

Volunteer Handbook

All you need to know about
volunteering with us





Who we are

Hello and welcome from the team!

Healthwatch Leeds is here to help local people get the best out of their local health and care services by bringing their voice to those who plan and deliver services in Leeds.

Vision & Values

Our Vision

Making your voice count in health and social care services in Leeds

Our Key values:

Values are the principles under which we operate. They describe the way we expect everyone who volunteers or works for us to behave when working or volunteering for us.

- Independent
- Inclusive
- Open
- Supportive
- Collaborative

Volunteering

What is Volunteering?

Volunteering is a choice made freely by people to spend time doing something that aims to benefit individuals, groups and communities.

It means people offer us their skills and expertise and in exchange we ensure they are well supported, well trained and learn new skills.

Volunteers are not paid, but it will not cost people any money to volunteer with us.

Some benefits of volunteering

- Meet new people and make new friends
- Share skills
- Learn new skills and information
- Develop new interests
- Take part in training
- Enhance your curriculum vitae (CV)
- Improve your employment prospects
- Gain valuable experience
- Help to make a difference
- Build your confidence
- Feel valued and be part of a team



Volunteer offer

Our Volunteer Offer

We aim to offer volunteering opportunities that are:

Good Quality

We will commit resources to supporting a good quality volunteering experience and ensure that staff are able to support volunteers effectively.

Well structured

Volunteer roles will have a description of what they involve and what the volunteer needs to be able to do.

Varied

We will have a variety of both short term and longer term volunteering opportunities with different time commitments. Opportunities will be determined by our current projects and priorities.

Inclusive

- We aim to recruit volunteers from all communities and with varied life experiences, we will try to support people if needed, to help make this happen
- We will provide different opportunities for you to get involved
- We will try to make sure the information we give you about volunteering is easy to understand and identify the best method for communication with the individual

Enjoyable

We aim to make volunteering an enjoyable experience. We will provide a friendly welcoming environment where volunteers have opportunities to work with other people as part of a team.

Recognised

Volunteers will receive a training certificate for attending any of our training. For volunteers that have volunteered with us for more than **30 hours** we will be willing to act as a referee for them in the future.

Continually improving

We will regularly seek feedback from volunteers about your experiences and use it to help us to identify where improvements can be made.

Volunteer Roles

All our volunteer roles have a role description outlining what the role involves, what the volunteer will be doing, time commitment, any required experience, knowledge and skills and what the benefits are for you!



Roles and how we support you

Some examples of our volunteer roles are:

- YouthWatch Leeds Volunteer (our Young People's group)
- Outreach volunteer
- Healthwatch Leeds Board Director
- Healthwatch Leeds Representative
- Project Support Volunteer
- Data inputting and admin support

Volunteer support

All regularly active volunteers will have a named member of staff (link worker) as their point of contact. Your link worker will offer guidance, recommend training and assist you in developing your skills. If you volunteer regularly with us, you will meet at least once every 6 months with your link worker for volunteer support to see how you are



Training and important information

getting on and provide you with any necessary support.

Expenses

We will ensure that volunteers are not out of pocket for any work that has been agreed with them by their link worker. This includes reimbursing agreed expenses which are incurred in the course of volunteering.

Travel expenses should be the most cost effective, practical way of reaching the place of volunteering. This will usually be by public transport. Please ask your link worker if you need advice. Please submit your expenses for approval regularly.



Induction and training

All volunteers are required to have an induction to equip them for their role. Some of the areas covered in induction include telling you about us and our current work, what you need to know to be a volunteer with us and explaining our ways of working.

We also offer regular training on:

Safeguarding adults

(this training is compulsory for some roles for example, Enter and View)

Equality & Diversity

Additional training may be required to give volunteers more knowledge, understanding and skills, to support

What you can expect

them for specific roles. Training offered to volunteers will be proportionate to their role and commitment.

Helping you find future opportunities

We will support you to identify how you can progress to other roles within our organisation. We can also let you know about agencies who may be able to advise you about other opportunities.

What we ask from our volunteers

We want your experience with us to be an enjoyable and positive place to volunteer where everyone is clear about their rights and responsibilities. We ask all volunteers to sign a Volunteer's Code of Conduct which outlines how we expect volunteers to behave. We will also make sure during your induction period that you are aware of our policies and procedures that you will be expected to follow.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is extremely important to us and we



What you can expect

ensure all volunteer data is kept safe by following our Confidentiality procedure. (Copy available on request).

Equality and Diversity

We are committed to making sure that individuals from all walks of life are able to volunteer with us and we welcome volunteers from all backgrounds. We see our volunteers as a really important way of linking with a diverse range of communities and value the knowledge and experience of different networks and communities that they may be part of.

Safeguarding

As a volunteer with us, you may have contact with children, young people or adults who are defined as ‘at risk’ (eg. our ‘Enter and View’ roles).

An adult at risk is an adult who:

- is aged 18 years or more, and
- has needs for care and support (whether or not these are currently being met),
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.



All you need to know

All volunteers will be made aware of our safeguarding policies, and what your responsibilities will be as a volunteer. It is everyone's responsibility to promote the welfare and ensure the safety of all children and young people and adults at risk. We are committed to good safeguarding practices within all the activities we undertake.

DBS check and references

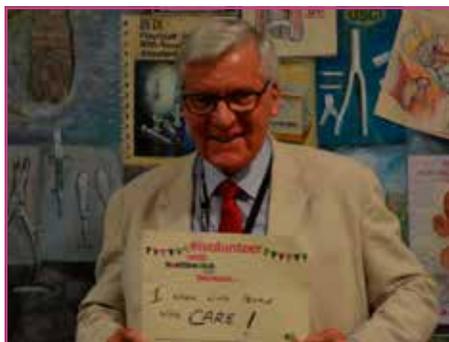
If the volunteering roles you are going to take up involve contact with children and young people or 'adults at risk', you will be required to have a

Disclosure and Barring Service

(DBS) Enhanced check. The DBS check allows us to check the criminal records of potential volunteers, to help us decide whether or not we think you are suitable for the role. Having a previous conviction does not mean that you can't be a volunteer. We would discuss the nature and history of any conviction(s) with you in confidence, in order to assess whether or not we would be able to offer you an opportunity. In addition to the DBS check, we will ask you for the details of two referees who we can ask for character references.

Insurance

All volunteers are covered by our employer's liability insurance policy, whilst they are working as volunteers on work agreed with us but this will not cover you whilst driving your own vehicle.



How to find us

Travel and Directions

Train Station

We are a 10-minute taxi or short bus journey from Leeds station.

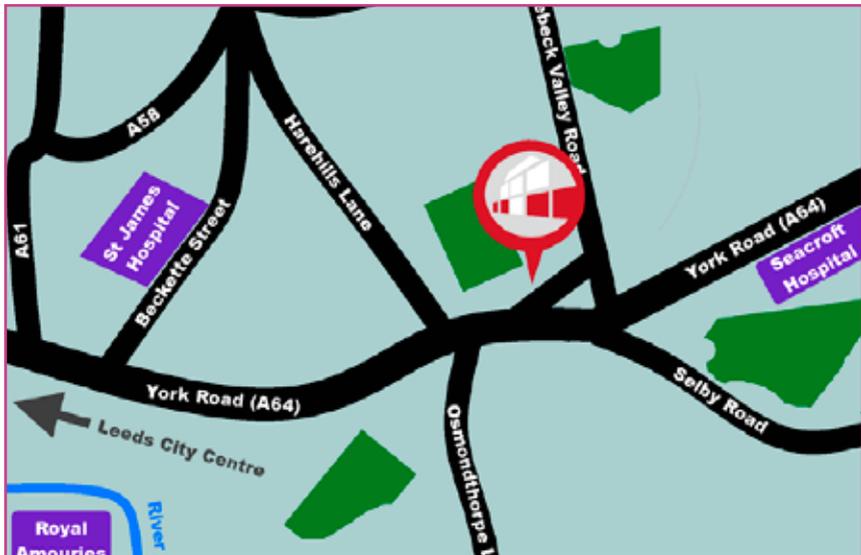
Bus Station

The map below details the local bus stops and services. Visit the West Yorkshire Metro website and First Leeds for timetables and general information.

By road

From City Centre: On the A64, at the junction with Harehills Lane (under a footbridge), keep to inside lane. Take 2nd left onto Gipton Approach, we are immediately on the left.

Towards Leeds: On the A64, turn right at the York Road Sandwich Bar, we are immediately on the left.



We hope you will enjoy volunteering for Healthwatch Leeds and helping us enable local people get the best out of their local health and care services.



Healthwatch Leeds:

The Old Fire Station Gipton Approach Gipton Leeds LS9 6NL

Our telephone number is: 0113 898 0035

Email: info@healthwatchleeds.co.uk

Website: www.healthwatchleeds.co.uk



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