



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

YOUR GUIDE TO VOLUNTEERING WITH US

Our handbook should give you the information you need to get started with volunteering and should be read very carefully before beginning to volunteer. If there's anything you're not sure about now, or as you get more used to volunteering with us, just ask your supervisor or mentor:

This handbook belongs to:	
Your Supervisor:	
Your Mentor:	
Your role:	

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Welcome, it's great to have you as part of our team!

Volunteering is a choice made freely by people to spend time doing something that aims to benefit individuals, groups and communities. Organisations try hard to make sure that volunteers come from all types of backgrounds and life experiences, because we think that's the right thing to do and because it makes us better at supporting individuals and communities across Leeds.

The time, expertise, knowledge and skills that you give, will help to make it easier for people to change Leeds for the better. We also know that it will help you to gain experience, learn new skills, meet new friends or develop new interests.

Of course we want you to have a positive experience volunteering so we'll make sure that we:

- Make you feel welcome
- Offer different kinds of opportunities and think carefully about what we ask you to do
- Give you the support and training you need to perform your role
- Talk to you about what you're trying to achieve and help you to reach those goals
- Cover all your reasonable expenses
- Get feedback from you
- Provide you with a reference

Rebecca's Journey

"Before I started volunteering I had just completed my degree in Psychology and Criminology, and it was a daunting feeling going out into the real world, with no job experience relating to the degree I had worked so hard for. It seemed like my career goals were hanging far out of reach because of my lack of experience, but after becoming involved in volunteering, I really feel like my working life is slowly falling into place.

Volunteering has really broadened my horizons, and provided me the opportunity to work with inspiring and motivated people, who encourage me to step out of my comfort zone and treat me as a valued member of their team. What's more as a result of my volunteer placement, I have been offered a part-time paid role as an Assistant Researcher for the organisation."

"After volunteering, I really feel like my working life is slowly falling into place."

There are lots of different volunteer roles; all of them are advertised with a role description that explains what we're asking people to do, what skills and experience you need, and the time commitment.

You might be:

- A volunteer administrator helping out in the office
- A volunteer advisor helping other people to find volunteer roles
- A City Ambassador helping the public at events
- A Health Ambassador finding out from the public what they think about the health service
- You might even be one of our Trustees setting the strategic direction for the organisation.

THE RIGHT VOLUNTEER

The right volunteer, in the right role, with the right support.

In most cases volunteers will have a brief informal interview in person or on the phone before they start. This enables us to get to know what you're good at, what you're interested in and the skills you might want to improve.

In some volunteer roles, we might not automatically hold interviews. Even if this is the case, a member of staff will have read your application so that they understand more about 'who you are' and if they feel they need extra information they might ask you in for a relaxed and informal interview. When you attend induction we'll both have a chance to decide whether we're a 'good fit' before a final decision is made.

You should take the opportunity during your interview or at your induction to let us know about any things that might affect your volunteering (e.g. health conditions). We will use the information you share to make any reasonable adjustments we need to ensure that you have a successful volunteering experience. We will keep this information confidential.

What happens when I start volunteering?

When you start volunteering you will attend an induction. This induction will include all the information you need to get started. It will introduce you to our organisation, to any specific tasks you need to do for your role, and to all the things you need to know to keep you and the public safe.

At your induction you'll also be introduced to your supervisor and, where relevant, your mentor, if you haven't already met them.

There's a list of things you need to know about us and your role at the back of this handbook and as you settle in we ask you to tick them off.

Do I get other training?

All volunteers here will complete training on how to keep information confidential.

We will always talk to you about your role and the skills you need to do it and work with you to find the right training and support so that you can improve. Your induction will include basic information about equality and diversity, health and safety and safeguarding.

We offer more extensive training in these areas and other opportunities, where they are relevant to your role (such as 'professional boundaries' or 'involving people') and we would like you to attend this training.



What does my supervisor do?

Your supervisor is a member of the staff team. They make sure that you have the right amount of tasks to do, and that you have the support to do the tasks well.

They might help you learn new skills or suggest training if there are things related to your tasks that you find difficult.

If there's anything good or bad you want to feedback, or if there's something you don't understand, you should always let your supervisor know.

In many volunteer roles you will be working alongside your supervisor and they will always be happy to offer help and advice. You will have regular supervision meetings, where you can discuss how things are going.

In some roles you will receive a briefing from your supervisor at the beginning of a task or group of tasks (this will normally be in person, but might sometimes be by email or phone) and you will be invited to give feedback when you've finished.

In some cases, if the task you're performing is done at a partner organisation, your supervisor might ask that organisation for feedback on how you're doing.

In these roles, you will have a phone number for your supervisor so you can organise a phone or 1:1 meeting if you want one. If your supervisor asks for a meeting to catch up, we ask that you agree to this.

What does my mentor do?

Wherever we can, we try to match you up with someone who has already volunteered in the same role for a while. Your mentor is someone who'll listen to you and offer advice about times they've had similar experiences and the way they dealt with them.

Do I have a probationary (trial) period?

It will take a while for us to get to know each other. It might be that when we're in the settling in period we decide that we don't have the right role for you, in which case we might agree that you'll stop volunteering straight away. However, we'll do everything we can to support you to volunteer with us, and in most cases we'll just extend your trial period for an agreed time.

When can I ask for a reference?

Once you've successfully completed your trial period with us, we'll be happy to give you a reference.

Indi's Story

I wanted to volunteer to give me a career change. I used to work in child care and then I was my Mum's carer. When mum went into a home I thought I'd like to try office work because I like working with computers and I wanted to get out of the house.

“I went to the Volunteer Centre and I was given a list of opportunities. I emailed June, the office manager, who then interviewed me – it was a friendly and informal chat making sure I understood the role and I was up for it.”

I volunteer once a week and I wish there were more days; it's really friendly and I like how busy it is.

TEAM MEETINGS

In most volunteer roles you will be invited to a **volunteer team meeting at least once every 6 months**. You should do everything you can to attend these meetings because this is where we will give you important information about things that are happening and discuss ways that we can all be more effective.

If you're in a role where you don't work alongside your supervisor, then when you come for team meetings there'll be a chance to share feedback and make sure things are going well.

If things aren't going as well as they could do.

Sometimes things don't go as well as they could do. Most of the time that happens because of misunderstandings or because people need more support in their role. When this is the case, we will organise 1:1 meetings to make sure that the issues can be resolved.

There are clear rules of conduct for volunteers, for example if you have been caught volunteering under the influence of drugs or alcohol – we may ask you to stop volunteering immediately. You can ask for our policy that explains what we'll do.

If you're unhappy with your supervisor, another volunteer or a member of staff you should try to resolve the issue with them first (you might want to ask your mentor for advice).

If this doesn't work then you should contact your project Manager you volunteer with, who will talk to you about what can be done (you'll find their details in the important contacts part of the handbook).



If you can't get things resolved you can always make a formal complaint (you can ask for our policy which explains what we'll do) by contacting our Volunteer Manager or Human Resources department.

Policy - the things you have to know when you work with us.

The next part of the handbook gives you key information you need for your role. The information in the handbook tells you the absolute minimum you need – we also have more detailed policies which you must follow. Your supervisor will explain what you need to do and will tell you where these policies are and will provide you with a copy if you ask for one.

“If you do not understand anything please ask your supervisor to explain it.”

SAFEGUARDING - THE BASICS

Safeguarding is about protecting people, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse or neglect.

Everybody has the right to be safe no matter who they are or what their circumstances and we are all responsible for the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults. We must ensure that we are doing all we can to protect the most vulnerable members of our society.

What is a vulnerable or “at risk” person?

The law about safeguarding applies to:

- Children and young people under the age of 18 years
- An adult of 18 years or more who is in need of support because of their age, disability, mental health needs, drug or alcohol misuse, or other illness; and / or who is, or may be, unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm.

What is abuse?

Abuse can take many forms, and may be:

- A single or a repeated act
- A failure to act
- Intentional, or due to a lack of understanding
- And it may be a crime

There are different types of abuse, such as:

- Physical abuse such as being hit, slapped or kicked; and which may include being locked in a room or being inappropriately restrained

- Sexual abuse, involving making someone take part in a sexual activity when they have not, or are unable to, give their consent
- Emotional or psychological abuse which may include being shouted at, ridiculed or bullied, as well as being made to feel frightened or pressured into decisions
- Financial and material abuse which is misusing, withholding or stealing someone’s money or belongings
- Neglect which is failing to provide care that results in or could result in someone being harmed. This may include being left with no food, or not receiving help with health or care needs
- Discriminatory abuse which is ill treatment or harassment based on age, gender, sexuality, disability, race or religious belief
- Domestic abuse is when any of the activities above happen as part of a relationship
- Organisational abuse is when any of the activities above happen in an institution (e.g. a care home), company or organisation
- Modern slavery includes slavery, human trafficking and forced labour and domestic servitude (being forced to work for someone)
- Self – neglect means failing to look after oneself so badly that it causes serious problems

What are my duties as a volunteer?

Volunteers have two main duties around safeguarding:

- Be aware that abuse happens and look out for the signs
- Report any concerns you may have

There are some places where safeguarding concerns might come up more than others (for instance if you have a trusting relationship with a child, they might disclose abuse to you). Even if you volunteer with people or in places where safeguarding concerns are not likely you should still be aware. For example, public places such as parks are places where children can be found on their own or in small groups; vulnerable people live and work within our communities.

Abuse can happen anywhere and anyone can be an abuser. You need to be aware but you don't need to "see" abuse everywhere. Abuse is still an uncommon act, and we would encourage you not to enter new situations with a positive attitude.

At the same time when you volunteer for us, you represent our policies and standards just as much as any member of our staff. So you must report anything you may observe which causes you concern.

Making a report simply enables us to check out the circumstances.

If you see anything which causes you concern, then you should report it immediately to your supervisor.

Whatever the circumstances you have a responsibility to act if you have any concerns about abuse - doing nothing is not an option.

If you cannot contact your supervisor, if you think a crime has been committed or if someone is in immediate danger, then you should contact the police.

What should I do if someone discloses abuse?

Always ensure you:

- Take any concerns which are raised with you, or concerns that you may have about what you see or hear, seriously.
- If someone tells you something that causes you concern, listen carefully.
- Do not ask questions other than to clarify what is being said to you.
- Don't lead someone – use open-ended questions. (Open-ended questions start with words like how, what or where and don't result in yes or no answers).
- Do not make a promise to keep something secret.
- Always tell your supervisor as soon as you can.
- Do not investigate any concerns yourself.

- If there is an immediate risk to the person, tell someone as soon as possible and consider if there is anything you can reasonably do to keep the person safe.
- You may need to call the police, or an ambulance, to keep someone safe.

Will I need a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check?

If it has been decided that your role requires a DBS check we will explain to you why and will work with you to undertake the check.

Can I make friends with people that use our services?

Even where someone else may seek to establish social contact (for example through Facebook), as a volunteer you should be aware that this kind of contact could cause problems, especially where the contact involves vulnerable people.

Volunteers should not give out any personal details including phone numbers or email addresses. If in doubt, please discuss social contact outside your formal volunteering time with your supervisor, before sharing personal information and or contact details with people that you volunteer with or meet through your volunteering.

It is also very important that, if you have not had a DBS check for your role, you never work alone with a young person or vulnerable adult. Basically, when you are volunteering in a 'non-DBS' role you should always stay in a public space where you can be observed by other people. Complaints about inappropriate behaviour are very, very rare but by following this simple rule you can protect yourself.

“Everybody has the right to be safe no matter who they are.”

CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

While you're volunteering you may come into contact with and use confidential information. That information might be about people, such as names and addresses or even information about people's circumstances, families, health and other private matters. We have to make sure individuals and other organisations can trust us, so it's vital everyone understands what information they can and cannot share.

What we'll do to help you:

- During your induction we'll explain to you what information you can and cannot access
- Give guidance on what you can and cannot share

What you need to do to help us:

- If you collect any personal data from someone you should explain what you're collecting, why you're collecting it and what you'll do with it (we'll explain in your induction what you need to say in your role)
- You must not pass on any of our company information or any information we have regarding others to anyone outside of the organisation
- You must ensure that you lock away any personal data relating to an individual when you leave the office or your workstation
- If you are accessing information on our databases, you must not use this for any unlawful reason and you must not copy our information on paper or otherwise

- If you are photocopying information please ensure you take it all with you and do not leave items on the copier or in the photocopier room
- You must not send personal data by email or copy personal data to any type of removable media, for example, disk or USB stick

No one should make assumptions about sharing confidential information with other employees, volunteers or organisations. If you are not sure about what information you're allowed to share then please talk to your supervisor. If they are not available, then please take down the query and any details and your supervisor will deal with the matter.

“If you collect any personal data, you should explain what you're collecting, why you're collecting it and what you'll do with it.”



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

We are an organisation that welcomes everyone (Equality and Diversity).

Society is made up of people with diverse identities, different backgrounds, needs and perceptions. It includes people of all genders, people of different races and from different ethnic backgrounds, disabled people, lesbian, gay and bisexual people, trans people, people of different religions, faiths and philosophies including those who do not adhere to a faith, people of all ages, people from different economic backgrounds, and those with caring responsibilities.

Equality, diversity and inclusion apply to us all, both in terms of our obligations and our individual needs. For many people their sense of who they are is influenced by belonging to one or more diversity identities described above. People who share a diversity identity are not the same. Even where we belong to the same diversity identity as another we are still individuals shaped by different life experiences. For example, each disability, impairment, mental or physical health condition is different, and even the way the same condition is experienced by two individuals is different.

How should I behave?

- You should treat people as you would expect to be treated; never behave towards someone in a way that is hostile, offensive or humiliating
- You should treat people as individuals; respecting their identity even when it is different to your own and being aware that what a person finds acceptable another may find offensive

- You should not make offensive or insulting remarks, or engage in 'jokes' or 'banter' about people based on their age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion, trans status, or political beliefs. Where you become aware of behaviour like this you should challenge it by calmly explaining that this behaviour is unwelcome. You should not avoid someone simply because they are different to you. Equally, be respectful of people's choices and don't press them to share personal details about their life
- If you're worried that you may have said or done something that made them feel uncomfortable, it's OK to ask them in a respectful manner if something you did or said upset them
- If you are challenged about your behaviour or language you should accept feedback in a positive way
- If you feel that the language or behaviour of others is offensive and / or it is upsetting you, then please seek advice or support from your mentor or supervisor to help you decide how you want to deal with the issue
- Once you've talked things over you might decide that the best way forward is to speak to the person in a quiet place. If you decide to do this, we would support you to stay calm and decide on some steps that will help you explain what is upsetting you and how you want things to change
- If you don't feel things are being resolved there is a formal complaint policy that you can follow. You can see this policy at any time and you should talk to your supervisor about making a complaint (unless your supervisor is the person upsetting you, then you should speak to your Volunteer Manager or the Human Resources department)

“You should treat people as individuals; respecting their identity even when it is different to your own.”

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Staying Safe

As an organisation we have a legal duty to keep volunteers and staff members safe. The places that you volunteer in have all been risk assessed by your supervisor, or by another member of staff. If there are any particular hazards that you need to be aware of, you will be informed at the induction to your normal work environment.

In roles where you visit different places you will be briefed on any hazards and how to avoid them. If you become aware of a hazard (e.g. a wet floor) you should let your supervisor, or another member of staff know, so that they can take action to keep everyone safe.

If you have an accident of any kind you should let your supervisor know so that the details can be recorded in our accident book. This will help to ensure you are given the support you need, and that we prevent any hazards in the future.

It is important that you do not undertake activities that might put you at risk, such as working at height (e.g. standing on a chair to reach something from a shelf).

EXPENSES

As an organisation we believe that no-one should ever be out of pocket because they've volunteered with us and we will make sure that we pay you all reasonable expenses. Our expenses policy will be discussed in your induction. If you have any questions around expenses, your volunteer supervisor will be able to answer these for you.

You should never have to claim for the things that help you to do your role (e.g. stationery) as we will organise and provide these things.

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

We want volunteering to be a great experience for everyone involved in our organisation. This agreement outlines what you can expect from us, and what we'd like you to do to help things run smoothly and mean that your time and effort freely given is put to the best use. You should read this agreement and our Volunteering Handbook carefully before beginning to volunteer. If you have any questions, you should ask your volunteer supervisor.

There are lots of ways to volunteer. This means that the details of how we support you (e.g. meeting your supervisor) and what we want you to do might be different for different projects, but we will always seek to meet these principles.

We will:

- Introduce you to our organisation, to how the project you are volunteering for works and your role within it
- Treat you fairly, with respect and dignity
- Discuss your goals for volunteering and do our best to meet them
- Review your skills with you and provide any training you need appropriate to your role
- Let you know about other training opportunities relevant to your role that are available through us and our project partners
- Keep you informed of volunteering opportunities using email (where you are volunteering for a project from time to time)
- Provide a safe working environment
- Ensure you have a named supervisor who is available to offer support to perform your role

- Ensure you have opportunities to let us know how things are going
- Wherever possible we will assign you a mentor who will be an experienced volunteer or a staff mentor while you learn your role
- Reimburse reasonable travel costs and other reasonable out of pocket expenses with the agreement of your supervisor (e.g. meals if you are volunteering 'on site' for a long time during a day)
- Insure you against any injury you may suffer or cause due to negligence
- Give you access to grievance resolution guidelines if there is a problem
- Provide you with a reference when you want to move on

As a volunteer we want you to:

- Enjoy volunteering with us!
- Let us know when you want, and are able to, volunteer
- Keep to any commitments you've made and notify your supervisor if you are unable to attend
- Attend training and briefing sessions that are needed for you to perform your role
- Keep in touch with us, read things that we send to you and ask for advice if you are not sure of anything
- Carry out your role safely, making sure you work to our Health & Safety Policy and any instructions from your supervisor
- Treat people as you'd wish to be treated and work to our Equality and Diversity Policy
- Keep any personal information you receive safe and work to our Code of Confidentiality
- Not volunteer while under the influence of alcohol, drugs or other controlled substances

- Raise any concerns or problems you may have with your supervisor
- Give feedback to your supervisor to help us improve the project and our work
- Let us know as soon as possible if you want to stop volunteering

This agreement is not intended to be a legally binding contract between us and may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. Neither party intends an employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future.

I confirm that I have read this volunteer handbook, any specific guidance for the role I'm volunteering for and this Agreement. I also confirm that I have completed an induction for my role with my supervisor (or another member of staff).

Name of Volunteer (please print):

Telephone:

Email:

Volunteer signature:

Date:

Volunteer Supervisor signature:

Date:

My thoughts and learning from volunteering.

You can use the boxes below to keep a record of the things that you've done as volunteer.

You might want to write down some key points from training you attended or give yourself a reminder of how to do things in your role.

You could take the opportunity to 'reflect' on things that happen when you're completing a task. By writing down what you liked, what you didn't like, what you could have done differently and what you learned from your experience you'll gain more from the experience.

You don't have to write things down but you might find it helpful if, for instance, you want to remind yourself of your experience when you're applying for a job.

Date:

Date:

Date:



YOUR GUIDE TO VOLUNTEERING IN LEEDS

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