



Adult Program Coordinator

CARAS (Community Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers)

Job Description

Post Title: Adult Program Coordinator

Your team: Adult Services (Social, Learning, Casework programs)

Supervised by: Head of Adult Inclusion

Number of supervisees: No paid staff, some volunteer supervision

Salary: £32,000

Contract: Permanent, full-time (35 hours) with occasional evening work

Location: Tooting, southwest London (hybrid working with 2-3 days in the office or on site at programs in and around Tooting)

Start date: 9th September or as soon as possible thereafter

About CARAS

CARAS is a leading refugee charity in southwest London that provides holistic early-action support to refugees and people seeking asylum, ensuring individuals have the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to build firm foundations in the UK. Founded in 2008, we have co-created our adult and youth services in partnership with CARAS community members over the last 16 years and now run a thriving weekly provision of social and educational programming delivered alongside wrap-around casework support.

Our core values are:

- **Kindness.** CARAS will nurture all who are part of our community, helping everyone to develop their skills talents and interests.
- **Justice.** CARAS will strive for social justice following a rights-based approach in all of our work and challenging instances when rights are not upheld in wider society.
- **Empowerment.** CARAS works alongside people, recognising and respecting their skills and strengths and striving together for better outcomes.
- **'With' not 'for'.** CARAS will put the voices, opinions, experiences and needs of its beneficiaries at the heart of all that we do.

CARAS strives to keep community member voices at the heart of all decision making, building opportunities for discussion and feedback at every level. We offer training and support for community members who want to gain leadership skills and contribute to the running of CARAS. Our work is award winning: we won The President's Award at the 2021 Festival of Learning, and we hold a Gold quality mark from London Youth. We have also been awarded the Investing in Volunteers quality mark.



We are an equal opportunity employer and strongly encourage applications from those with lived experience of migration, and from diverse applicants regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital/civil partnership status, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or pregnancy/maternity leave status.

About CARAS Adult Programs

Most of the adults we work with are newly-arrived in the UK and are still waiting for a decision on their asylum claim. During this time, the vast majority do not have the right to work, are eligible for less than £9/week, and are accommodated in cramped and unsuitable hotel accommodation by the Home Office. This can be an incredibly difficult time for people, and this is why CARAS' adult social program exists - to open opportunities to make meaningful connections with each other and with the local community, build confidence and skills, prepare for the future, and importantly, to feel good and have fun!

Through close collaboration with community members, our learning and casework teams as well as through strong partnerships across the sector and beyond, we have developed a thriving timetable of activities, from yoga, creative workshops, trips and employability sessions. Our adult community is diverse, lively and ever-changing. We aim to welcome and celebrate this diversity, so our programs are designed to be flexible and responsive to these wide-ranging interests, skills and perspectives that community members bring.

Additional benefits

CARAS offers 28 days' annual leave per year. Additionally, all staff are gifted additional time off bridging the Christmas and New Year period. CARAS also pays into a workplace pension with employers' contributions currently at 7%. We are a proud member of the Living Wage Foundation, ensuring that all employees at every level are remunerated fairly. We are members of the Bike2Work scheme.

All front-line staff are offered monthly clinical supervision with a qualified and experienced psychologist, allowing for exploration within a confidential space of challenges that arise, and for mitigation of vicarious harm. All staff also have the option of making use of an Employee Assistance Programme which offers 24 hour a day access to qualified counsellors who can support with any aspect of a person's life.

About the Adult Coordinator Role

We are seeking a creative, motivated and highly organised person who has ideas for how to contribute to a thriving service that is welcoming, accessible and inclusive for our diverse community.

As the Adult Program Coordinator, your primary responsibility is to plan, coordinate and encourage strong engagement in all CARAS social programs. You will be a first point of contact for new community members, building positive and trusting relationships to ensure everyone feels heard, listened to and warmly welcomed into our activities. You will also support people to connect with opportunities of their choice outside of CARAS.



Strong collaboration and partnership working are key to this role. You will regularly liaise with external partners to ensure high quality program provision, you will work closely with colleagues across casework and learning teams to ensure community members' needs and interests are met through our holistic model of support, and you will lead on the recruitment and supervision of a strong team of volunteers to support you.

The nature of the asylum system means that you will often be working with uncertainty and unexpected scenarios. The Adult Coordinator will be someone who enjoys responding creatively and effectively to last-minute changes, and can take a reflective approach to learning from these situations.

We live by our values, and person-centred working and empowerment will lie at the heart of this role. The successful candidate will embed community voices throughout their work, and will build upon the rich diversity and skill sets of our community members to help them build lives filled with value, meaning and purpose.

While this is primarily a front-line role, the Adult Program Coordinator will play a central role in shaping the strategic direction and development of the adult program going forward, working closely alongside community members and the Head of Adult Inclusion. We are constantly looking to learn and grow our service and are keen to recruit a team member who is excited about the prospect of developing how we do social programming at CARAS.

Main activities

Include, but not limited to:

- Building strong, trusting and supportive relationships with community members and managing groups in a way that creates welcoming, kind and compassionate spaces;
- Managing all communication and outreach for social programs to ensure programs are well attended and accessible for those we work with;
- Conducting intake assessments with new community members, identifying and triaging needs with the team to ensure early-intervention is possible;
- Supporting the emotional needs of individuals, building confidence and working in a person-centred way to inspire community members to identify ways to improve their own wellbeing;
- Coordinating and delivering feedback and consultation sessions, co-production workshops and other engagement activities to ensure community member voices and choice are at heart of planning, delivery and evaluation of the program;
- Liaising with partner organisations to offer a wide range of activities and services to adult community members, both through building partnership programs and by effectively signposting to diverse programs offered by partners;
- Recruiting and managing a team of high-quality volunteers, including recruitment, induction, supervision and training;
- Adhering to project budgets, managing expenses and invoicing, following financial processes accurately and promptly;
- Maintaining accurate and up to date records that enable effective monitoring and reporting of the social programs' activities;



- Identifying and reporting all safeguarding concerns to the safeguarding lead;
- Collaborating with other staff members within the adult and wider CARAS team.

Person specification

Essential criteria

1. Excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to build trust, motivate and support diverse range of people, including those experience mental health distress
2. A strong understanding of trauma-informed and person-centred approaches to working with people facing oppression
3. A demonstrated ability to create warm, welcoming and inclusive spaces with diverse communities
4. Strong project management skills, including time management, multi-tasking and prioritisation to ensure multiple projects are delivered to timescales and budgets
5. A strong understanding of participatory and creative approaches to service delivery, working *with* not for
6. A collaborative approach to working across teams, both internal and external
7. A reflective approach to professional practice, committed to learning and adapting
8. Excellent verbal and written communication skills, including the ability to make language accessible and appropriate for those new to learning English
9. Experience dealing with safeguarding concerns and solid understanding of safeguarding procedures
10. Excellent organisational skills, including time management and accurate record-keeping on database management systems
11. Commitment to CARAS' values, recognising empowerment, decision-making and agency as essential to challenge the policy-based disempowerment refugees and asylum seekers face

Desirable criteria

1. Experience coordinating or facilitating groups in community settings with refugees, migrants or other diverse groups facing significant disadvantage
2. A strong understanding of the issues facing refugee and asylum-seeker groups
3. Excellent conflict-management skills and a strong understanding of working through conflict or difficult group dynamics, particularly in contexts of power imbalances
4. Experience in building and/or maintaining effective and collaborative partnerships with colleagues and external organisations
5. Experience of supervising volunteers



6. Knowledge of one or more community languages (including but not limited to Arabic, Farsi, Amharic, Urdu and Spanish)

We are interested in people who show a strong interest in CARAS' work, can demonstrate that they share our values and hold the voices of community members at the heart of their work. Examples taken from voluntary roles or from lived experience will carry as much weight as those taken from employment history.

Application process

Please submit your completed application form by 9am 16th August 2024 to Maria Wardale, our Head of Adult Inclusion, at maria@caras.org.uk.

We only accept Word document format and we do not accept CV and covering letters.

Interviews will take place in the week commencing 19th August 2024.

Please note, we may extend the submission deadline and interview dates depending on volume and suitability of applications.