



## **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 *current opportunities* section, and on a range of other volunteer jobs sites, such as do-it.org. 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, HR will get in touch with you.

### **Informal interview**

Upon reading your application, if we think you sound like a good match for us, we'll invite you down to the organisation for an informal interview, where 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, sometimes we may do that on the same day as the interview. 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 come back to spend a full day or half day with us, doing what you would be doing if you became a volunteer. 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. As you won't have been background checked, we ask that you do not put yourself in a position where you are alone with one of our students.

### **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**

We aim to do an induction with you on your first day or as soon as possible after you've started. Your induction will last approximately 30 minutes and will include:

- Volunteer handbook, which includes all relevant policies you need to know
- Share values
- What you can expect from us and what we ask for from you
- Typical activities at Share and how you'll be involved
- Volunteer benefits – including free lunch and travel reimbursement
- Our organisational chart, who's who of staff
- Tour and introduction to staff, volunteers and students
- Introduction to Autism and disability awareness
- Safeguarding

### **Support and training**

Our People and Projects Manager (Leanne Wood) and PA and HR Administrator (Aamir Khan) will be the main providers of support to Share volunteers. However depending on your volunteer role there will be 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 up 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 two volunteer training events per year. If there is any specific training you would like to receive, please let us 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 always do a little something during volunteers week to say thank you. 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 any Away Days that we have planned, and you'll be invited to attend any 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. We have a full policy which details how to claim back your expenses.

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. If you volunteer for a full day (i.e. at least 4 hours), we can also contribute £5 towards lunch outside of Share.

## **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 site.

## **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, if you need to.

## **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. This helps us to plan our days and ensure that our students still receive the best possible service.

## **Corporate volunteering**

We work with Benefacto, a social enterprise, who arranges for employees from businesses across London to sign up to a day of volunteering with us. People can sign up in advance, or a couple of days before, and will be sent an information pack by Benefacto. They'll be welcomed into Share on the day, shown around and introduced to as many people as possible. Volunteers will 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 Benefacto after their experience, which is feedback to Share.