



York Carers Centre

Volunteer Handbook

Company Number: 06760783

York Carers Centre is committed to meeting the needs of all Carers in York and improving their quality of life, helping them fulfill their full potential, living their own life alongside their caring role.

York Carers Centre Volunteer Handbook

Introduction

York Carers Centre values the contribution that volunteers make and appreciates what a difference volunteers can make to our service. This handbook is a general guide which we hope will help you understand the work of the Carers Centre and answer any queries you may have. We have tried to keep this simple, so if you cannot find what you are looking for please contact your supervisor and they will be happy to help you.

What is York Carers Centre?

We are an independent charity and company limited by guarantee. We are a member of the Princess Royal Trust for Carers (an umbrella organisation for Carers Centres). We have a Board of Trustees who are responsible for overseeing all aspects of the charity.

We support unpaid carers and have a number of services for carers:

- Young Carers – one to one support, groups and activities for carers aged 8 to 18.
- Young adult carers - low level one to one support, advice, information and groups for carers aged 18 to 25.
- Carers Emergency card – for carers to register a plan in the event of an unplanned emergency.
- Specialist welfare benefits advice for carers of all ages.
- Specialist employment, education and training advice for carers aged 16 onwards.
- Information, advice and emotional support for carers.

Our Vision

The vision of the charity is to be the lead agency for unpaid carers and provide support for both carers and professionals in the city of York. In response to needs identified through the recent review of carers services in York, and through the evaluation of the needs of service users, the centre will develop new and existing services. The centre will be accessible for carers of all ages across the city, with a drop-in facility, telephone helpline, and flexible opening hours to suit carer needs. The centre will continue to obtain funding to pilot new services in order to ensure the sustainable future of the carers centre.

Funding

Our services have been commissioned by City of York Council and NYYPCT.NHS who jointly provide our core funding for the service. We also seek additional funding from other sources and have funding for the young carers service from the Early Intervention Fund for a schools project, Children in Need – activities for young carers and the Innovation Fund via Princess Royal Trust for Carers for a Family Support Worker project. The centre will continue to maximise its funding in order to extend its remit.

Our Team

The centre has 10 permanent employees, 1 employee on a temporary contract (Future Jobs

Fund) and a bank of sessional workers to help with activities for young carers. A further one year post has been created for the Family Worker post and is being recruited into in April 2010.

Volunteering at the Carers Centre

A volunteer is someone who, without financial reward, performs a task at the request of, and on behalf of York Carers Centre. The benefits of volunteering include:

- feeling valued
- having a sense of purpose
- meeting people
- making new and lasting friends
- sharing experiences with others
- using talents and experience to help others
- learning new skills with training provided
- trying something different
- being part of a team
- making a real difference by helping others
- having a sense of personal achievement
- having the satisfaction of seeing results

We have a range of volunteering opportunities which can be office based or on location, helping with activities or events. We can offer relevant training and support to individuals who wish to volunteer. We can also pay out of pocket expenses. It is important that there is a clear distinction between volunteering and paid employment, therefore the arrangements for volunteers do differ to paid employees.

Suitability for the role

The acceptance of volunteer assistance is made on merit, the sole selection criteria being the individuals' suitability to do the specified task, subject to the restrictions of the task and location.

Role descriptions are produced for all volunteering opportunities. We must ensure that volunteers are suitable for the available role, interviews will take place, and 2 references are always taken up. As the people we support are either children, young people or vulnerable adults, we will almost always require an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check – the cost of this will be covered by the Carers Centre.

Our clients are vulnerable children, young people and adults. The welfare of our clients is extremely important and all volunteers will need to be able to show at an initial interview that they have the qualities needed to support and respect carers who we provide services to.

Your commitment

We will agree the time commitment with volunteers on an individual basis. We usually require a commitment of regular support for a minimum of 6 months. We ask this in order to make taking on volunteers worthwhile for both parties. Exceptions are usually only made in

the case of volunteers having specialist skills needed by the charity on an ad hoc basis.

Our commitment

York Carers Centre understands that although volunteers do not seek monetary reward, they do appreciate recognition. All paid employees and Trustees will value and support your contribution. We will provide regular feedback on how you are doing and ensure that volunteer contributions are commended and publicised. We will use our supervisions and volunteer meetings to help with your learning and personal development.

Induction

All volunteers will receive an induction and be provided with copies of the relevant policies and procedures.

Training

Training needs will be identified and any internal training will be provided by the relevant worker. External training can be sourced subject to funding and relevance to the volunteering role. Any training needs should be discussed with the allocated supervisor.

Supervision

All volunteers will be allocated to a worker who will be responsible for their supervision, allocating tasks and identifying and sourcing any essential training. Performance will be reviewed at supervision and this will be the opportunity for the volunteer or the supervisor to raise any issues or concerns.

Expenses

Volunteers are central to the work of York Carers Centre and we recognise that Volunteers are entitled to out of pocket expenses.

What we pay

- Travel to and from the place of volunteering either:
 - re-imbusement of bus fares on production of a valid receipt
 - appropriate car mileage at a rate of 40p per mile.
- Any expenses incurred in attendance at training events, conferences and courses that we ask you to attend.
- Any other reasonable out of pocket expenses at the discretion of the Manager.

Expenses will be paid on a monthly basis by cheque on production of valid receipt and mileage claims itemised on an official expense claim form.

Because all expenses claimed are out of pocket expenses only they are not taxable.

Transporting people

If your role involves transporting people in your own vehicle we will request a copy of your MOT, Insurance documents, and valid UK Driving Licence on an annual basis.

Use of equipment

All Carers Centre property should be used with care. Any equipment found to be faulty or being damaged in the course of volunteering should be reported to the supervisor. Carers Centre equipment such as computers, telephones etc should only be used for Carers Centre business. Telephones should not be used to make personal calls, however occasional calls can be made with permission of an authorised member of staff.

Any equipment or property that belongs to the Carers Centre should be returned in good condition at the end of the placement,.

Other Practicalities

Dress code: All volunteers are asked to dress appropriately for the tasks they undertake especially bearing in mind any circumstances where they will be meeting the public and need to uphold the professional image of the organisation, or any hazardous activities.

Kitchen: Volunteers should feel free to use the office kitchen. Tea and coffee are provided. Please leave our working environment in a tidy state and wash up any used mugs or plates.

Office tidiness: As we hot desk, it is important that you put away all paperwork at the end of the day so that you can find it on your return and others can use the same workspace

Time keeping: many of our volunteering opportunities involve working directly with vulnerable adults and children. Carers of all ages have difficulties freeing up time for events, activities and appointments therefore it is important that we are punctual. If you cannot attend an agreed session please notify your supervisor in advance so that they can make alternative arrangements. If you are likely to be late for your session please telephone the Carers Centre staff line 01904 715498 and a member of staff will pass a message to your supervisor.

Smoking

York Carers Centre operates a strict no smoking policy. This includes when transporting carers to events, at events and residential and in the office. Your supervisor will advise you of locations specifically designated as smoking areas.

Drugs and alcohol

Being under the influence of or using recreational drugs or consuming alcohol whilst volunteering for York Carers Centre (including at events, activities and residential) is not permitted. Any breach of this requirement will result in the immediate withdrawal of the

volunteering opportunity.

Health and Safety

All volunteers are expected to be aware of their own health limitations and are urged not to exceed their physical capabilities. You should advise your supervisor of any serious medical problems that may affect your ability to undertake or complete a task.

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act, York Carers Centre is required to provide a safe and healthy working environment for all staff, volunteers, and other people using our facilities and premises. The relevant manager has responsibility to ensure that statutory legislation is followed. However, there is a personal obligation on each individual to comply with the charity's Health and Safety Policies and Procedures at all times when representing or undertaking tasks for York Carers Centre. Should any accident or incident occur when undertaking duties for York Carers Centre the volunteer affected must ensure that it is reported and recorded via the relevant line manager and also seek medical treatment for any injury sustained.

York Carers Centre has public liability insurance and accepts liability for volunteers whilst they are undertaking approved duties, however we regret that we cannot accept responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property.

Data Protection Act 1998

The above Act was introduced to regulate personal data held either on computer or within a manual filing system. As an employer it is the responsibility of York Carers Centre to ensure that the documentation held is relevant, accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date. Any data held shall be processed fairly and lawfully and in accordance with the rights of data subjects under the Act. Volunteers have the right, upon written request, to be told what personal data is being processed, the source of that data and to whom it may be disclosed.

York Carers Centre is not obliged to supply this information unless a written request is received and the appropriate fee paid.

Confidentiality

It is important that we maintain confidentiality at all times. Information about carers, employees, volunteers and Carers Centre business should not be discussed outside the Carers Centre.

No employee or volunteer is permitted to access any files or records unless they have a work related reason to do so.

Any breach of confidentiality will be treated seriously and is likely to result in the volunteering opportunity being removed.

Specific training will be provided at induction to provide more details about confidentiality.

Child protection

Volunteers will be provided with a copy of the Carers Centre's child protection policy and training on this will be provided at induction.

Vulnerable adults

Volunteers will be provided with a copy of the Carers Centre's vulnerable adults policy and training on this will be provided at induction.

Equal opportunities

York Carers Centre is aware of our diverse community and appreciates the value of difference. It aims to provide equality of treatment for everyone. York Carers Centre recognises that many people in our society experience discrimination or lack of opportunity for unfair reasons, including race, religion, colour, national and ethnic origin, political beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability or non relevant criminal convictions. We will challenge discrimination and lack of opportunity in its own policy and practice. We are also committed to ensuring that no one working with us or volunteering in need of our services is discriminated against.

Grievance and problem solving

We hope you won't need to use this section! At York Carers Centre we strive to provide you with high quality information, training and assistance. However, if you feel that you are not satisfied with your placement, please let your volunteer supervisor know your problem, and we will try to resolve it.

Volunteers who behave in a way which does not meet York Carers Centre standards or policies may have their offer of volunteering withdrawn by York Carers Centre.

Conflict of Interest

There is potential for conflict of interest for volunteers in a number of areas and these must be reported at the commencement of volunteering or as soon as the volunteer becomes aware of it.

Examples of conflict of interest include:

1. A relative of a member of staff being a carer and accessing services from the Centre
2. A friend or neighbour of staff being a carer and accessing services from the Centre
3. A member of staff being related to an employee of another organisation that may be competing for funds from the same funding pot
4. A member of staff being related to a potential supplier of goods or services

Volunteers will be required to notify their supervisor of any known or potential conflict of interest and these will be noted on the individual's personnel or volunteering file. Agreement will be sought as to the most appropriate form of action to deal with this, based on this policy. If an employee of the Centre is aware of any potential conflict for the volunteer that

the volunteer has not identified they will also be required to raise this and the supervisor will discuss any implications for the volunteering role.

We will not place a relative who is the cared for person in the same service as a young carer or a young adult carer, as this may have implications for the young person. If we are able to consider the placement of a cared for person in a volunteering role we will always discuss this with the carer. We may decline the volunteering application if we believe this will have a negative impact on the carer who is the service user. In such instances we will refer the applicant to York CVS volunteer service for other opportunities.

Similarly, placing other family members as volunteers where a carer receives services may impact on the carer so the above considerations will apply.

Ending the placement

To help us manage our service the more notice you can give us the better for ending the volunteering placement. Ideally 2 weeks notice should be given.

York Carers Centre reserves the right to terminate a voluntary placement if it is deemed to be unsuitable. Reasons could include; continued ill health, unreliability, breach of confidentiality, conflict of interest, or failure to comply with policy and procedure.

When volunteers choose to cease their involvement with York Carers Centre we may ask you to take part in an exit interview to share any learning points for our future development.

Thank you

Thank you for your interest in volunteering for York Carers Centre. If you have any comments or queries about our service please contact us on 01904 715490, email: enquiries@yourkcarerscentre.co.uk or visit our website www.yorkcarerscentre.co.uk