



Awareness, Boundaries and Good Practice

Advice Boundary Exercise

Below is an imaginary conversation between an unregulated volunteer at a small refugee community organisation and a client who drops in to enquire about claiming asylum. Together we will consider:

- Does it amount to advice or legal information?
- At what points do you think the volunteer may be committing a criminal offence?
- What could they do differently?

1. **Volunteer:** Hello. How can I help you today?

Client: Hello. I want to claim asylum. I just need to know how to claim – I don't know where to go or what to do.

Volunteer: Okay, I think I can give you some information on that. Give me a minute to find what you're looking for.

Client: I'm sorry – I can't read English very well; can you just tell me what I must do to claim?

[Volunteer looks through the printouts, then begins reading from the section headed 'Register your claim' until the client interrupts again]

2. **Client:** Can I be detained while I'm claiming asylum?

Volunteer: It says: 'unless you've been detained' on the next page, so it's possible. I know of a few other people who were detained, but it doesn't happen very often. If you're worried about this, you could try speaking to a solicitor.



3. **Client:** I went to a solicitor, but I only spoke to the reception person who said they couldn't see me unless I had already claimed asylum. Do you think I will be detained?

Volunteer: I'm not sure. What's your nationality? Is it just you claiming, or do you have a family?

Client: I'm from India. Yes, I'm here with my family – my wife and my son. He's going to be 3 next week.

Volunteer: I think that's a white list country. I also think it's very unlikely that you will be detained – they don't normally detain families with children.

4. **Client:** Thank you. Can you find the number I need to book an appointment and also give me a map of where I need to go? It's in Croydon – I think it's the address you read out to me.

Volunteer: Yes, of course. I'll print the contact details, a map and you can also take this other printed material.

[Volunteer wraps up, giving the client the contact details, a map and the previously printed material. Client leaves.]