

Volunteer Guide



WORKING
TOGETHER



SOMEONE TO BE THERE

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SOMEONE TO BE THERE

— Why your support matters

Our referrals increased by a massive

890% 

in the first lockdown.

We were there for
people in urgent

58,584

need in Aberdeen
times.



We delivered

18,494

care packages
during the first
lockdown.

We received

1,709

Gift-in-Kind
donations that our
volunteers helped to
sort through.

As living costs continue to rise, so does demand for our services and support. We are so grateful that during these exceptionally difficult times, people from all walks of life have stepped forward to help some of those most vulnerable in our community.

Without our dedicated volunteers, we couldn't carry out vital activities such as helping people with food, warmth, safety and companionship. From food parcels or sorting donations, to joining or running activities: you are the heart of our care for those in need.

IT STARTED WITH A
HELPING HAND

OUR VOLUNTEER HISTORY



01

1968

Established in 1968, we began life as a soup kitchen in the city's Castlegate, organised by student volunteers from the University of Aberdeen.

02

2006

Our Street Alternatives service was set up in 2006. It started with just 6 volunteers and grew to over 60 regular volunteers running the service which provided meals, washing and showering facilities!



03

2020

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Street Alternatives converted to AC2U to deliver care out in the community. Volunteers collected donations and helped pack food parcels for people in need; and they worked online, running yoga and music classes to boost the physical and mental wellbeing for our isolated service users.



04

2021

In 2021 we were honoured with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. The QAVS is the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK!



05

2022

As even more people continue to ask for help, we continue to grow to provide vital support. Volunteers are the foundation across all our services at Aberdeen Cyrenians: being there for people when they need help.

POSITIVE IMPACT ON YOU

Volunteering and direct community support will always be at the heart of what we do. Our volunteers are essential in providing the range of support that many people rely on.

However, we want to make sure you get something out of it too!

When you volunteer with us, you have the opportunity to make a true difference in the lives of others every single time. With the busy lives we lead, making time meaningful helps improve our quality of life.



Why should you volunteer with us?

- Meet new people
- Put your values into action
- Learn new skills
- Enhance your skills
- Help strengthen communities
- Great for your mental/physical health
- Feel great for making a positive impact

“ Having started volunteering in the warehouse at the start of the year I have enjoyed meeting the other volunteers I work with as well as the warehouse staff. It's heartwarming to see the amount of donations we receive and I am really looking forward to seeing the other side when the food go to those in need! ”



Our volunteers inspire us every single day with their amazing attitudes and infectious energy. **Thank you** for everything that you do.

HOW CAN I HELP?

Our volunteer roles are as varied as our projects and service users. Whatever your interest, we've got something that's just right for you.



Behind the scenes

There's a huge number of tasks that keep our services ticking over, from stocking the grocery store; collections and deliveries and sorting donations; to helping our Corporate Services team with specialist skills such as logistics and administration or gaining new skills. Whatever you feel comfortable doing makes a big difference to getting support to where it's needed.

Working with service users

Those who use our services are often isolated, lonely, and have low self-esteem. Our amazing volunteers are great at befriending, offering a listening ear, and re-building confidence through shared activities, and offering other meaningful distractions. From gardening, quizzes, yoga or music group to simply sharing a smile and a cup of tea, there's a wide range of activities you can get involved in.

Fundraising

From helping run our online charity shop, organising your own donation drive, gathering a team of adventurers to take on a challenge, or creating your own fundraising event, there's lots of ways you can help make sure someone is supported.

OUR MISSION

At Aberdeen Cyrenians, we support people to make positive change. We are known as a pioneer in homelessness; but we also work with other vulnerable people that face challenging and overwhelming circumstances.



Our focus is on what matters to those that ask for our help, we work alongside people to untangle the multiple and complex challenges they face. Easing their burdens and helping them on their journey to recovery, we are here for people in need.

... AND HOW YOU BRING IT TO LIFE

By volunteering at Aberdeen Cyrenians, you will be helping vulnerable people, often at the margins of society, struggling every single day.

You will help them feel that they belong and that they matter, giving them warmth, hope and reassurance. Playing a role as part of their journey; helping them to flourish in the future.





— “ —————

I started volunteering with Aberdeen Cyrenians in 2017, mainly at weekends for Street Alternatives. I found this such a rewarding thing to be doing and no two shifts were ever the same.

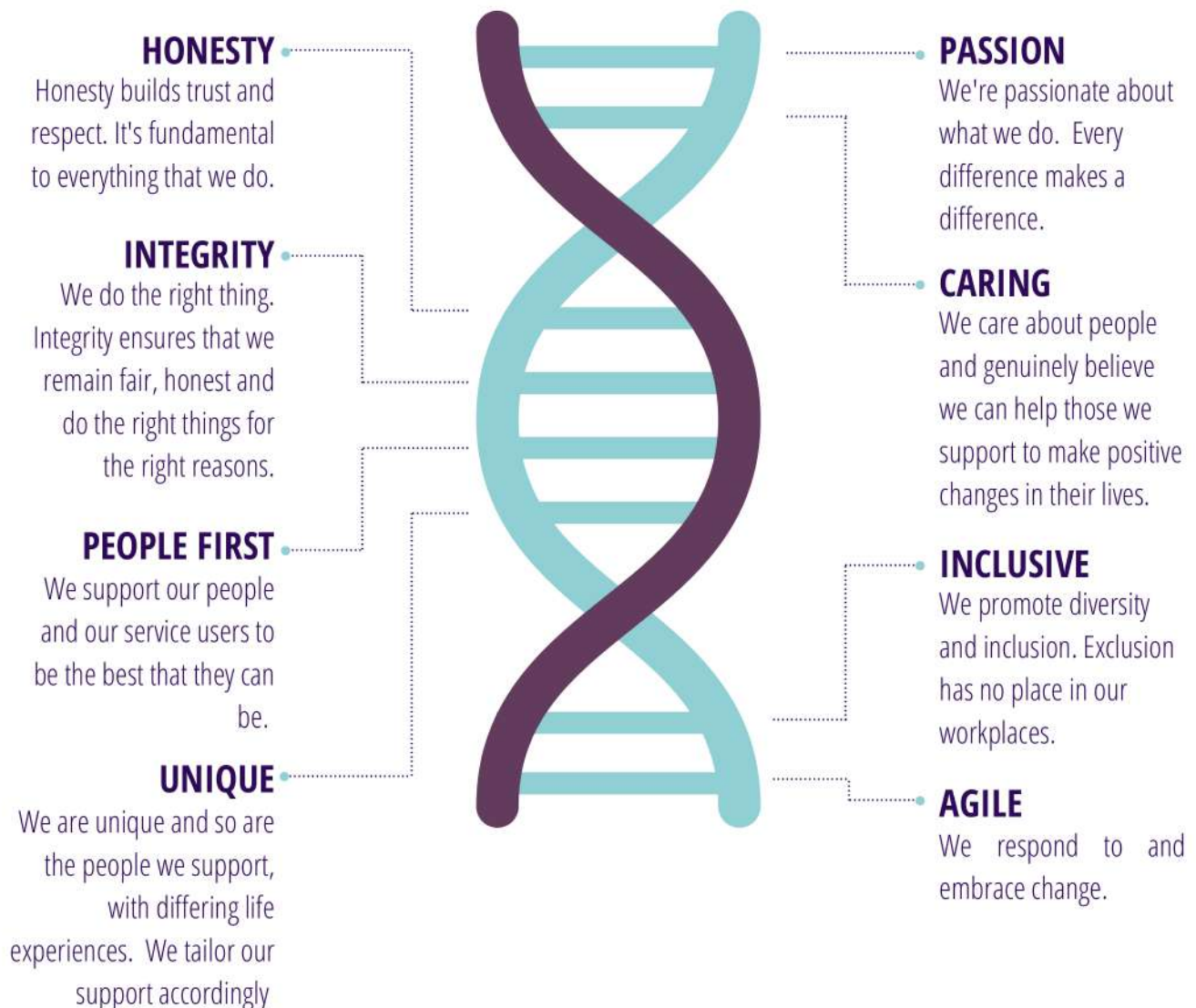
With the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic obviously everything changed and I have now found myself helping out at the new warehouse. It's very different from anything I had done previously and certainly different from my office based "day job" there's lots of lifting and sorting food donations but I really enjoy it. It's great to feel that I'm helping such a worthwhile cause.

————— ” —

OUR VALUES

Our values are the guiding principles that inform how we work. They reflect what we hold to be truly important to us as an organisation and are a commitment to our service users, stakeholders, employees and volunteers in terms of how we interact, how we create value and how we measure success.

Our values are non-negotiable. They shape the culture at Aberdeen Cyrenians and are embedded across all of our services. They are critical to our ongoing success and we expect everyone within our organisation to embrace them as their own.





SAFETY AND WELLBEING

At Aberdeen Cyrenians, our number one priority is the safety and wellbeing of our service users, volunteers and staff. Supporting people at their most vulnerable means it is vital that we make every effort to keep them safe. When things go wrong it can put people at serious risk, as well as damage trust in the organisation and the care we provide.

We require anyone that works with us to make this same important commitment to safety and wellbeing for the good of the vulnerable people we are supporting.



LOOKING AFTER YOUR WELLBEING

We promise to provide clear guidance and boundaries to allow volunteers to keep service users and themselves safe. To provide ongoing support we will also:

- Provide an induction and all the necessary training for you to enjoy your role
- Be available with ongoing support and guidance during your time volunteering with us
- Let you know how to claim and provide reimbursement for any appropriate expenses
- Manage risk and carry full insurance with your safety in mind
- Provide equal opportunity to all
- Provide support when things go wrong, listen to any complaints, and strive to improve





PROTECTING EVERYONE

To protect everyone, respect the boundaries and rights of individuals, ensure responsible behaviour and a safe space, everyone representing Aberdeen Cyrenians shares a common code of conduct.

This includes:

- Always working in the spirit of our core values
- Seeking guidance when you're unsure how to handle a situation or responsibility.
- Contacting your team leader if you feel you are missing necessary training or knowledge for your role.
- Engaging with training to make the most of opportunities to learn
- Support the wider team by notifying staff as soon as possible if there is an issue with meeting your shift commitment
- Bring positivity to being a role model, using behaviour and attitude to promote our aims and values.
- Act responsibly and be accountable for carrying out your role
- Keep people's information confidential and respect privacy in line with our policies
- Be fair and treat everyone with respect and dignity
- Always communicate openly and respectfully
- Work to deescalate potential disruptive behaviour by notifying staff
- Be mindful of family and carers of service users
- Comply with all UK laws and guidance



Life is complex and we recognise that even with good intentions, boundaries can seem blurred. Helping someone in crisis makes people want to go that extra mile and elicits strong empathetic emotions. Equally, sharing someone's journey can cause stress and frustrations. To support our volunteers we offer extensive training as well as ongoing support to help navigate any challenging experiences.

PROTECTING EVERYONE

To help keep boundaries clear we ask all volunteers to agree to the following guidelines.

- Any violent, aggressive or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated.
- Keep an individual's personal details private unless you have explicit permission to share them with a specific person or service
- Keep your own last name, phone number and other personal identification details private from service users
- Do not lend or give money to service users
- Touching Service Users must be limited to a handshake/fist bump of greeting or shoulder-pat of congratulations or assurance
- Ensure you do not ask Service Users any probing or inappropriate and personal questions
- Do not offer lifts to service users or invite them to your home
- You cannot conduct a personal relationship with Service Users, even after they no longer use our services.
- Do not use recreational drugs on any Aberdeen Cyrenians premises or bring them into any premises whilst volunteering
- Any supply of illegal drugs or illegal drug equipment whilst volunteering with us will not be tolerated
- You must not be under the influence of any alcohol or drugs while volunteering.
- You cannot exploit or abuse your position as a Volunteer
- You may only accept small tokens of appreciation that are no greater in value than £5
- Your faith or belief practices must be kept private from Service Users or other Volunteers unless asked
- You may not sway or attempt to convert Service Users to your specific religion or opinions

HOW WE SOLVE PROBLEMS

We hope you have an enjoyable and rewarding time volunteering with us, but sometimes problems can happen.

It could be a difficulty in carrying out a task you've been given, challenging behaviour from a service user, or an issue with another volunteer.

We want you to know that we are here for you, whatever it is, and will work as quickly and fairly as possible to respond to and resolve the issue you are experiencing.



To ensure we solve any problems with a fair and standard approach, we will take the following steps:

Step 1 - Informal approach

Whenever possible, we try to resolve problems informally within each service. This means we expect people to talk to one another to try to sort out issues themselves. If you need support to solve the problem, your volunteer manager will be your first point of contact.

Step 2 - Formal Approach

If a problem is more serious or cannot be solved informally, then we use our formal procedure to investigate impartially and decide what to do.

If you are involved in a formal procedure, we will give you support and information to understand and prepare anything needed.

Step 3 - Appeal

Volunteers can appeal a formal decision if they believe that the procedure has not been followed properly or the outcome is unreasonable.

"GETTING HELP FROM ABERDEEN CYRENIANS HAS BEEN LIFE-CHANGING FOR ME. WHEN I FIRST CAME TO THEM, I WAS DRAINED, TIRED, AND FELT LIKE GIVING UP. THEY REALLY INSPIRED ME TO MAKE CHANGES. I'M SLOWLY MOVING FORWARD, WORKING HARD, AND I NOW HAVE A FULL-TIME JOB. YOU'VE MADE A POSITIVE MARK IN MY LIFE AND I WILL NEVER FORGET YOU".

-SIMON



WE'RE ON HAND TO SUPPORT YOU



Your main contact:

First stop for anything volunteer related from signing up, training or scheduling to feedback, difficulties or opportunities. We're here to help you on your journey.

Email: volunteering@weareac.org
Tel No : 0300 303 0903

Corporate Services:

Email : AskCS@weareac.org
Phone: 0300 303 0903

- PVG** Protecting Vulnerable Groups form and references
- IT** Training or Assemble scheduling access
- Expenses** Claims and enquiries

Warehouse:

Email: Warehouse@weareac.org
Phone: 01224 009621



www.weareac.org



[aberdeen.cyrenians](https://www.facebook.com/aberdeen.cyrenians)



[Abdn_Cyrenians](https://twitter.com/Abdn_Cyrenians)



[aberdeen-cyrenians](https://www.linkedin.com/company/aberdeen-cyrenians)



[aberdeencyrenians](https://www.instagram.com/aberdeencyrenians)

INDUCTION CHECKLIST

To help you get settled in, here's the first steps we'll be taking together so you can check you have everything you need.

- Go to our volunteering webpage
- Complete the Volunteering Application Form
- Receive an introductory email with this guide
- Have a telephone interview
- Complete required ID checks for PVG
- Complete core online training sessions
- Discuss and agree volunteering role
- Complete role specific training
- Attend welcome induction
- Complete volunteer agreement
- First day on-site induction



VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

I have read all the materials and undergone the necessary training relevant to my volunteering role.

This includes:

- Volunteers Guide
- Digital Training Material
- Health and Safety Training

I have sought and received clarification of the above. I will work within the code of conduct and policies and carry out my volunteering duties to the best of my abilities.

VOLUNTEER NAME: (please print clearly)

VOLUNTEER SIGNATURE:

VOLUNTEER MANAGER SIGNATURE:

DATE:



A pair of hands is shown holding a piece of light brown cardboard. The word "support" is written on the cardboard in a simple, grey, sans-serif font. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light grey.

THANK YOU FOR CREATING CHANGE FOR PEOPLE IN CRISIS

Find out more or get in contact:

www.weareac.org

volunteering@weareac.org

0300 303 0903