

Guidelines for SWVG Visitors on the Stopping of Regular Visiting

STOPPING REGULAR VISITING – Guidelines for visitors

This is a modified version of the guidelines written in August 2012 and updated in November 2014

The guidelines aim first, to clarify what we mean by Regular Clients, Occasional Clients, and Ex-Clients, second, to outline the usual progress from one stage to the next, and third to offer some practical advice on how visitors might handle the progression.

1. Regular, Occasional, and Ex-Clients

REGULAR CLIENTS Most of these clients either have an active claim or have been refused and are hoping for a Fresh Claim. Some get State Asylum Support (previously called NASS), others are supported by our ASSIST scheme or by friends. A small number have been granted Leave to Remain but, because of particular difficulties or distress, still have need of befriending. In these cases it is important that the visitor does not attempt practical help which can be better provided by a more specialist organisation/agency.

Regular clients are visited in a neutral place, typically once a week for about an hour.

The main reasons for regular visiting are for:

- befriending
- practical help
- help to access good legal advice
- financial help

Visitors are responsible for sending regular updates to either MAG or NAM.

OCCASIONAL CLIENTS These are previous Regular Clients for whom regular visiting is no longer appropriate. Some have now got Leave to Remain and are working or receiving State benefits in Southampton. Others have been granted Asylum Support (NASS) but in another part of the country. Others have moved to be near friends or family.

Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group *Working with asylum seekers and refugees*

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Occasional contact is often maintained by e-mail, text, phone or the odd meeting.

Updates are not required for MAG or NAM.

EX-CLIENTS These are former clients who no longer receive any help from SWVG. Some remain friends with their visitors.

2. Progressing from one stage to the next

Regular visiting should always be for a temporary period, never indefinitely. Our aim is to encourage independence in clients. It is also necessary to free up visitors so that they can work with new clients.

If the visitor has personal reasons for cutting down, needs a “break”, or has difficulties with a particular client, it is important to discuss the matter with one of the Coordinators, who if necessary will arrange for an alternative visitor to take over. It is often helpful for the visitor to discuss the problem in the support group and also with the “back-up”.

Occasions when Regular Clients usually become an Occasional or Ex-Client:

- Client gets Leave to Remain: when a client is in receipt of state benefits, in education, or is employed, regular visiting will normally stop. Support and advice with housing, employment and integration is available from CLEAR and other organisations/ agencies – and is normally outside the remit of an SWVG visitor. Visitors should point clients in the direction of this more specialist help.
- Client gets Asylum Support (NASS), s/he will not normally need regular visiting - unless there are outstanding legal or other issues to be settled.
- Client is detained
- Client is removed or takes Voluntary Return
- Client moves away from the area
- Client feels competent to handle his/her own affairs
- Client has exhausted all legal options

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- There are incidents of violence, or criminal activity
- Client needs more specialist care and help than SWVG can provide
- Client presents expectations SWVG cannot meet

3. The Process of Moving on

The aim should always be to encourage the client towards greater independence. The visitor needs to be pro-active in making a client aware of the process. It is also important that the visitor maintain some degree of emotional detachment in his/her dealings with the client.

Some strategies which visitors may find useful

- Start right from your first visit by explaining that regular visiting is always temporary, that when appropriate it will be reduced and will eventually end.
 - Discuss your client's expectations as well as what SWVG can offer.
 - A reference to the moving-on process from time to time is helpful for both parties.
 - Explain that it's "not the end of a friendship"; also that you need to become available to work with new clients.
 - Discuss with the client: "Do we need to meet next week?", "Can you manage to sort this out yourself?"
 - Encourage client input: "What would you like to discuss next time, what do you find helpful?"
 - Promise to ring/text/email the following week, instead of visiting. Or simply say, "I cannot come next week".
 - Suggest, "If there's a problem you want to discuss do telephone me."
 - Discuss the subject in your support group.
1. If ASSIST support is being discontinued a member of the MAG group will join you and your client to explain the reasons and discuss the new situation.
 2. CK April 2017

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