



Communicare in Southampton


Southampton Voluntary Services, Kingsland Square, St. Mary's, SO14 1NW

☎ 023 8021 6023

✉ volunteer@communicareinsouthampton.org.uk

Volunteer Policy

Amendment History

Date	
November 2017	Revised and Amended
	Signed by Miles Newton, Chair of Trustees
November 2018	To be reviewed

Reviewer Chair of Trustees

Owner and Authorised by Chair of Trustees and Trustee Board

Introduction

Communicare in Southampton recognises that from our foundation volunteers have formed the core of our organisation. Communicare in Southampton exists to recruit and organise volunteers for the objective of 'The relief of poverty hardship and distress among the inhabitants of Southampton and surrounding areas by the provision of a home or residential care visiting service offering advice, befriending and physical and emotional support to those in need.'

Communicare in Southampton is committed to best practice with regards to volunteering. We aim to ensure that volunteers are treated well and feel valued by our organisation.

1. Who can volunteer with Communicare in Southampton?

Communicare was originally founded by Shirley Baptist Church and our Christian roots and church links remain important to us. At Communicare in Southampton we welcome volunteers from all faiths and none and simply ask that volunteers are able to acknowledge Communicare's Christian roots and are comfortable with the fact that many of our volunteer support sessions take place in church buildings.

While many of our volunteering opportunities require a regular time commitment for a minimum period, we often look for temporary assistance with short term projects and one off events. We therefore try to accommodate people who only have a limited time to spare or those who have irregular availability.

For most of our volunteering roles volunteers need to be able to volunteer in the community with little day to day supervision however we also offer some volunteering opportunities where volunteers can be supported to perform their role. This includes some volunteering roles within our joint lunch club 'The Haven'.

Under 18s

- Young people aged 16-17

We welcome young people aged 16 or 17 as volunteers however young people cannot volunteer alone in a client's house. Young people are very welcome to volunteer at group activities such as tea parties and our lunch club. They may also volunteer alongside an adult volunteer. Communicare in Southampton will carry out a risk assessment on a case by case basis to determine whether young people aged 16-17 can safely volunteer alone with tasks such as shopping, gardening or meeting clients in the community. DBS checks will be carried out according to our DBS and rehabilitation of offenders' policy.

- Accompanied Children

with our volunteer coordinators. Our volunteer Coordinators are also happy to respond to volunteers by phone and email.

Communicare in Southampton uses questionnaires, phone calls and other appropriate means including emails to keep in touch with volunteers and review their volunteering experience.

Support when a befriending relationship comes to an end.

Volunteering relationships come to an end for a variety of reasons. Sometimes volunteers may find the ending of a relationship difficult. In these circumstances volunteers are encouraged to talk to a volunteer coordinator. If appropriate the volunteer coordinators will signpost the volunteer to an appropriate means of support which may include bereavement services such as the Cruse Bereavement Care helpline.

4. Expenses

Communicare in Southampton believes that no one should be at a financial disadvantage through volunteering their time on a freely chosen basis and is committed to meet, within the resources available, reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred by our volunteers.

Volunteers are also encouraged to log and report the time they spend volunteering as this not only provides vital information for our statistics but also demonstrates the value we put upon their time.

Expenses include:

Travel

This may be between home and place of volunteering activity or travel as part of volunteering activity

Public transport allowance –If travelling by bus or train, the ticket must be retained and given to the relevant Volunteer Coordinator or Finance Administrator when submitting expenses. Suitable arrangements will be made to check electronic tickets. Public transport from outside the City should first be discussed and agreed with the Volunteer Coordinator or manager beforehand.

Petrol / Mileage allowance – If the volunteer is using his/her own transport, a record of all mileage must be kept. The mileage allowance will be concurrent with the Communicare in Southampton staff mileage allowance, which will reflect the HMRC rate.

Volunteers needing to claim the Itchen Bridge Toll should obtain a receipt and hand it to the office with their expense claim. Please note if the travel is with or on behalf of a client the client should pay the toll.

Communicare in Southampton will keep in touch with volunteers through producing newsletters and other updates.

Valuing Volunteers:

Communicare in Southampton will demonstrate our appreciation of volunteers through events such as our annual celebration evening, long service certificates and participation in local award schemes such as SVS awards.

6. Volunteer Responsibilities

Volunteers should follow all relevant policies and to ask the office if they are unsure how to respond to a situation.

Volunteers should inform the office if any problems arise related to their volunteering including any complaints made against them or any concerns they have about a client.

Volunteers should inform the office if they are unable to carry out their volunteering commitments either on a temporary or permanent basis.

Volunteers should inform the office of any injuries or accidents that occur whilst they are volunteering or if they feel they or another volunteer may be at risk.

Volunteers should inform the office if anything significant changes about their client's circumstances such as a deterioration in health or mobility. They should also inform the office if they start or stop carrying out a particular service for a client for example if their befriending visits start becoming trips out or if they begin shopping for a client they have previously just been visiting.

Drivers: All volunteers who are driving on Communicare business are responsible for ensuring their vehicle is in a fit and legal condition and that they have all relevant insurance. Volunteers who will be transporting clients must inform their insurance company. A sample letter will be given out at induction and is available from the Communicare offices.

7. Problem Solving

If a volunteering relationship with a client is not working

Due to the nature of our activities sometimes clients or volunteers will feel that they are not suited to each other. As a non-statutory organisation it is important that our volunteers and the people they support feel comfortable with the volunteering relationships established through Communicare, therefore we will treat such concerns seriously.

The volunteer may be asked to suspend all or part of their volunteering activity whilst the complaint is investigated.

The volunteer may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the issue with the Communicare Manager or other appropriate member of staff or trustee. The volunteer will be given the opportunity to put forward their point of view.

The volunteer may be offered relevant training either as part of a formal training session or an informal discussion.

Following a meeting with the Communicare Manager it may be decided it is necessary to restrict the types of volunteering available to the volunteer or that the volunteer is no longer suitable to volunteer with Communicare in Southampton. Any such decisions shall be set out clearly in a confidential record and explained to the volunteer who can appeal the decision to the trustees.

If necessary the Communicare Manager will ensure concerns are reported to the relevant authorities. Serious incidents must be reported to the Charity Commission.

Summary

Volunteers are at the core of Communicare in Southampton and we will do all we can to follow best practice guidance and give volunteers the best possible experience of volunteering with us.