Having good processes in place for recruiting volunteers will help volunteers and migrants stay safe.

There are five key things we recommend you establish with potential volunteers at the point of recruitment:

1. **Do they have specific skills and experience?**
   eg First Aid, counselling skills, language skills, driving a van, teaching or training skills. If they don’t have specific skills, ask them if they are willing to help out generally and be an all-rounder.

2. **What are their motivations?**
   Sound them out about why they want to volunteer. Establishing people’s motivations will reveal what they expect from volunteering and whether they have an accurate picture of what they will be facing. This will also help to identify a role they will enjoy and will find fulfilling.

3. **How is their physical and emotional health, endurance, adaptability?**
   Some volunteer roles in camps may require tasks that are quite physical, eg sorting and organising donations or supplies for distribution. They may need to stand or sit on the ground for long periods. They may need to be strong swimmers if they will be retrieving people from dinghies. Consider what may be the most suitable role for their abilities. Volunteering in camps requires emotional resilience and endurance, and the ability to adapt to harsh environments among people who have or are suffering trauma. Bear this in mind when determining whether a volunteer could adapt to these circumstances and ask them how they think they would cope. Let them know what support will be available.
4. What is their availability?
Ask when they can start and when they will need to stop volunteering. The time commitment they can give will determine the most suitable role and training period for them.

5. Are they able to financially support themselves while volunteering?
You may only be able to provide limited support with the costs of volunteering, so what support is available needs to be clear to volunteers from the outset. Volunteers will need to plan for the financial costs they may incur, such as taking out the right type of travel insurance for the duration of their stay in the country/countries they are visiting.

How can you safeguard your organisation?
Migrant camps are often unregulated, volatile environments, with vulnerable people and children, whereas some are managed by the military and are harder to gain access to.

You should be aware that people with criminal convictions may approach your organisation or volunteers and offer themselves as volunteers. Your organisation must have appropriate safeguarding measures in place to safeguard volunteers, staff and the beneficiaries they are working with. A criminal record check by the Disclosure and Barring Service, if appropriate, is only part of a wider approach to safeguarding.

Staff and volunteers should be made aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding, particularly in relation to behaviours which may be acceptable in some cultures but not others.

For more detailed guidance on safeguarding, refer to NCVO’s Safeguarding Guidance and the Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action.

What information should you give volunteers before they leave the UK?
It’s a good idea to explain the realities of volunteering in migrant camps before volunteers arrive. Put your new volunteers in contact with previous or current volunteers so they can talk them through what to expect. Camps can be crowded, makeshift and poorly lit places; magnets for traffickers and smugglers. Use the How to help refugees and migrants avoid harm from organised immigration crime factsheet to brief your volunteers.

People may be knee-high in mud and lack running water and sanitation. Insist that volunteers bring sensible footwear, appropriate clothing to cover shoulders and legs, and sunscreen. Ensure that volunteers have a named contact and someone to talk to regularly when they arrive – whether this is another volunteer, a team leader or a long-term more experienced volunteer. Make sure your volunteers bring emergency next of kin details with them in the event of injury, illness or fatality.

Request that volunteers tell their family or friends in the UK where they are going, for how long and the name and contact details of the organisation they will be volunteering with.

Encourage volunteers to register for a free online training course via the disasterready.org website to help them prepare.

Point volunteers towards the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website for up to date travel advice.

Ensure you provide volunteers with up-to-date security briefings.

Alternatives to volunteering in a migrant camp
If after initial recruitment you decide that someone is unsuitable for volunteering with your organisation, or not well suited to volunteering on the ground, signpost them to other ways they can help. For example, donating items that organisations say they need on their websites or making a financial donation to a charity or community group.

NCVO can offer information on how to find other volunteering opportunities with refugee and migrant focused organisations operating in England.