



HARC

Homeless & Rootless at Christmas
SHEFFIELD

Volunteer Handbook

WHAT WE DO

We have been providing companionship and a safe, warm, and welcoming shelter for homeless, rootless, isolated, and lonely people over the Christmas and New Year period in the Sheffield city centre since 1989.

We offer a day shelter where people can access hot meals either to sit inside or take-away, and various services such as hairdressing, podiatry, and housing advice.

We also aim to support other organisations that offer this kind of help throughout the year.



Our commitment to you

— what you can expect from HARC

- Ensure that building is risk assessed so that it is safe to work in
- To ensure policies are up to date for safety
- Clear induction and training days
- To have a clear briefing before and after your shift
- Regular communication to keep you informed
- To be reimbursed for agreed expenses
- Public liability insurance to cover your volunteer activities
- To be treated fairly and with respect
- Confidentiality in respect of volunteers details
- Follow our Volunteer Complaints policy appropriately should any problems arise

- To familiarise yourself with the signing up to volunteer procedure
- Support HARC's aims and values appropriately
- Reliably, responsibly and safely carry out your agreed volunteer role
- Read and follow our guidance, policies and procedures www.harcsheffield.org.uk
- Attend the HARC briefing
- Reply to communications from HARC if requested
- Volunteer as part of a team, with other HARC volunteers and staff
- Have a friendly, flexible and supportive attitude
- Treat everyone you encounter when volunteering with fairness and respect

Your commitment to us

— what HARC expects from you

Where we are based

HARC will open at the Lower Hall of the Victoria Hall Methodist church using the George Street entrance (just down from the Curzon Cinema - postcode S1 2PF).

If the doors aren't open knock on the windows that can be seen through the railings, and someone will come and let you in. There is also a doorbell on the wall to the right of the entrance door.



When we open

Opening times for guests
8.30am-2.30pm every day

Meal times

Breakfast (optional takeaway): 8.30-10am
Lunch (optional takeaway): 12noon-1.30pm
Tea (takeaway)
Hot drinks are available throughout the day.



Volunteer key information



Where can I park?

There isn't a lot of parking around the project, so please allow ample time to find somewhere to park before your shift.

We have an offer for all day parking for £2.00 at [Bank Park Victoria Quays](#). The discount will be able to utilised from Christmas Eve via a special code on paybyphone that will be given to all volunteers prior to the project starting.

[Parkopedia](#) and [JustPark](#) also have some suggestions about where to park near the project.

When do I need to arrive at the project?

- 7.30am** Catering Lead and two Kitchen Volunteers
- 7.45am** Project Lead
- 7.45am** Shift and Deputy Shift Leads
- 8.00am** General Volunteers
- 10.30am** One further Kitchen Volunteer

Come to the George Street entrance of the project in time for your briefing. If no-one is around, ring the doorbell next to the door and someone will come and let you in.

You will be shown where you can safely store your belongings. Please only have essential belongings as we have limited secure storage.

You will have a briefing with the Project, Shift and Deputy Leaders and they will allocate your tasks for the shift.

Who will be there to support me as a volunteer?

Each shift has a:

Project Lead - this is a paid worker with overall responsibility for the project. They will be introduced to you during the briefing.

Shift Lead - this is a volunteer who will manage what goes on during the shift. They will wear a red armband.

Deputy Shift Lead - this is a volunteer who supports the Shift Lead. They will wear a red armband.

Catering Lead - this is a paid worker with overall responsibility in the kitchen.

It really picks you up over Christmas. You forget that it's cold and wet and dull. It's nice to know that people are thinking about you.

Danielle- HARC Guest

It's incredibly rewarding and a great antidote to Christmas excess.

HARC Volunteer

If you can't make your shift

If for any reason you can't attend your shift, you must call the HARC phone **07523 927318** as soon as you can. This will mean that we can ring our reserves and try and arrange for a replacement for your shift.



What happens during my shift?

General Volunteers

There are many jobs that need doing during the shift.

These are described in the [Shift Roles document](#) which can be found on the website.

The Shift Lead and Deputy Shift Lead will create a rota during the shift briefing. You will have the opportunity to select the roles that you would like to do.

The main role of a volunteer is to have positive engagements with our guests. We always say 'just muck in'!

Kitchen Volunteers

The Kitchen Volunteers help the Catering Lead to produce breakfasts, lunches and a takeaway bag for our guests.

This role also involves clearing away and washing up after the meal.



Will there be other volunteers at the project?

During the project, we will also have a number of other volunteers. These will be providing guest services such as hairdressing, podiatry and housing advice.

Any queries relating to any of these services, particularly in respect of housing advice, must be referred to the Project, Shift or Deputy Leaders.

Will I be able to have a break during my shift?

Tea, coffee and other drinks will be available throughout your shift. You are welcome to have a hot meal once guests have been served.

There is a separate toilet for volunteers upstairs that can be used at any time.

I lovely to chat with guests who you get to know over the years, but sad to think they are still lonely, vulnerable or homeless.

HARC Volunteer

There is so much that's enjoyable about volunteering with HARC.

HARC Volunteer

Expenses

Taxi fares will be reimbursed when you are travelling to and from the HARC project to volunteer when:

- There are no other options of public transport or lift sharing
- It is agreed with the HARC Committee or the HARC project lead
- You must specify the start and finish points and the purpose of the journey on each taxi receipt.



For Sheffield residents, by Sheffield residents.

Personal safety

- If you feel unsafe or unsure about anything please go straight to the Shift or Deputy Shift Leader who will be wearing a red armband.
- Don't bring valuables into the project. There will be limited space to leave coats and bags only.
- Wear a name badge with your first name only on, and do not give guests your full name, or other personal details.
- Do not turn up to a shift you have not signed up for or bring anyone else into a shift.
- We are an over 18's project only for volunteers and guests – please do not bring children into the project.
- If you are concerned about any behaviour from another volunteer or a guest, please refer this to the Shift/Deputy/Project Lead.
- Do not give/lend guests money, phones etc.
- Avoid being alone with one or more guests.

Project safety

- **Animals** - Only guide dogs are allowed on the premises.
- **Smoking, alcohol and drugs** - We are a smoke, alcohol and drug-free project, and Victoria Hall requires that this is the case outside the building. Any concerns should be discussed with the Project, Shift or Deputy Leaders.
- **Needle stick injuries** - do not place unprotected hands inside pockets of guests' coats/belongings. Inform Project, Shift or Deputy Leader and attend Walk-In centre on Broad Lane.
- **Donations** - Should be referred to either the Project, Shift or Deputy Leaders. Food donations should be taken into the kitchen.
- **Accidents** - Inform the Project, Shift or Deputy Leaders immediately.
- **Physical and/or verbal abuse** - avoid confrontation and refer to Project, Shift or Deputy Leaders.



• Fire procedure

- On hearing the fire alarm the Shift Leader and Deputy Shift Leader will then contact the Hall caretaker to dial 999 for the fire service to attend and clear the building.
- The Cook will turn off all gas appliances by pressing the red stop button, and make sure all appropriate fire doors are shut. The Cook will then clear the kitchen.
- The Deputy Shift Leader will direct Guests and Volunteers to the nearest safe exits: either the front door, door on Chapel Walk, or fire door in the upstairs kitchen.
- Do not use the lift.
- Do not delay unduly for people who will not evacuate.
- The assembly point is outside the Crucible Theatre.
- The Shift Leader will remain at the front door of the Project to make sure no one re-enters and also to liaise with fire service personnel.
- No one may re-enter the building until the fire service and/or Hall Caretaker say it is safe to do so.



Engaging with guests



A smiley face is always a good start!

- Informal chats with a guest will make them feel welcome. Empathy and support can make a difference.
- Some guests may appear less sociable. There is no blueprint for conversation or interaction with guests.
- As you meet a new guest, ask if they are comfortable and make them aware of our services – they might not know we have a hairdresser on that day, have someone to help with housing advice, or have a clothes store for example.
- We have board games, books etc, available and have planned activities. You could see if a guest would like to join any of these activities.
- If a guest is not interested in talking, please respect their choice. Some guests may prefer to be left alone.

Active listening tips

- Use open questions. These are questions that can have a range of answers and don't just invite one specific answer. An open question would be, '*How are you feeling?*'. These types of questions give someone the opportunity to open up if they want to and show that you're there, even if they're not up to talking about it.
- Let them talk. It might seem a bit obvious but leaving some gaps in a conversation can give someone a chance to think about what they want to say, if anything.
- Have a neutral tone of voice and open body language. These things might be most important of all, especially if you're not sure of what to say in a difficult conversation. Just being open and showing you're there will automatically create a supportive environment and can help on its own.

Dealing with difficult behaviour

- Seek support - from the Shift Leader, Deputy Shift Leader and other experienced volunteers.
- Don't fight back - don't try to beat them at their own game. Avoid confrontation.
- Don't try to change the difficult person's behaviour.
- Don't take the difficult person's behaviour personally - a difficult person's behaviour is habitual and they behave this way with most people.
- Do stay just outside the reach of any guest who is angry. This will avoid you stepping too close to them and into their personal space.



HARC

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LOCATION:

Victoria Hall, Norfolk Street, Sheffield S1 2JB
(please use George Street entrance)

PROJECT DATES AND TIMES:

8.30am Sunday 24th December 2023
to 2.30pm Monday 1st January 2024