



Volunteer Handbook

Contents

Welcome to Centre 404

- About Centre 404
- Mission Statement & Values
- Statement of Intent – Volunteers

About Centre 404

- Our Main services
- Organograms
- Statement of Intent – Volunteers

Volunteer policy

What you can expect from us:

Centre 404 Volunteer Policy

- Volunteer Role Description
- Equality and Diversity
- Induction and Training
- Training Resources
- Adaptations and Reasonable Adjustments
- Volunteer Check-Ins
- Roles in Decision Making and Reviewing Processes
- Insurance
- Expenses
- DBS Checks
- End of Placement
- References

What we will expect from you:

- Volunteer Code of Conduct
- What Happens If Things Go Wrong
- Reporting Absence and Sickness
- Health & Safety
- Reporting Complaints
- How to Raise Concerns with Us
- Reporting Harassment and Bullying
- Data Protection
- Confidentiality
- Professional boundaries

Our mutual agreements (separate documents)

- Volunteer Agreement
- Photo Consent
- Standard of Confidentiality



Welcome to Centre 404

Welcome and thank you for volunteering at Centre 404! We hope that your volunteering with us will be enjoyable and rewarding. Our volunteers are extremely important to us, and we value them for the contribution they make towards Centre 404.

This handbook aims to give you further information about your voluntary placement with Centre 404. Please refer to the volunteer handbook during the course of your placement, and feel free to talk to the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator if you are unsure about anything.

About Centre 404

Centre 404 was founded in 1951 by parents of children with learning disabilities and works towards building a community and a society where people with learning disabilities are valued. Over the years, Centre 404 has built vital services across three main areas: Supported Housing and Independent Living, Clubs and Activities and Support for Family Carers. The services, activities and volunteer roles at Centre 404 are committed to promoting independence and choice for people with learning disabilities.

Centre 404's Mission Statement

Centre 404 is working towards a world where people with learning disabilities and their families have the support that they need to enjoy the same rights, freedom, responsibilities, respect, choices and quality of life as people within the wider community.

We aim to contribute to this by providing excellent quality services and by supporting people with learning disabilities and their families to get their voices and views heard.

Mission, Beliefs and Values

Centre 404 is working towards a world where people with learning disabilities and their families have the support they need to flourish and enjoy the same rights, freedom, responsibilities, choices and quality of life as people within the wider community.



Centre 404's **Beliefs** and **Values** are deeply rooted in the way that we work and will continue to underpin the future direction of the charity.



Statement of Intent – Volunteers

Volunteers are a vital and valuable part of Centre 404. Volunteers are involved in all aspects of Centre 404's friendly and vibrant community and play a major role in Centre 404's life, from decision making in various committees, to working directly with our members through participation in our groups and teams. Our staff and service users value the time and commitment that volunteers give through supporting our services and our people.

We work with volunteers in a personalised way to help them achieve their goals and make a positive contribution. Centre 404 volunteers have opportunities to learn new skills, gain valuable work experience and receive support towards making a career start or change. Volunteers also have the chance to become part of our thriving community, increase their social circle and make a real difference to people with learning disabilities and their families.

Volunteer Role Description:

Before a voluntary role is created, the appropriate project manager will consider the following:

- A volunteer must not fill a job vacancy that someone was paid to do, they should play a supportive role and be provided with support from a staff member. Should a volunteer feel that they are doing the work of a paid role, they should speak to the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator as soon as possible.
- The role should be mutually fulfilling for both the volunteer and organisation.
- Staff must be consulted and where the role will affect the role of existing volunteers, they too must be consulted.
- A task description outlining the duties, skills or personal qualities required and the expectations must be available in writing. Benefits to the volunteers must also be specified.

Equality and Diversity

Centre 404 is committed to providing a welcoming and friendly environment for volunteers and determines that they should be treated fairly and without prejudice.

Centre 404 does not want anybody to be treated unfairly because of any protected characteristic including their race, religion or belief, sex, age, sexual orientation or gender reassignment, because they are disabled, if they are married or in a civil partnership, if they are an expectant mother or if they have children to look after.

Each volunteer task description must make clear the volunteer's obligation to adhere to the Equality and Diversity standard of the organisation.

The recruitment of volunteers operates within the Centre 404 Volunteer Policy, which sets out the process that will be followed. A diversity monitoring form is sent out to all potential volunteers alongside their volunteer joining form and is looked through at the initial meet and greet between the volunteer and Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator.

Behaviour and conduct by the volunteer should be in line with Centre 404's standard on Equality and Diversity and, in addition, volunteers will have the opportunity to receive Equality and Diversity training during their placement and to find out how to deal with any issues or complaints in relation to this.

Centre 404 will make every effort to make reasonable adjustments for volunteers with extra support needs or disabilities. If reasonable adjustments are required, we will meet with you to discuss your needs and look at how we can accommodate these during your placement. If it is not possible to accommodate your needs, Centre 404 will give individuals a full explanation.

CENTRE404

Volunteer Induction Process

Volunteer Joining Form
Equality and Diversity Form

Interview
Handbook
General Induction
DBS Check
Volunteer Database and Mailing List

Volunteer Placement
Role description
Induction with Manager or Key Worker

References 2x
Safeguard Training
Additional Volunteer Training
Health and Safety

Support and Supervision
Professional Reference (3 months)
Invite to events
Exit Interview



Induction and Training:

All volunteers will be given a full induction to Centre 404, including a copy of the Volunteer Handbook. The induction will provide the information needed for the volunteer to carry out the tasks required. The Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator will give volunteers a general induction to volunteer policy and procedures. Volunteers will then be allocated to a Centre 404 staff member who will provide a tailored induction to their specific role / project. Off site volunteers will be provided with a volunteer handbook through email or post. They will also be introduced to relevant staff and other volunteers.

Any reasonable training required to enable volunteers to perform their roles will be arranged and paid for by Centre 404. The Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator will work with the volunteer to identify training needs and will contact the volunteer to let them know about any relevant training available to them. Training may include in-house training, shadowing and observing staff, online courses and external training.

Training Resources:

Each volunteer will need to be aware of our safeguarding policies for Adults and Children and Young People. They will be offered more information in their induction. Some Volunteers will be asked to carry out Safeguarding Training online.

We also offer additional training if required to carry out the volunteering role.

All courses are CPD accredited and endorsed by Skills for Care and provide an official certificate upon successful completion.

Adaptations and Reasonable Adjustments:

Centre 404 considers requests for additional support and adaptations to the role for all volunteers. Should the volunteer need an adaptation to the role or their working environment to enable them to carry out the tasks, the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator and supporting manager(s) will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments. If for any reason, adjustments cannot be made, the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator will communicate this to the volunteer and the reason why. Additional support or adjustments are discussed at interview stage. Reasonable adjustments will be made where possible to enable the volunteer to do the role to their ability.

Centre 404 endeavours to tailor volunteer roles to the special requirements that may be needed by volunteers with learning disabilities and family carers by providing specific roles to enable people to fulfil their tasks and providing the individual support that is needed.

Volunteer Check-Ins

Centre 404 recognises the need for ongoing support and regular contact to enable the volunteer to carry out their role. Provision will be made for suitable and regular check-ins.

Volunteers will be allocated to a staff member who will support them in managing their tasks on a day-to-day basis. The Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator will oversee their role and offer volunteers a variety of ways to receive feedback and discuss their progress. This will include email, surveys, phone calls or face to face meetings depending on the volunteer's preferred method and availability. Generally, we offer six-monthly Volunteer Check-Ins, but will also check in informally (through email or face to face) within the first week/s to see how your volunteering placement is going. Should you want to book an appointment to have a Volunteer Check-In at any time, please contact the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator directly.

Centre 404 will also provide opportunities for volunteers to meet and share experiences and group feedback sessions at volunteer social events in the year. In addition, we hold recognition and appreciation events annually for our volunteers.

Roles in Decision Making and Reviewing Processes

Volunteers could be invited to comment on any major policy or operational changes to Centre 404 that may affect their role. They will be informed of updates about any changes at Centre 404 and invited to offer feedback.

Volunteers are encouraged to express their opinion on the work of Centre 404 and develop their role within Centre 404 in Volunteer Check-In sessions, which take place with the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator and offer the volunteer the chance to discuss any feedback, concerns or comments they have about how their placement is going.

Volunteers may be approached to consult on various volunteer policies, procedures and communications (newsletters, website etc.) at Centre 404. Their feedback will be considered and will be noted along with feedback from staff and trustees, which will inform the organisation and contribute to the development of our work and services. Personnel Committee volunteers, who report to the Executive Committee as appropriate, will address volunteer issues and any policy revisions as an agenda item of every meeting. Volunteers also have the option to not be part of the review process.

Insurance:

All Centre 404 volunteers are covered by our employee liability insurance policy whilst they are on the premises or engaged in any tasks on behalf of Centre 404.

If volunteers would like to see the breakdown of the cover, a copy of 'Section 2 from the Liabilities and Legal Expenses Wording' can be obtained from the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator.

Expenses:

All reasonable out of pocket expenses related to volunteering can be reimbursed. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to claim these at regular intervals if required.

Travel: Reasonable expenses within London to and from the office/centre can be reimbursed if required. However, we do need to have a journey history receipt. See www.tfl.gov.uk/oyster for details on how to register your oyster card. The cost of travel will be reimbursed up to the amount of £5 on provision of a receipt.

We also cover mileage cost if you use your own form of transport to and from your volunteer placement. The current mileage rates are:

- Cars and vans: 45p per mile regardless of engine size
- Motorcycles: 24p per mile
- Bicycles: 20p per mile

Claims for using your own mode of transportation must be made monthly, using the 'Volunteer Expenses Claim Form' and/or the Volunteer Mileage claim form. Copies can be obtained from the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator.

Food: Where voluntary work involves a shift of more than 4 hours, the cost of lunch will be reimbursed up to the amount of £5 on provision of a receipt.

Volunteers can claim their expenses by sending their receipts in to the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator or the relevant project manager to submit to their service manager, who will claim expenses on their behalf. Volunteers will get their expenses returned on a rolling week to week basis.

The best practise to claim expenses is to email receipts to the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator, but you can also hand receipts in. Payment will be made by cash (if available in petty cash), cheque, or via BACS payment. If you would prefer a bank transfer please confirm your full name and bank details (i.e. account number and sort code) when you submit the receipts.

DBS Checks and Character References:

We carry out an enhanced DBS check for all regular volunteers (one-off or short-term volunteers are individually risk assessed).

Certain types of convictions / cautions may restrict you from volunteering. Disclosures will be dealt with on an individual basis and considered in relation to the volunteer role applied for. Information may be shared with the manager of the service to decide

whether the result would restrict you from volunteering. All DBS results are kept confidential.

In addition to an enhanced DBS check, all new volunteers are required to have two satisfactory character references. In the circumstance that these are not available, we will provide three weeks supervision in substitute.

End of Placement:

We ask volunteers if they can do a minimum time commitment of 3 months for admin and office roles and 6 months for direct support work with people with learning disabilities. These time commitments are only a guide for volunteers and you should discuss any changes / needs you may have with the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator. These time frames indicate a minimum time frame, not an end to the volunteer placement, if you wish to continue volunteering for longer.

When your placement is coming to an end, we will have a discussion with you about possible ways to communicate the end of your placement to the person / people you support and you will be asked to give feedback about your volunteer experience.

Should you wish to end your placement earlier or to extend it, please let the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator know at least two weeks in advance of your end date.

Should Centre 404 wish to end your placement for any reason, we will communicate this with you and explain why. Should you wish to prematurely end your placement, please let the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator know and give your reasons for doing so. Please refer to our reporting *Compliments and Complaints Policy* for more information about raising issues, available on request from

Professional References:

We will offer you a reference for paid work, study or further volunteering after 3 months of successful volunteering with Centre 404.

If we feel the placement has not been successful or if you leave before the end of your volunteering placement, we hold the right to refuse a reference.

Volunteer Code of Conduct:

We ask that volunteers follow a code of conduct when volunteering at Centre 404:

- To treat everyone that they come into contact with, with respect and refrain from making derogatory or inappropriate comments / jokes.
- That the attitude, behaviour and language do not go against the aims and values of Centre 404's mission and belief.
- To maintain professional boundaries at all times.
- To not act in a way that may be perceived as discriminatory. See our *Equality and Diversity Policy*.

- To honour their volunteer commitment and let us know if for any reason they cannot make a session.
- Report any behaviour or allegations made to them by children or vulnerable adults, or any concerns that they have regarding the behaviour of others.

All volunteers will be made aware of the following rights and policies without having to ask. Details of current rates for expenses, *Health and Safety Policy*, *Equality and Diversity Policy* and other Centre 404 policies will be readily available. This information is kept with the service managers in each department, or can be requested from the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator.

What Happens if Things Go Wrong

If the overseeing Manager has concerns with how you are carrying out your volunteering role, the overseeing Manager, together with the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator if appropriate, will meet with you to discuss these concerns. Discussions may be around boundaries and development plans. If, however, these concerns cannot be addressed, for example they concern more serious matters (safeguarding breaches, theft, breach of confidentiality, discriminatory conduct, etc.), we will end the volunteer agreement.

Reporting Absence or Sickness:

Centre 404 staff and other volunteers may be relying on you to be present at agreed or specific times. It is therefore very important that you let us know if you cannot come in at agreed times. Please phone (020) 7607 8762 or email CarolineG@centre404.org.uk as soon as you know that you will not be able to get here and leave a message if no-one answers the phone. This will enable Centre 404 to make other arrangements and prevent us worrying about you.

If we do not hear from you and cannot contact you for four weeks after you were due to come to Centre 404, we will assume you are no longer interested in volunteering with us, and your Volunteer Agreement will end. If you wish to return after this time, please contact us. Please be aware that we may need to negotiate a new volunteer agreement.

Health and Safety Procedures:

It is the responsibility of Centre 404 to ensure that there are defined health and safety procedures and adequate insurance cover for the tasks that volunteers are asked to undertake.

Volunteers are covered by Centre 404's *Health and Safety Policy* and will be encouraged to read it and any other relevant policies or risk assessments at induction. Any specific health and safety training will be provided where required.

Smoking

Centre 404 is a no smoking zone. Staff / volunteers who want to smoke can do so away from the premises. The Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator will show smoking volunteers a space to smoke away from the building and not in front of service users.

Dress Code

As a sign of respect to your colleagues, each person should dress in an appropriate way. Bear in mind that some of the volunteer work you do will involve physical activity, arts and crafts or gardening, so please wear appropriate, safe clothing and footwear where needed.

Reporting Complaints:

If a volunteer has a grievance or a complaint about Centre 404 staff, service users, other volunteers or services, we will endeavour to resolve any issues as quickly as possible. The volunteer should initially discuss their concerns with the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator. If the volunteer remains unhappy, the procedures from Centre 404 *Compliments and Complaints Policy* will be followed to deal with the issues raised. Please ask the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator for a copy if you would like to see the full procedure.

We will adopt the same procedure if a complaint is received about a volunteer. If it becomes apparent that the relationship between Centre 404 and a volunteer is not working out, it may be necessary to end the arrangement without notice.

How to Raise Concerns with Us

Concerns involving abuse, malpractice, fraud or health & safety issues should be brought to the attention of the Head of Service immediately. If you are not sure who the appropriate service manager is, speak to the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator.

Write anything you remember down as soon as possible, sign and date it. The disclosure will be treated confidentially and in accordance with our *Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy*, *Child Protection Policy* and *Whistleblowing Policy* and associated procedures. If you would like to see these procedures, ask the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator for a copy.

Once the matter has been investigated, a decision will be made about what action will be taken if appropriate. The Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator will then communicate the result of the investigation to the volunteer.

Reporting Harassment and Bullying

Should a volunteer feel they are in any way being bullied or harassed by a staff member, trustee, other volunteer or service user, they should contact the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator as soon as possible. If the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator is unavailable or if the volunteer feels that raising the matter with the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator would be inappropriate, the volunteer should contact the Head of People and Resources.

Bullying and harassment is not tolerated at Centre 404. If you report any incidents of this, we will ask you to fill in an incident report and work with us to resolve the issue with the relevant parties involved. Once the matter has been resolved, the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator will communicate this to the volunteer.

Data Protection and GDPR

Centre 404 recognises that its first priority under the Data Protection Act is to avoid causing harm to individuals. In the main this means:

- keeping information securely in the right hands, and
- holding good quality information

Centre 404 ensures that all information it holds about the volunteers is kept in a secure place. Paper records are kept in a lockable filing cabinet and electronic information is maintained in a secure location on Centre 404's server. All computers are password protected and this ensures access is restricted to relevant data for specific staff or groups of people.

To see the full *Privacy Policy* or *Data Retention Schedule* for volunteers, please ask the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator.

Volunteers are required to comply with procedures relating to the handling of personal data and confidentiality as described in the *Volunteer Agreement, Standard of Confidentiality* and this handbook.

Should we require any information e.g. photos or quotes about your placement for publicity purposes for our website, newsletter or annual review, we will seek your consent beforehand via our *Photo Consent Form*.

Confidentiality

Volunteers may be placed in a position where they have access to confidential records and personally sensitive information in roles such as data inputting and interviewing. It is important to respect these confidences.

All information regarding volunteers should be kept in the strictest confidence and, except in exceptional circumstances, should not leave the organisation.

If a volunteer has any concerns about information they have received regarding a volunteer, business, staff members, service user or Centre 404, they should discuss this information with the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator or Head of People and Resources.

Professional Boundaries

Don't

- Swap contact details with service users
- Add service users on social media of any kind
- Keep photos on your phone or camera
- Accept money or gifts
- Influence with your own beliefs
- Get involved in personal problems

Between volunteers and staff members:

- Volunteers must not fill the role of a paid worker – they play a supportive role and should be provided with support from a staff member.
- Administering medicine, handling money and personal care are the responsibility of staff, not volunteers.
- The relationship between staff and volunteers is a professional one. It is important to treat and speak to each other with respect, and refrain from physical contact – e.g. greet one another with handshakes, not hugs. Bear in mind that your behaviour with staff acts as a model for how service users may expect to interact with you.

Working with people with learning disabilities:

- Maintain physical space with the service user and discourage physical contact like hugging. Shaking hands or a brief touch on the shoulder is appropriate depending on the service user's level of comfort. Some service users will not like any kind of physical contact, so it is good to check beforehand whether you can shake hands for example.
- Connecting with service users through Facebook or social media is prohibited.
- A service user may disclose incidents of abuse to you. It is very likely that we will have already been informed of these incidents, but you should always report this to the support manager or Volunteer Coordinator anyway, using the procedure in this handbook. Make the service user aware that you will be

letting us know about any incidents that they talk to you about which may raise concerns.

- Some service users may dwell on the negative incidents in their lives and while it is good for them to talk about their feelings, there is a danger that their sessions become quite negative. It is always good to introduce other activities or topics into your sessions to keep the engagement positive.
- Service users may sometimes want to strike up more personal friendships with volunteers. If you feel this is the case, let the Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator and manager of the service know as soon as possible.

Thank you for volunteering at Centre 404.