# Southwark Day Centre for Asylum Seekers

Southwark Day Centre for Asylum Seekers (SDCAS) is a charity founded in 1996 that supports refugees, people seeking asylum and other migrants living in the London Borough of Southwark. It works to relieve poverty and distress, to help people access their rights, and to promote their health, wellbeing and education.

SDCAS runs weekly drop-in day centres in different parts of the borough, each open one day a week. The centres offer a safe, friendly and welcoming space where visitors can have a hot lunch, meet others and find practical support. Services include free advice on housing, health, education and asylum issues, English classes and conversation groups, a crèche for young children, gardening, a women's group, health and NHS access support, donated clothing, and social and wellbeing activities. The centres are run by a small team of staff together with a large group of dedicated volunteers.

As a volunteer, you will become part of this team and help the drop-in sessions run smoothly. Above all, you will offer visitors time, a friendly face and a listening ear.

**Volunteer tasks include:**

- Welcoming visitors, helping them register and showing them around the centre
- Setting up and clearing away rooms before and after sessions
- Helping to prepare and serve lunch and keeping the kitchen tidy
- Sorting, organising and handing out donated clothing, food and toiletries
- Supporting English classes and conversation groups, e.g. practising everyday English with learners
- Helping in the crèche with play and craft activities for young children, under staff supervision
- Taking part in gardening and in social, wellbeing and women's group activities
- Helping with office tasks, fundraising, events and communications on days the centres are closed

The role does not involve personal care. Legal and immigration advice is only given by the centre's trained advisers; volunteers do not give advice themselves but can help visitors find the right person to speak to. You will receive an induction and training from SDCAS and will always work under the guidance of staff. The exact tasks will be agreed with the SDCAS volunteer coordinator on your first day.

**What is expected from a volunteer:**

- **Interest in refugee and asylum issues** – openness to learning about the asylum system and the situations people have fled from.
- **Empathy & Respect** – treating every visitor with dignity, warmth and without judgement.
- **Tolerance & Open-mindedness** – being comfortable working with people of many different cultures, languages and faiths.
- **Discretion** – respecting visitors' privacy and keeping personal information confidential.
- **Good English** – being able to communicate clearly and patiently, including with people who are still learning English. Other languages are a bonus.
- **Calmness & Resilience** – staying calm in busy sessions and knowing when to ask staff for support.
- **Flexible Team Player** – being reliable and punctual, and happy to help wherever needed, from the kitchen to the classroom.