



Volunteering Policy

Introduction

Newlife the Charity for Disabled Children is a registered charity that supports families across the UK by giving children access to equipment that can change their lives; funding wheelchairs, specialist car seats, hoists and communication aids and other essential items.

Statement of intent

This policy is intended to define good volunteering practice for use throughout Newlife and provide guidelines for volunteers and for staff in relation to volunteering.

The aim of the Newlife volunteer programme is to involve members of the community in activities associated to fundraising, promoting awareness, support of our care services or the commercial division.

This activity will promote awareness of Newlife and raise funds that we will use to help disabled children nationwide through the provision of specialist equipment, a family support helpline, campaigning action for the rights of disabled children and targeted investment in medical research.

These activities will be of benefit to Newlife and the families we serve, and provide personal, social and professional opportunities and benefits for the people who volunteer.

Recruiting Volunteers

Volunteers freely give their time to assist Newlife in raising awareness or funds through voluntary opportunities. As well as being a valuable resource to Newlife, we recognise the benefit of volunteering to the individual volunteer, and where possible Newlife aims to respond to its volunteers needs by providing the opportunity to gain relevant skills, work experience and references as well as the opportunity to meet new people whilst volunteering.

We will use appropriate means to advertise all volunteer opportunities. Opportunities will be advertised in the Newlife Stores, Newlife Opportunity Centre, Newlife websites, recruitment web sites and the Council for Voluntary Services (CVS). All recruitment will consider the principles of our Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policies, and our Data Protection Policy (GDPR).

Anyone interested in volunteering will be provided with a list of the opportunities for volunteering within the organisation and an application form. Following completion of the form, the volunteer will be invited to a meeting to establish the needs of the volunteer and the suitable opportunities available at Newlife.

During this discussion, applicants will be introduced to the volunteering opportunities and provided with opportunity to ask questions. Applicants may be accompanied by a friend or carer if additional support is required. The option to be accompanied also extends to volunteer sessions if the application is successful.

Newlife reserves the right to refuse offers of voluntary support in certain circumstances, and in these cases potential volunteers will be offered the opportunity for feedback if required. Volunteers from overseas will be asked to produce the appropriate paperwork showing they can volunteer in the UK where required. The minimum age for volunteering is 15 years and may be higher for some roles due to Health and Safety requirements.

Induction, Training and Health and Safety

An Induction or Briefing will be provided to all volunteers on or before their first session. This includes familiarisation with relevant Newlife policies and procedures, health and safety, manual handling' and a tour of the facilities where appropriate. Volunteers will be given training for the task they are to undertake.

The charity has a health and safety policy in place and full risk assessments for all volunteer activities. Reviews will take place regularly with the volunteer and session supervisor to review both sides of the relationship.

Expenses

By prior agreement, volunteers can claim reasonable travel expense, car mileage, bus or other transport costs. All such expenses must be agreed in advance by the volunteer supervisor and claimed using the Volunteer Pre-Agreed Reimbursement Form. All car mileage is paid at 20p per mile.

Support

The volunteer manager, session supervisor, Newlife staff, and established volunteers will offer support to new volunteers.

The session supervisor will have regular meetings with volunteers to discuss any problems or issues that may arise. The session supervisors will receive support and have regular meetings with their manager or the volunteer manager.

To involve volunteers as fully as possible in the aims of the charity, Newlife provides regular updates of the work of the charity. We also encourage feedback and suggestions from volunteers about the roles they are doing.

Insurance

The Charity has a valid insurance policy which covers all volunteers who are taking part in activities *on behalf of* Newlife Charity (activities organised by the charity).

Volunteers who undertake activities *in aid of* Newlife Charity (activities organised and delivered solely by the volunteer) are responsible for any insurance required and are not covered by Newlife's liability insurance. This is particularly relevant to fundraising volunteers organising their own events.

If your volunteering activity requires insurance, or if you are unsure if your volunteering activity is covered by Newlife's liability insurance, you should check with Newlife before commencing your activity.

Confidentiality/Security

Newlife will maintain a database of volunteer contact details. All information held about volunteers will be treated in a confidential nature and in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (Newlife are controllers of the information we collect about you). No personal information about volunteers shall be accessed except by authorised parties.

All volunteers have the right to access any personal information the organisation holds about them. Requests for such information should be made to the volunteer manager.

Newlife's processes, the families we serve and the donor companies that the charity works with all require explicit confidentiality. At induction, a volunteer's confidentiality form will be issued that all volunteers are required to sign.

To safeguard volunteers and staff and to ensure there is no abuse with regards to the removal of company property, the charity reserves the right to search any person or the contents of parcels or vehicles entering or leaving the premises. All searches will be conducted in the presence of a third person and individuals will have the right to ask that another independent witness is present if so required.

Employment Opportunities

We welcome those wishing to give their time and skills freely to help Newlife, those who are volunteering as part of their skills development and those who are looking for placements to put themselves forward for employment in the charity.

Volunteers are welcome to apply for paid positions that may become available within the charity and will be subject to the same application/interview process as all other applicants; records of volunteering will be made available to interviewers.

Resolving Problems

The relationship between Newlife and its volunteers is entirely voluntary and does not imply any contract. However, it is important that the organisation can maintain agreed standards of service to its donor companies, the beneficiaries we serve, and that volunteers should enjoy making contributions to this service.

If the activity of a volunteer does not meet with Newlife's standards, here is how it will be dealt with.

1. Initially a meeting will take place with the volunteer and session supervisor who will explain the concerns.
2. If this does not resolve the concern, then another meeting with the volunteer manager or a representative from the People Team will be convened.
3. If the volunteering activity still does not meet with our standards, Newlife will cease to engage the volunteer's services.

If the volunteer is dissatisfied with any aspect of volunteering, or has other concerns, they should:

1. Initially explain their dissatisfaction to the session supervisor.
2. If that does not resolve the concern, then a meeting with the volunteer manager should be convened. The volunteer may be accompanied by a friend if they wish.
3. If that does not resolve the issue, then a formal meeting with a member the People Team or senior manager should follow.
4. If the dissatisfaction remains unresolved and we are unable to resolve the problem, then it would be inappropriate to continue the volunteer engagement.

Discounts

After an agreed volunteering contribution, a Newlife retail discount card may be issued in appreciation of time given. (*see our volunteer discount policy*).

Representing Newlife

Everyone who volunteers for Newlife in whatever capacity is representing not only the charity but other volunteers, Newlife staff and supporters, and the families and children that we serve. We hope that all volunteers will support and respect the caring and professional image the charity requires.

Opportunities to Volunteer

There are eight super ways that you can get involved and make a difference:
(Task descriptions are available for all roles)

1. Stock Preparation Volunteers

This includes all volunteers located within the Opportunity Centre in Cannock, Staffs, and our Stock Processing centre in Heanor, Derbyshire. The tasks for these volunteers will include preparation of fashion goods for sale in the Newlife stores, sorting of jewellery, refurbishment of specialist disability toys and processing of household items.

No experience is needed and Newlife will provide induction, training and supervision.

Time Commitment: We welcome volunteers Monday-Friday between 9.30am and 4.30pm by agreement. There is no commitment to come every day/week, we just ask for a minimum of 2 hrs in any one session

2. Home Based Volunteers

This covers all volunteers carrying out activities from home including internet research of promotional or fundraising opportunities for Newlife, as well as processing jewellery. Newlife will ensure that appropriate risk assessments are in place for any such home tasks and the appropriate training is given. All jewellery items will be recorded in and out and volunteers are responsible for goods booked out to them.

Home based volunteers work independently but are required to keep in communication with the appropriate Newlife contact.

Time Commitment: It's up to you how much time you give and when you give it. There is no commitment to take on a volume of work in a set period

3. In-Store Retail Volunteers

This covers volunteers helping in any of the Newlife retail stores. As well as a volunteer induction, these volunteers will receive additional shop specific information.

Within this volunteer role no cash handling or use of a till will be required, however customer interface and stock display/release/tidying is important, so we will take this into account when selecting volunteers for this opportunity.

Time Commitment: You can choose the hours/days that suit you dependent upon which store you would like to volunteer in. Opportunities at all stores vary according to their opening hours. Not all stores open Sundays. Please ask for details of our individual store opening times.

4. Community/Fundraising Volunteers

This covers all volunteers acting in their local community carrying out activities which may include but are not limited to: off-site sales, charity collections, challenge events or other fundraising activities. Full risk assessments will be carried out by Newlife for all pre-arranged off-site fundraising activities.

Within this type of volunteer role, cash handling may be required, and this will be discussed and taken into consideration when selecting volunteers for this opportunity.

Most community/fundraising volunteers will be required to work independently but keep in communication with the appropriate Newlife contact. Some events however will be supervised by a Newlife representative.

Time Commitment: You can decide how much time you give and when you give it. There is no commitment to take on a volume of activity in a set period, but many volunteers will give their time in supporting specific event/s.

5. Community Awareness Volunteers

This covers all volunteers who offer to promote the charity and raise awareness of its aims and services within their local community. The role may include public speaking, distribution of promotional materials and attendance at local community events where information about Newlife support or services may be provided.

As with our Community Fundraising roles, most Community Awareness volunteers will be required to act independently but keep in communication with the appropriate Newlife contact. Some events however will be supervised by a Newlife representative.

Time Commitment: You can decide upon the type of awareness events you are comfortable to support, how much time you give and when you give it. There is no commitment to take on a volume of activity in a set period.

6. 'In Training' Volunteers

This covers all volunteers who are on voluntary placements to support a recognised qualification. Newlife will undertake to provide the appropriate training for the voluntary opportunity and provide supervision while on site. However, it is the responsibility of the training provider/volunteer to ensure the qualification if completed to the agreed standard. Newlife only undertake to support the qualification through offering a voluntary opportunity.

Time Commitment: We will consider the appropriate available hours according to which dept can accommodate the placement. Some depts' are small and cannot always accommodate the skills sought - but this can be discussed.

7. Organisation Attached Volunteers

This covers groups who contact Newlife to offer the services of their members or staff in a voluntary capacity to benefit not only Newlife but the group, for example; Company Employees, Students, Rotarians, and Soroptimists etc.

Such organisations normally provide their own supervision for the groups they send to volunteer. Newlife will ensure the appropriate risk assessments are in place.

Time Commitment: This is by agreement according to the size of the group and to the type of volunteering activity the group is willing to be involved in.

8. Skill Specific Volunteers

This will cover people who may offer to use their professional skills, contacts or experiences in a voluntary capacity to support Newlife in its charitable or trading aims. This may include but is not limited to roles such as; clinical or welfare professionals in our care services dept', public relations and awareness/promotional roles.

Time Commitment: By agreement, but we can often offer opportunities that, where possible, fit around other work schedules. There is no commitment to volunteer every week/regularly, we just ask that's you give a minimum of 2 hrs per session and undertake relevant training as appropriate.

Work Experience Placements

People may volunteer with a charity for different reasons, and we recognise that many people volunteer to gain personal and professional skills to help them with their career development. Therefore, we also offer many of our volunteering roles as work experience placements.

Doing unpaid work experience can bring great rewards. It gives you the chance to learn new skills and improve those you already have. You can add your work experience to your C.V and Newlife can supply you with a reference for future employment opportunities.

The great thing about Newlife work placements is that as well as gaining new skills, they help you to understand working practices such as meeting deadlines and working in a team. You can build up your confidence and find out what sort of roles you enjoy. You will also be helping others at the same time...and helping yourself build a better future

This type of placement is a great way to get back into a routine if you have been out of the work place for an extended period of time.

It is also ideal for school and college students looking to gain work ready experience and can be arranged in partnership with the school or college.

Should you then decide to apply for an advertised vacancy within Newlife, your work experience placement will be considered.

Time commitment: Work placements, like regular volunteering opportunities are flexible. We encourage applicants to offer enough time to develop their skills and confidence ready for work, but there is no commitment required for any regular hours or attendance.

Summary

Volunteers are a fantastic asset to Newlife and are respected and appreciated as such. They provide valuable help and support, and many volunteers stay with us for a long time or even go on to join the team.

To ensure our volunteers enjoy the best experience, our Volunteer Handbook provides further details on our policies and procedures affecting volunteers and is available upon request.

This volunteer policy is freely accessible to all and will be reviewed yearly to adapt or improve where necessary