

# **BORDERLANDS**

from exclusion to

# **BELONGING**

## **Member Volunteer Handbook**

**Borderlands (South West) Ltd Registered Charity No: 1143313**

**January 2024**

Review date January 2024

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## Introduction

Thank you for being a part of Borderlands and choosing to volunteer with us! Welcome to the team.

Borderlands is a charity supporting asylum seekers and refugees in Bristol with weekly hot meals, the drop in, English classes, the mentoring project and wellbeing activities.

**Here are useful contacts at Borderlands, please save them for future reference:**

### *Mentoring team:*

Annora Ward

Mobile: 07732 901174

Email: [annora@borderlands.org.uk](mailto:annora@borderlands.org.uk)

Working days: Wednesdays and Thursdays

Abbe Cleverdon

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Working days: Mondays and Tuesdays

### *Safeguarding Lead*

Caitlin Plunkett

Mobile: 07754 854212

Email: [caitlin@borderlands.org.uk](mailto:caitlin@borderlands.org.uk)

Working days: Monday - Friday

**If you can't get hold of the Safeguarding Lead, please leave them a message and they will get back to you as soon as possible. If you are concerned about someone's safety, please contact emergency services as soon as possible and report to Safeguarding Lead.**

### ***Drop in team:***

Katie Connel: [katie@borderlands.org.uk](mailto:katie@borderlands.org.uk)

Francisco Salgado: [francisco@borderlands.org.uk](mailto:francisco@borderlands.org.uk)

Sezab Idris: [sezab@borderlands.org.uk](mailto:sezab@borderlands.org.uk)

### ***Learning Project Team:***

Imogen Franklin: [imogen@borderlands.org.uk](mailto:imogen@borderlands.org.uk)

### **Our weekly activities are as follows:**

#### **Mondays:**

- English classes from **10.30am – 12.30pm** and **1.30pm – 3.30pm**
- Breakfast table and drop in: 10am-1pm

#### **Tuesdays:**

- **Drop in and food: 11am – 2pm** (social supermarket 10-12, hot halal food from 1-2pm, drop in from 10-12pm).
- English classes from **10.30am – 12.30pm** and **1.30pm – 3.30pm**

#### **Wednesdays:**

- Poetry and reading group: 10.30-12 (Sanctuary Room)
- Yoga for Women: 11.30-12.30 (Main Hall)
- Dance for Women: 12.30-1.30 (Main Hall)
- Fitness for men: 1-2pm (local gym)
- Sewing for women: 9.30-11.30 (Romero Room)
- Sewing for women: 12.30-2.30 (Romero Room)
- Sleep support and relaxation classes: Men 11.30-12.30; Women 12.30-13.30 (first Wednesday of the month in New Room)

## Introduction to Borderlands and the asylum process

Borderlands is a charity dedicated to working with asylum seekers, migrants and refugees in Bristol. We run three separate projects at Borderlands: the mentoring project, the learning project and the welcome and drop in project.



### Introduction to the asylum system in the UK

The 1951 Refugee Convention was the first key legal document that was written to enshrine in law the international legal standard that defines who is a refugee, sets out the rights of individuals who are granted asylum and the responsibilities of nations that grant asylum. The Convention also sets out which people do *not* qualify as refugees, such as war criminals. The Convention builds on Article 14 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognizes the right of persons to seek asylum from persecution in other countries. More information on this may be found here: <http://www.unhcr.org/uk/1951-refugee-convention.html>

Definitions:

**Asylum seekers are people who have applied to the UK Home Office for permission to live in the UK and are waiting for an answer to their application.**

This can be a time-consuming and lengthy process as some people may need to apply more than once and gather ‘fresh evidence’ and getting a decision on whether you will be granted permission to stay in the UK can take many years. Most asylum applications in the UK fail because of ‘lack of evidence’ but getting evidence can be very hard when someone is running for their life.

**Refugees are people who have been granted leave to remain under the terms of the 1951 Refugee Convention in the UK by the Home Office.** *“A refugee is a person who ‘owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country...”* (Definition quoted from the 1951 Refugee Convention)

**Different types of leave to remain exist.** Someone could receive indefinite leave to remain as a refugee, or time limited leave to remain. This should be clearly indicated in their Biometrics Residence Card (BRP) and decision letter received by the Home Office.

**For those with limited leave to remain,** it is important they know how and when to renew their leave. It is ideal if they have a solicitor who can represent them in applying.

### **The asylum process**

Claiming asylum is a long, challenging, often delayed process which is made particularly challenging in an effort to ‘deter’ people from coming to the UK and encourage them to voluntarily return to their countries of origin. Asylum seekers have significantly less rights than an ordinary citizen. We strongly recommend that you use the [Right to Remain Toolkit](#) to better understand each step of the asylum process. This is a valuable tool developed for those navigating the system and is something you can read alongside your mentee throughout your partnership also.

**Update:** please note that **in July 2023, the Illegal Migration Act was passed** which proposes dramatic changes to the asylum process in the UK. You can find more information on the changes that the IMA may be bringing [here](#). You should also have recently attended a training with Borderlands which covers this in more

details. Please contact one of the mentoring managers if you would like access to the training materials which cover this and the asylum process in more depth.

## What are asylum seekers or refugees allowed to do?

Refugees and Asylum Seekers have different legal rights and access to services, employment and housing in the UK. Many asylum seekers and refugees are homeless and impoverished at some time. Asylum seekers and refugees are ordinary people who face great challenges and live difficult lives. Many of them find it very hard to do the normal routine things that most of us take for granted, here are a few examples:

Question	Asylum Seeker	Refugee
Am I allowed to work (have any kind of paid employment)?	<b>No</b> – you can face serious consequences and even be removed from the UK for working	<b>Yes</b> – you are allowed to work but you must give your National Insurance Number to your employer in order to pay tax etc. and provide them with a current bank account number to pay your salary into. It is often difficult to get banks to allow you to open a current account with them as you will not have a ‘credit history’.
Am I allowed to claim ‘benefits’ such as Job Seekers Allowance or Income Support?	<b>No</b> – as an asylum seeker who has applied for ‘status’ in the UK you can apply for *NASS (National Asylum Support Service) which offers free accommodation e.g. a single room in a shared house, and a weekly allowance of £37.75 to pay for ALL of your needs. If your application for asylum fails, you will be evicted and your financial support stops. Asylum seekers are vulnerable to destitution and homelessness. If, however you are successfully granted ‘refugee’ status by the Home Office you will be asked to leave your NASS accommodation within 28 days and your	<b>Yes</b> – refugees are allowed to claim benefits in the UK but you <b>MUST</b> apply for, and receive a National Insurance Number as soon as possible as most services in the UK require this as ‘proof’ of your eligibility to receive this support. Upon the date of being granted status you have only 28 days to sort out accommodation, benefits etc before being evicted from NASS accommodation. Many refugees are left homeless and destitute at this point.

	NASS financial support will stop because you are no longer an asylum seeker.	
Am I allowed to access the National Health Service?	<b>Yes</b> - but only Primary healthcare such as prescriptions, glasses or the dentist. You are not allowed to have an operation unless it is an emergency or for a life-threatening illness e.g. cancer	<b>Yes</b> – you can access the NHS like anyone else who has a National Health Service number.
Am I allowed to go into higher education? E.g. a college or university?	<b>Maybe</b> - each asylum seeker will be given specific terms, some of these may include a ban on studying. Some universities offer sanctuary scholarships to allow asylum seekers and refugees to access university education. If an asylum seeker is interested in studying then they will need to check the specific terms given to them by the Home Office when they claimed asylum. If there is a barr on studying they might be able to apply to the Home Office to have this removed.  This bar does not apply to ESOL classes so all asylum seekers are entitled to access english classes.	<b>Yes</b> – just like anyone else
Am I allowed to sign a Tenancy Agreement to rent somewhere to live for myself?	<b>No</b> – it is illegal. If you do sign a Tenancy Agreement (because you don't tell your landlord you are an asylum seeker) both you and the landlord can face criminal charges	<b>Yes</b> – you can sign a Tenancy Agreement and rent somewhere to live. But cheap accommodation in Bristol is very hard to find.
Am I allowed to have a current account with a bank?	<b>No</b> – but you can have a savings account. Any savings you have must be fully used up before you are allowed to receive NASS* allowance and this is thoroughly checked by the Home Office and asylum seekers must wait until this is done before they are allowed to receive any NASS support.	<b>Yes</b> – but it is very difficult to get banks to allow you to open a current account as you don't have a credit history.
Am I allowed to drive a car?	<b>No</b> – you are not allowed to have a Driving License	<b>Yes</b> – you are allowed to drive a car
Am I allowed to volunteer in a charity?	<b>Yes</b> – this right has recently been upheld in the courts	<b>Yes</b> – you are allowed to volunteer for charity
Am I likely to end up homeless and destitute?	<b>Yes</b> – if your application to the Home Office for refugee status in the UK is refused (there are over 550 reasons to be refused) then you will have nowhere to live	<b>Yes</b> – if your application for refugee status in the UK is accepted your NASS support will stop and you will be evicted.



<p>(about 31% of Borderlands members are destitute)</p>	<p>and no money to live on as your NASS support will stop within 2 weeks.</p> <p>Unless someone gives you somewhere to live you will be homeless and destitute.</p>	<p>Unless someone gives you somewhere to live you will be homeless and destitute.</p> <p>The best thing you can do is apply for a National Insurance number, get a job and find a private landlord who will rent a small bedsit to you to live in. You can apply for Social Housing but the waiting list is over 7 years long if you are a single male!</p>
<p>Do I have to report at Patchway Police station regularly?</p>	<p><b>Yes</b>- all asylum seekers living in Bristol have to go to Patchway Police station and sign - report to the Police - whether they get NASS support or not.</p> <p>How often they have to go depends on the Police, some people have to report every week, others every 2 weeks, once per month or once every couple of months. Most asylum seekers find this upsetting because of their life experiences and they worry that they might be detained by the Police.</p>	<p><b>No</b></p>
<p>Is it possible that I could be detained and put in a Detention Centre?</p>	<p><b>Yes</b> – asylum seekers can be detained by the Police, for example at Patchway Police station when they go to sign. In fact, few asylum seekers are detained each month but everyone worries about this possibility. If an asylum seeker’s application to the Home Office fails the Police can, and will, detain them and remove them to a Detention Centre which are located around the country in easy access distance to a main airport e.g. Harmondsworth Detention Centre is near Heathrow airport.</p> <p>Asylum Seekers can use a mobile phone in a Detention Centre (so long as it doesn’t take photos) and can access legal advice although the Duty Solicitors are often overloaded.</p>	<p><b>No</b></p>

## **The Mentoring Project**

The project is designed to train and support volunteers to become mentors to asylum seekers and refugees living in Bristol. The project involves 4 compulsory training sessions for all prospective mentors, the chance of one-to-one support sessions and on-going monthly group supervisions. Whilst anybody with serious immigration issues who needs mentoring will be welcomed onto the project, the Mentoring Project will especially seek to support newly arrived asylum seekers and those who have recently received their refugee status as they face some of the biggest challenges integrating into life in the UK. The project is designed to empower refugees and asylum seekers to overcome the emotional and physical barriers that many of them face living in the UK. The project recognises the difficulties and challenges asylum seekers and refugees face integrating into a new community and seeks to reduce isolation and exclusion and promote accessibility and inclusion.

## **Are asylum seekers and refugees ‘vulnerable adults’?**

Many asylum seekers and refugees do not meet the standard criteria set out for what is considered to be a ‘vulnerable adult’ in the UK. However, we know that asylum seekers and refugees are often socially isolated and excluded because they don’t know many people, if anyone, who lives here in Bristol; they may not be able to speak English very well to communicate their needs and it is hard for them to find friends they can trust. Many asylum seekers and refugees come from different black and ethnic minority backgrounds and they are targets for racism both overt racism such as verbal abuse, but also the more subtle racism where they are simply ignored and marginalised in the community. And many asylum seekers and refugees are impoverished and cannot participate in social activities that bring people together in communities such as shopping or going out for an evening, so they sometimes feel like ‘outsiders’ where they are not welcome or wanted. They are often separated from their family and friends who may be living in another country and they may not be able to afford to make a phone call on a mobile phone to speak to someone. Mentors are advised that they should reflect on how the above could impact their mentee’s outlook and the things in which they can participate.

## Safeguarding?

Safeguarding means ‘supporting people and protecting them from harm’ which means creating a safe environment that promotes adults and children's well-being. It is possible that your mentee may disclose to you, or you may notice, that they have been or are currently at risk of being abused or mistreated, or if they may be abusing another child or vulnerable adult.

**Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility.** Should this arise, you must recognise that this is a serious situation and you **must** inform the Mentoring Manager immediately of your concerns. You must not promise to keep secrets, even if your mentee asks you to, if there is a possibility that they have been, or are being abused or mistreated or are themselves perpetrating abuse.

The Mentoring Manager will inform Borderlands Safeguarding Lead, Caitlin Plunkett, and they will deal appropriately with the situation and the person involved. If your concern refers to the Mentoring Manager themselves, or you do not feel that the Mentoring Manager takes your concerns seriously then please contact the safeguarding officers directly – you can find all the contact details needed at the start of the Handbook.

Please read our **Safeguarding Policy** [here](#) and ensure that you understand this, if you would like to discuss further you are encouraged to contact our Mentoring Managers and Safeguarding Lead.

**In case of immediate danger, please contact emergency services on 999.**

## Key aims of the Mentoring Project

- To train and support mentors to provide practical and emotional support to asylum seekers and refugees living in Bristol;
- To build the knowledge and confidence of refugees and asylum seekers to access and engage positively with the community and public services in Bristol;
- To build the skills and knowledge of local people in Bristol to understand and support refugees and asylum seekers and enhance community inclusion;
- To gather and assess information on the impact of The Mentoring Project to create a model of best practice for future projects.

## Defining mentoring

Mentoring at Borderlands may be understood as a supportive relationship between two individuals consisting of weekly one-to-one meetings over a period of up to 6 months.

Each mentoring relationship will have agreed objectives and aims defined at the initial meeting between the mentor, mentee and Mentoring Manager. The needs of each person will vary and thus each mentoring relationship will have a unique set of goals specific to that partnership. You will both sign up to a 'Mentoring Agreement' that outlines the contact times and level of support you have mutually agreed.

**Mentoring is different from befriending, coaching and counselling.**

<b>Befriending</b>	<b>Mentoring</b>	<b>Coaching</b>	<b>Counselling</b>
<b>?</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>?</b>	<b>✗</b>
The provision of informal social support to an isolated individual with the main objective of forming a trusting relationship, building social companionship and providing a relationship where none existed.	A supportive relationship between two individuals whose main objectives is to fulfil a set of aims that are set out with the client at the outset of the relationship, with the social relationship being less central than in befriending	An interactive, short term, results orientated process that brings about a change or purpose focusing on performance and improvement	The provision of <u>professional</u> assistance and guidance in resolving personal or psychological problems. There is a focus on non-judgemental listening and no commitment to action necessarily. Mentoring does NOT include counselling.

**Mentoring involves:**

- ✓ Listening and being non-judgemental;
- ✓ Building rapport, respect and trust;
- ✓ Creating “action plans” to help sort out solutions and strategies to tackle the challenges an asylum seeker or refugee is facing;
- ✓ Providing opportunities to feedback on the relationship to each other;
- ✓ Setting expectations and boundaries at the beginning of your relationship;
- ✓ Being realistic about what you can achieve and in what timeframe;
- ✓ Facilitating decision making by exploring different possible options;
- ✓ Inspiring the mentee to realise their potential and have self-confidence;
- ✓ Where needed looking things up on the internet or refer to someone else for their advice;

- ✓ Highlighting any ethical or moral issues that may be relevant e.g. smoking around children is not acceptable;
- ✓ Supporting mentees to develop the confidence and skills to navigate systems and communities independently.

**Mentoring does NOT involve:**

- ✗ Providing a counselling service
- ✗ Giving any advice that should be given by a specialist adviser eg. legal advice
- ✗ Providing therapeutic interventions
- ✗ Taking responsibility away from the person
- ✗ Intruding into areas that the mentee wants to keep private
- ✗ Creating dependency

**Some of the things you might do with your mentee:**

- help with English
- support in finding and accessing services
- signposting
- journey planning or initial accompaniment to an appointment
- help filling out forms e.g. job applications, courses or schools (but not Immigration forms as this must be done by a qualified solicitor)
- listening and helping to build self- confidence and knowledge of “how things work here”

## Before you start...

### Confidentiality

During the mentoring relationship, there may be moments in which the sensitive and private matters are discussed. If you have created a space in which a mentee feels safe to speak with you about sensitive or private matters, it is important that you maintain confidentiality. However, it is not about keeping secrets. As will be explained at the initial meeting between you and your mentee, any concerns about risk of harm to you, your mentee, or anyone else must be immediately disclosed and communicated to the Mentoring Manager.

### Consent

If you are undertaking any advocacy on behalf of your mentee, make sure they have fully understood and consented to any information you might share with third parties. Always involve a mentee by obtaining their prior permission when finding or applying any practical solution and in any advocacy you undertake on their behalf. All Borderlands mentees sign a consent form for the project before the join. If they say that they do not wish you to help and they are over 18, then this must be respected. If they are under 18, then we might choose to share information with others in the best interest of the child, you should discuss this with the mentoring manager.

### Advice

Do not give advice in areas that you are not qualified. E.g. housing or immigration. It is illegal and can be detrimental on your mentee if you get it wrong. If you are giving advice regarding ways of living or everyday decisions, be aware that your mentee may not take follow your advice and that their decision must be respected. Rather than thinking about giving advice to your mentee, it is better to think of the ways in which you can lay out the different options that your mentee may wish to choose from and/ or when you can signpost them to to get professional advice on issues which are affecting them.

### What skills and interests do you wish to offer to an Asylum Seeker or a Refugee?

Borderlands Mentoring Manager will ask you to complete a list of skills and interests that you are willing to offer to an Asylum Seeker or refugee to help them improve their lives. This is so that we can do our best to ‘match’ your skills and

interests with someone who wants that kind of help. We hope that most mentors and mentees will get on well together but if it does not work out well for you then we can easily try and find someone else for whom you are a more suitable match.

## **Understanding different cultures**

Take the time to find out about the culture of the person you are mentoring and bear in mind that people may be very different in their beliefs and values than others from the same cultural group.

- Be aware that the manner in which your mentee may handle relationships with people of another gender, race or ethnic background may be very different to you.
- Depending on their previous experiences they may find it hard to trust you or anybody else in the first instance so please be aware of this when you start working with your mentee.
- Be aware that the person you mentor may be very distrustful of authorities such as the police or government agencies, based on life experience.
- Body language plays a very important role in any communication we have; where communication in English is limited, it can make even more difference. An understanding of the difference of body languages in different cultures is important to avoid creating offense or misunderstanding.
- Please dress modestly and appropriately in regard to the culture of the mentee you are working with.
- if you are unsure about what is appropriate in different cultures then do some research if appropriate, and gently ask your mentee; it is always best to ask questions and have open conversations. However, be understanding if your mentee does not want to share also.



## Boundaries


### Why have boundaries in a mentoring relationship?

It is important that the mentee has realistic expectations of what types of support a mentor can provide. This is to:

- manage expectations and avoid disappointment;
- to avoid creating unhealthy dependence;
- and to prevent a mentor finding themselves involved with a broad set of problems or issues that they are not trained or equipped to handle and don't want to get involved in.

**It is important to be direct and open about your capabilities, consider what you can or cannot accept or tolerate, and be clear about when and how you will contact each other.**

There are a number of boundary guidelines that we recommend and we ask you to respect as a Borderlands mentoring volunteer.

Place	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✘ Mentoring meetings must take place either in Borderlands Drop-In or another similar charity or in a neutral public place such as cafes, community centres or libraries.</li><li>✘ <b>We strongly request that you not to meet in your own home or your mentee's home for the first 3 months.</b> After 3 months, should you wish to do this, please first contact the Mentoring Manager and talk it through as it will require assessments for Health and Safety and the responsibilities of Borderlands towards both the mentor and mentee.</li></ul>

Time	
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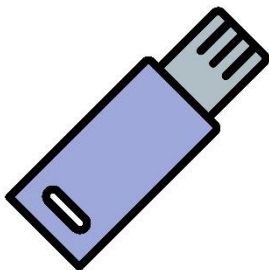
- ✓ You may find that time management is an issue for the mentee. As mentee's lives can be very unstable, it is important that you are a point of stability. We have found that texting your mentee the night before to remind them about your meeting is very effective.
- ✗ If somebody is late, although you may be able to give up more time together, ensure it is convenient and feel free to be clear on the time you have available to meet.

### Keeping in contact



- ✓ Think about how you would like to be contacted by your mentee. By phone, text, email? When you meet your mentee for the first time, you will discuss and agree how you would like them to contact you and vice versa.
- ✗ Think about when you do not want to be contacted. Are there any 'no contact' times e.g. when you are at work or late at night? How quickly will you be able to respond to each other?

### Personal Information



- ✓ Be careful with any personal data you may record about your mentee. Respect their right to privacy and also consider what personal information you are happy to share about yourself - confidentiality works both ways.
- ✗ **We request that you do not share your personal home address with your mentee.** If your mentee does not feel comfortable or willing to talk about something, please respect their wishes.

### Problem Solving




- ✓ Your role is to provide support to your mentee by taking an interest in their progress and encouraging them to take responsibility and actions themselves.
- ✗ **It is not your responsibility to resolve all their problems, nor can you.** Please do not provide advice in areas that you are not an expert in such as immigration law or housing as this can have very harsh consequences to a mentees life if you are wrong. Before undertaking any advocacy or support please ask your mentee if they want the help you can offer and make sure they fully understand. If they say ‘no’, always respect their wishes. **Be careful not to create dependency on you as their mentor.**


### Gift Giving



- ✓ During the mentoring relationship, you may wish to support your mentee through giving them a gift. Whilst buying your mentee a tea or coffee is ok, please be aware that any gift you may give exacerbates the power dynamic between you. Borderlands reimburses volunteer expenses for mentoring meetings, please claim back any expenses you have whilst meeting your mentee. If it is clear that the expenses are coming from Borderlands this will help to keep the power dynamic more equal in the relationship. It also helps Borderlands to track how much each of our projects really costs. The acceptance of gifts can often lead to a feeling of debt toward the gift giver, or the feeling of pressure that a gift must be given in return. If you feel that your mentee is in need of something, please first check with the Mentoring Manager that there is not already an organisation in Bristol that already provides those things freely

	<p>(e.g. clothing, bikes, food). If you still wish to give a small gift, please contact the Mentoring Manager in order to assess the appropriateness of the gift.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>× <b><u>Please never lend or give money to your mentee, and do not borrow or accept money from your mentee.</u></b> Be aware that communities talk with one another, and that giving a large gift to your mentee might create an unhelpful expectation for others entering into the mentoring project.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Physical contact</b></p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Different cultures have different customs regarding physical contact. Please be aware of this and if you are working with somebody of the opposite gender, we advise that you allow no more physical contact than a handshake.</li> <li>× <b><u>Physical intimacy or romantic attachment are NOT appropriate in a mentoring relationship and could be seen as an abuse of power.</u></b> Many mentees will be isolated and the mentor might be the first person in a long time to be caring toward a mentee. This can lead to feelings of affection. It is important not to feel flattered by any affection and not to encourage any hopes a mentee might have regarding the nature of the mentoring relationship. Be clear, consistent and direct with boundaries.</li> </ul>

Transport	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ We encourage you to use a bicycle or public transport when meeting your mentee.</li> <li>✗ <b><u>We strongly advise that you do not drive with your mentee, especially if it is just you and them in the car.</u></b> If you do you must first contact your insurance company to see if you are insured to drive whilst volunteering and then provide Borderlands with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A copy of your driver's licence</li> <li>- A copy of your insurance to provide assurance that you are covered to transport a mentee.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**In summary, the things we strongly ask you NOT to do:**

- borrowing, giving or lending money;
- having any romantic or physical relationship with your mentee;
- going to your mentees house or inviting them to yours;
- giving advice in areas where you are not an expert, acting as a counsellor;
- creating dependency;
- not respecting the wishes of your mentee;
- drink alcohol or take drugs prior to, or during a meeting with a mentee

**We also ask that you meet up with your mentee alone, and do not bring along friends and family to the meetings.**

**In your meetings you will give money to:**

- **Cover a coffee or a tea for your mentee (up to £7)**
- **Cover travel for your mentee (up to £8)**

**We will reimburse your expenses at the end of the month through bank transfer unless agreed otherwise with one of the Mentoring Managers. Please ALWAYS upload receipts alongside your feedback form, which you can find on our website under Mentoring > Resources.**

## Meeting your mentee

The first meeting is very important but can be a little daunting for both the mentor and mentee. The Mentoring Manager will always be there to facilitate the introduction and setting of goals and aims for the duration of the mentoring relationship. The mentor, mentee and Mentoring Manager will sign a 'Mentoring Agreement' form that sets out the goals and timeframe of the mentoring relationship.

### Before each meeting

Give yourself time to prepare for the initial meeting. The Mentoring Manager will give you some information about your mentee before your meet. You could prepare by taking a look at the country they come from, maybe find out what the national dish is, or how to say hello in their native language. Be prepared to talk about yourself as well. Think about what you feel comfortable with, how you would like to contact your mentee, where you would like to meet and if there are any times that you do not wish to be contacted.

### During

- Be an active listener; be relaxed and behave naturally
- Ask open supportive questions and only ask 'whys' if you feel that the mentee is comfortable to go into more detail
- Show an interest in them and talk about some neutral topics like food, hobbies and interests
- Discuss with your mentee what they would like to get out of the mentoring relationship. Find out what your mentee would like to do and try to achieve (this might have changed since the Mentoring Manager has spoken with your mentee).
- Be very clear about what you can and cannot do. Do not make promises that you cannot fulfil or over-commit yourself beyond what you want to do.
- Do not falsely raise their expectations. You can always explain that you can refer the person to someone else in areas where you cannot provide support.
- Discuss the best ways to contact one another and the best times

- Arrange where and when your next meeting will take place. Discuss different places to meet with your mentee and make sure they feel they can reasonably do whatever arrangements are made.
- If you feel like the conversation is making the mentee feel anxious or depressed as it is focusing on the problems or issues your mentee is facing, try to change your approach to look at hopes and aspirations.

#### After each meeting

- Take a moment to reflect on the session
- Did it go well? Do you think your mentee understood you and that you understood your mentee?
- Was there any confusion? If so, how do you think you could try to avoid that in the future. Talk to the Mentoring Manager if you have concerns.
- Have you come away with ideas of what to do at the next meeting?
- **Fill in the feedback form! This is a crucial requirement of the mentoring project and you will be contacted by a manager if you have not filled out the weekly form. This is the only way we have of monitoring the partnerships, as you will be meeting outside the Borderlands premises. You can find a link for the feedback form [here](#), and you can always find it on our website under Mentoring > Resources.**

## Expenses

All volunteers are entitled to reclaim reasonable out of pocket expenses that they have incurred in order to undertake voluntary work on behalf of Borderlands. Please do claim expenses as it helps Borderlands to realise the actual costs of our work and can help to create a more even power dynamic in mentoring relationships (see boundaries). Borderlands will repay:

### 1. Travel expenses

**Mentoring sessions** between mentor and mentee. The mentoring project will be able to cover the local travel costs (bus tickets) for both mentee and mentor – **up to £8**. If you do take your mentor in the car, we can also reimburse petrol costs.

**Court hearings.** If the mentee needs to go to court for their asylum hearing (or other type of immigration hearing) and it has been agreed the mentor will accompany them, the mentoring project can cover for the mentor's travel expenses. If mentees are receiving NASS support, the Home Office must pay for their ticket and the mentor should support the mentee liaising with their solicitor and Home Office in order to receive this prior to the court date. In case the mentee is not eligible to receive a ticket from the Home Office, please refer the member to our solidarity fund ([steve@borderlands.uk.com](mailto:steve@borderlands.uk.com)).

### 2. Refreshments and activities

For each meeting mentors can use a little pocket money – **up to £7** – for refreshments or to join activities, such as yoga. We highly encourage mentors and mentees to meet in places where they can get free drinks (eg. St. Marks Community Centre in Easton, BHN) and to join free activities (eg. @We the Curious, shows/performances/concerts at Old Vic). For more information about Borderlands' partnerships please contact the Mentoring Manager.

If there are other expenses that you think you might incur through your mentoring partnership e.g. you need to buy resources for practising English, then please discuss this with the mentoring Manager before you make the purchase to ensure that it can be reimbursed.



### **How can I claim my expenses?**

At the end of the feedback form you fill in weekly you can upload photos or scans of the receipts from your meetings along with your bank details. If you would prefer cash, you can bring your receipts to the Borderlands office and we can reimburse you here. Please note that we will be able to transfer your expenses via BACS once every four weeks.

## Feedback during the mentoring partnership

Feedback from both mentors and mentees is absolutely vital to the mentoring project. There are different ways in which we gather feedback.

### **Weekly Feedback Form:**

We ask all mentors to fill out a simple feedback form after every meeting. This will be sent to you as an online form. Filling out this form is very important as it ensures that:

- The Mentoring Manager knows what content was covered, whether there are any problems or safeguarding issues that need to be addressed
- Borderlands can accurately assess the impact of the mentoring project on both mentors and mentees
- The mentor has a chance to let the Mentoring Manager know about how they are finding the meetings and contribute to the enhancement of our project
- The mentor has a chance for reflection and can document their mentoring relationship on a weekly basis and see how it is developing.
- **Please note that in case the mentor doesn't fill in the feedback form for a prolonged time, the Manager will have to ask the mentor to stop meeting the mentee.**

### **Monthly supervision and feedback sessions:**

We ask that mentors attend a monthly meeting with other mentors and their Team Leader. This will be an opportunity to discuss how things are going, share ideas and get helpful input. It will also be a chance to run top up training, give and receive new information and share resources.

If you have ANY concerns regarding the risk of physical or emotional harm to you, your mentee or anyone else, please immediately contact the Mentoring Manager. If you feel that the Mentoring Manager has not addressed your concern adequately, please consult our Complaints procedure for what to do about this – the safety of everyone involved in the project is our highest priority.



## **Resources folder**

At completion of your induction training, the Mentoring Manager will share with you the resources page on our website, where you will find useful resources (such as training material, services directory, safeguarding form and the link to the feedback form).

If you have trouble accessing this, please let the mentoring manager know.

## Ending the mentoring partnership

How the mentoring relationship is ended is as important as how it begins. Please read our guidelines on “How to approach and to end the mentoring relationship” that it is shared on the Drive.

- Always end on a positive note and recognise your joint achievements. You could even mark it with a special thank-you session at Borderlands Drop-in or a card.
- Prepare yourself and your mentee to look ahead. If your mentoring relationship ends before 6 months because your mentee has achieved their goals, please let the Mentoring Manager know.
- The mentoring arrangement between you and Borderlands is a commitment to meet with the mentee for 3 to 6 months and you should not feel under any pressure to maintain contact with your mentee after this, or after you have achieved your mentee’s goals.
- You may wish to decide to stay in touch with your mentee informally in the future; it is a decision that we encourage you to speak to the Mentoring Manager about.
- You may wish to consider supporting a new Mentee if you found the experience positive.

## What do I do if?

Questions	Issues	Solutions
<p>You arrange to meet up and your mentee does not turn up. You try to ring them and you cannot get through to them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They could be nervous about speaking English on the phone</li> <li>- They could have insufficient credit on their phone</li> <li>- They could have no access to internet to see email</li> <li>- They could have ill-health or be dealing with personal problems</li> <li>- Feeling embarrassed about bothering you</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Find out the best way to get in contact if you lose the contact that you had arranged.</li> <li>- Send a text reminder to your mentee the night before to remind them of the meeting.</li> <li>- Ask your mentee to let you know if they are going to be away that week</li> <li>- It is possible that your mentee has been detained by the Home Office and they are genuinely unable to contact you.</li> <li>-If your mentee fails to turn up more than once, contact the Mentoring Manager</li> </ul>
<p>You feel that your mentee has unreasonable expectations about what you can do for them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A mentee might feel that you are their ONLY support and put a lot of pressure on you</li> <li>- Mentees may not be working and may not understand UK working time hours and pressures</li> <li>- If you successfully tackle one issue, it could have raised their expectations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Borderlands will do our best to make sure that mentees expectations are set properly at the beginning.</li> <li>- Be clear about boundaries and what you can and cannot do</li> <li>- Ask your mentee what they want from mentoring and be clear if expectations are unrealistic</li> <li>- Try to signpost them towards someone who may be able to help</li> <li>- Remember that the aim is to empower your mentee to do things for themselves.</li> </ul>

	about achieving more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mentees may have multiple issues, try to focus on what you have managed to achieve together</li> <li>- Contact the Mentoring Manager if you would like us to speak to your mentee for you about their expectations</li> </ul>
The mentoring relationship seems too informal and we are not doing any of the goals we set at the beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are no clear cut goals that your mentee would like to achieve</li> <li>- The issues are very big (e.g. housing) and may feel too daunting to even start tackling</li> <li>- You are both happy and enjoying a more informal mentoring relationship (and there is nothing wrong with this)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If you are both enjoying meeting up then you might not need to change anything</li> <li>- If you feel like the goals you set may be too daunting, you can always change or redefine them to smaller stages towards achieving a longer term goal</li> </ul>
A mentee asks you for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Your mentee may be destitute and you may feel that you do not know how to say no.</li> <li>- You have said no to giving your mentee money and you now feel that it has changed the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Remember the boundary guidelines: explain to your mentee that as a Borderlands mentor you are not allowed to give or loan money.</li> <li>- Try to signpost them toward services that provide destitution support. Borderlands <u>may</u> be able to support them through our Destitution Fund.</li> <li>- Remember that you do not want to create dependency or a situation in</li> </ul>

	relationship between you.	which mentees may see their mentors as potential sources of money - If you feel uncomfortable about the situation talk to the Mentoring Manager and get some advice
I am not really getting on with my mentee	- We are having difficulty understanding one another - I don't like my mentee or I think they do not like me - We have nothing to talk about and meetings are quite awkward	- As with any relationship you might just not get on with someone and that is ok. Let the Mentoring Manager know and if after a few meetings it doesn't get any better, we can match the mentee with someone else instead. - Your mentee will be providing constant feedback to the Mentoring Manager, so if they are not enjoying the sessions then it might be best that we find a new mentee for you.
I don't think I am being a good mentor	- You may feel as though you are not achieving any of the goals you set out - Your mentee is not turning up	- If the mentee is too busy to meet with you it could be a sign that they are well occupied and that your services are not needed any more. - Ask the mentee how they feel the mentoring is going and try to get some direct feedback - If this feels uncomfortable, you can always ask the Mentoring Manager what feedback they are receiving from the mentee.
Meetings have fizzled out and I feel I have lost contact with my mentee	- Not all mentoring relationships will end with a clear finish and it may be that the mentee no longer feels that they need or want a	- Continue trying to get in contact with your mentee and ask the Mentoring Manager to check that everything is ok

	mentor but don't know how to tell you	
It would be much easier to use my car to get to somewhere we want to go to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Remember that there are legal and safeguarding concerns to consider in using your car</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Try to avoid using your car.</li> <li>- If you are getting into a car alone with someone, make sure that you have confirmation from Borderlands and that you have cleared it with your car insurance</li> <li>- Be aware of the safeguarding risks and make sure you and your mentee are not alone in the car and that they sit in the back of the car and not next to you</li> </ul>
Your mentee has an eviction notice or is under the threat of impending homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You may feel that you have room in your house to put someone up for a few nights</li> <li>- It might be that your mentee asks you for help and it is outside the times that you usually meet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contact the Mentoring Manager and let them know; they may be able to help the mentee.</li> <li>- <u>We strongly request you do NOT offer mentees somewhere to sleep at your home.</u> Whilst it might seem like a solution, it can be very hard to ask somebody to leave once you have offered them a space. It might create a dependency and raise expectations that you cannot meet.</li> <li>- It is inappropriate to take such action as a Borderlands Mentor and we ask you to respect this.</li> <li>- Help your mentee to contact an agency that supports homelessness in Bristol and can offer them informed advice.</li> </ul>



<p>A mentee confides to you that they are considering self-harm or suicide</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some mentees have past experiences of significant trauma that they find hard to manage</li> <li>- Going through the asylum process takes a long time in the UK and can make people depressed and hopeless.</li> <li>- You may be the ONLY person they feel they can confide in.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explain to the mentee that you will need to talk to someone about this, but try to get their permission first.</li> <li>- Do not agree to keep secrets if someone is in danger, you MUST tell someone so they can get help.</li> <li>- Immediately contact the Mentoring Manager</li> <li>- Encourage them to get help themselves</li> <li>- Remember that you are not a counsellor and this is something that needs to be dealt with by professionals</li> </ul>
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**The most important things to remember are:**

- You are not expected to know everything and your job is not to be able to solve every problem that your mentee might have.
- The Mentoring Manager is there to support you. If you have any questions or worries, however small, you can always ask them.
- Make sure that you manage expectations and maintain an appropriate relationship with your mentee.

## Listening

One of the most vital things that you will be doing as a mentor is listening. In your training we look at listening habits and explored how they affect our listening.

<b>Blocks to listening</b>	
<b>The Faker</b>	All the outward signs are there: nodding, making eye contact, and giving the occasional uh huh. However, the faker isn't concentrating on the speaker. Their mind is wandering elsewhere.
<b>The Interrupter</b>	The interrupter doesn't allow the speaker to finish and doesn't ask clarifying questions or seek any further information from the speaker. They are too anxious to speak their own words and show little concern for the speaker.
<b>The Intellectual or Logical Listener</b>	This person is always trying to interpret what the speaker is saying and why. They are judging the speaker's words and trying to fit them into their logic box. They rarely ask about the underlying feelings or emotions attached to a message.
<b>The Happy Hooker</b>	The Happy Hooker uses the speaker's words only as a way to get to their message. When the speaker says something, and frankly, it could be anything, the Happy Hooker steals the focus and then changes to their own point of view, opinion or story. Favourite Hooker lines include; "oh, that's nothing, here's what happened to me..." "I remember when I was..."
<b>The Rebuttal Maker</b>	This listener only listens long enough to form a rebuttal. Their point is to use the speaker's words against them, at worst; they are argumentative and want to prove you wrong. At least, they want to get their point of view over.
<b>The Advice Giver</b>	Giving advice is sometimes helpful; however, at other times, this behaviour interferes with good listening, because it does not allow the speaker to fully articulate their feelings and thoughts. It doesn't help the speaker to solve their own problems and prevents them venting their frustrations. It could also belittle the speaker by minimising their problems by offering quick fix solutions.

Being aware of positive ways to engage in active listening is equally important. But do remember that you are NOT a counsellor. Listening is a one - way exercise where one person talks and the other listens. Conversation is when you both speak taking turns. Give the speaker time to reflect and gather their thoughts. It is not necessary for you to fill any silent spaces with questions or comments. It is OK to ask if there is anything further they want to say. You should only start talking to them when you are certain they have said all they wish to say.

<b>Active listening techniques</b>	
<b>Non-verbal communication</b>	Be aware of all the ways in which your body, facial expression, eye contact and tone of voice contribute to your communication
<b>Reflecting back or checking out</b>	After the speaker has finished talking it is OK to reflect back what you think the person was trying to communicate to you. E.g. ‘so you feel intimidated by your house mate and that makes you feel unsafe?’ Do not make suggestions, but rather respond to what the mentee was saying, following their lead and allowing space to explore and sort their thoughts and feelings. This can also act as a prompt if the mentee loses track or doesn’t know how to continue. If so you should recommence your listening.
<b>Inverted mirroring</b>	We often unconsciously mirror a person when we listen empathetically. However, if your mentee is agitated, angry or distressed, a useful tool is inverted mirroring. If somebody is talking rapidly or shouting, try to speak calmly and slowly. When agitated, people often sit forward and tense their body. By sitting back and relaxing your body, you may help your mentee to mirror you and thus feel less agitated. Remember you may not be able to provide any practical solution to their distress but you have at least provided a safe space in which they could share their difficulty.

## Support services and organisations

The Mentoring online resource section on our website provides a list of support services you can signpost your mentee to. However, please remember the following when doing so:

- Your primary role regarding these organisations is signposting
- When contacting any of these organisations, make sure that your mentee has fully consented to having any information about them being shared by you
- Always be polite and respectful, and remember that you are acting in the capacity of a Borderlands mentor
- Many of the support services in Bristol are very well connected. Check with them that you are not attempting to duplicate work that is already being undertaken by another organisation.
- If you have any queries or you are not quite sure about something, talk to the Mentoring Manager first.
- Remember that whilst aspects of the mentoring role involve advocacy, you are not an advocate.
- Do NOT try to give advice on immigration, housing or any area in which you are not legally qualified. It is illegal and can have detrimental effects.

***Thank you for taking the time to read and understand the  
Borderlands Mentoring Handbook  
Thank you also to all of the charities and volunteers who have given us  
advice and guidance to help prepare it.***