

MIDST Volunteer Visitor Role

Role: Volunteer Visitor

Supported by: Volunteer Coordinator and other volunteer visitors

Purpose of role: To visit people being held in Manchester R-Short Term Holding Facility/Manchester Prison and to provide support, practical advice and friendship.

Time requirement: at least 1 visit each month plus team meeting (currently every 3 months) and training time (as and when arranged).

About MIDST

MIDST is a volunteer-run group. Members visit and support men and women being detained at Manchester R-STHF. Some members (also) visit and support men being held post sentence under immigration control at HMP Manchester.

MIDST is a member of AVID (Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees), an umbrella organisation of 17 visitors groups and organisations who visit across the UK and represent over 650 volunteer visitors, as well as many individual members, who give their time to befriend and support people being held in immigration detention and prison.

Main responsibilities

- To provide emotional support and friendship, by using active listening skills and developing trust with the person you are visiting
- To support people in detention to understand their rights whilst in detention/prison.
- To signpost detainees to other sources of support (*such as Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees (AVID), Bail for Immigration Detainees (BID), other visitor groups etc.*)
- To liaise/facilitate communication with other individuals and organisations (e.g. friends, family, other visitor groups, legal representatives, other specialist support)
- To provide brief feedback to the volunteer coordinator/ fellow volunteer after visits on any issues requiring follow-up or support from the group/AVID.
- To seek guidance and advice from the group and/or AVID if any difficulty arises or you are unsure about how to proceed
- To alert the coordinator or detention centre/prison staff if it is felt that the detainee is at serious risk of self-harm
- To attend quarterly team meetings and training events
- To visit on the days specified on the rota; if prevented, to swap days with another visitor or in the last resort to cancel the visit by contacting the STHF/prison
- To act in accordance with MIDST policies, including “Confidentiality” and “Guidelines on Boundaries”
- To adhere to the requirements of the STHF/prison

Induction process (in consultation with the coordinator)

- To meet with 2 existing visitors for informal discussion
- To obtain security clearance
- To arrange and take part in shared visits with existing visitors prior to visiting alone