



Volunteer policy

Volunteers at Share are one of the key reasons for the success of the organisation. At Share, we value our volunteers and try to offer them the support, training and rewards they deserve. Being a volunteer with us gives you the chance to make a difference and become part of our community.

Our volunteer policy has been created to show our volunteers and potential volunteers that we have spent time and care in planning how volunteers will be welcomed at Share. This policy will be shared with all new volunteers at the application stage. All staff should be aware of this volunteer policy and follow it at all times.

Our vision for volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to share your enthusiasm, skills and ideas whilst having fun and meeting new people. We are passionate about open and equal access for everyone and we focus on ability. By volunteering with Share you will be making a positive contribution to helping disabled people achieve their potential and life goals. We aim to have volunteers that are engaged, committed and passionate about our work. We want everyone to enjoy their voluntary role and feel comfortable to be themselves.

Applying to volunteer

We have a range of opportunities for volunteers. We advertise our roles on our website under the *get involved* section, and on a range of other volunteer jobs sites, such as do-it.org and across university and community platforms. If you have found a role that you are interested in, you will need to complete our volunteer application form. The application form can be found online, or we can email or post it to you. Once we receive a copy of your application form, the volunteer team will get in touch with you within a week.

Informal interview

Upon reading your application, if we think you sound like a good match for us, we'll invite you to an informal volunteer interview over zoom. At this point, we'll be able to find out more about you, your goals, your interests and your availability. If your application form is not shortlisted, we'll let you know why.

If we feel you are suitable for volunteering at Share, we'll invite you back to have a taster day with us. If we don't feel that you are suitable for volunteering at Share, we'll provide you with some feedback as to why.

Taster day

We'll arrange a time for you to Share and spend a full day or half day with us. You'll be able to meet our students, staff and our other volunteers. You will be fully supervised on this day by a member of the team. It'll give you a chance to try out what it would be like, before fully committing to volunteering. We'll also get to see whether we think this voluntary role is for you. We will be in touch afterwards to get some feedback from you, and to give you some feedback from us.

Volunteer training

Before you start volunteering with us, you'll be invited to attend our full day volunteer training. This takes place every two months, either on a Saturday or across two evenings. The volunteer team will be able to give you our upcoming training dates. You'll need to attend this training before you start volunteering with us and it will give you the knowledge and skills to start your volunteer role with confidence.

Background checks

To be able to volunteer with us we need to complete background checks. All employees, volunteers and trustees are required to undergo an Enhanced DBS Check every 3 years due to the nature of Share's work with vulnerable adults and children. Share will arrange and pay for DBS checks.

In order for us to protect the interests of our service users, we also need to ask you to provide two professional referees who are not directly related to you and who have known you for at least two years.

Once the background checks have been completed and signed off by our Chief Executive, we will be back in touch to invite you down to start your voluntary role. We aim to have the background checks completed within three weeks, however this is very much dependent on how quickly referees get back to us and your DBS is processed. You won't be able to start volunteering at Share until these background checks have been completed.

Your first day

- If you are befriending, a staff member will join you for your first meet up to support you and your befriender.
- If you are a social buddy, either a staff member or experienced volunteer will join you on your first trip to support you.
- If you are supporting on one of our training projects, we will try to buddy you up with another volunteer, or maybe a student. This person can help you through your first day and will be able to help if you get stuck. We'll also give you a tour of the building and let you know about health and safety (like fire exits).

All staff at Share will be happy to help if approached, so do speak to someone if you feel a bit lost or unsure.

Support and training

Our Volunteer and Community Services Manager and Volunteer Coordinator will be the main providers of support to Share volunteers. However depending on your volunteer role there will almost always be another contact of support provided. They will remain your key contact throughout your volunteering with us. We will ensure regular informal catch ups with you as and when is convenient, to discuss how you are getting on. This will help us to ensure that we are doing all we can to make your volunteering experience an enjoyable and meaningful one.

We'll offer you training opportunities when we can, and aim to organize additional training in Makaton, basic mental health first aid, advanced safeguarding, and behavior that challenges throughout the year. If there is any specific training you would like to receive, please let our Volunteer and Community Services Manager know.

Recognition and reward

We could not do the work we do without our volunteers. To acknowledge this we will always say thank you and show appreciation for a job well done. At Share, to show our thanks we invite all our volunteers to our yearly 'thank you' volunteer party which is normally held during volunteers week in the summer. You'll also receive invitations to our yearly garden party, awards day and to our staff and volunteers' Christmas dinner.

We will invite you to volunteer meetings so you can meet other volunteers and share your experience. We can also provide a reference for your time with us, if requested.

Every year we ask our volunteers to give us feedback via our anonymous volunteer survey. This survey gives you a chance to have your say about Share and make suggestions. We respond with a 'You said, We did' to show you how we have listened to your feedback and what changes we have implemented as a result.

Expenses

We will reimburse travel expenses to and from Share (within zone 1-6), if you can provide a receipt to show us how much it has cost you.

If you volunteer for a full day, we can also contribute £5 towards lunch outside of Share. If you volunteer at Share HQ, you are welcome to have a free meal which is served in our canteen at lunch time – there is always a menu on the wall so you can see what's on offer.

In order to claim expenses, an Expenses Form must be completed with Share's Volunteer and Community Services Manager or Head of Finance, and a valid receipt provided.

Insurance, health and safety, accidents and risk assessment

Share has a valid insurance policy so that volunteers are covered by public liability insurance. We have clear policies around health and safety and risk assessing, which will be shared with you at induction. We also have clear procedures for accidents and emergencies, and will always have a first aider on our sites.

Resolving problems

If your role as a volunteer does not meet with your expectations, we want you to feel comfortable about letting us know. You can follow the 'Volunteer problem solving' procedure in your volunteer handbook.

Commitment

If you are unable to volunteer on a day that we normally expect to see you, we ask that you let us know as soon as you can, ideally the day before. You can contact the volunteer team or the main reception. This helps us to plan our days and ensure that our students still receive the best possible service.

For most of our roles, we ask for a minimum of 3 months commitment. For befriending, we ask for a minimum of 6 months commitment. We can be flexible around days and times to suit your needs so please don't hesitate to speak to us about this.

Corporate volunteering

If you are corporate volunteer with us, you'll be welcomed into Share on the day, shown around and introduced to as many people as possible. Volunteers should be fully supervised during their time with us (they won't have been background checked), and can have a free lunch from our canteen. Corporate volunteers give their feedback to their place of work after their experience, which is fed back to Share.