

Volunteer Handbook

VOLUNTEER

www.swansecarerscentre.org.uk
Charity number: 1108865
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from swansea carers centre

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welcome to swansea carers centre

Thank you for offering to help us in supporting unpaid carers in Swansea.

Volunteers are vital to our work, and we want to make sure that your time with us is rewarding and enjoyable. The purpose of the Volunteer Welcome is to explain our commitment to you, the commitment we expect back in return, and to make sure that you are going into the role which best suits your abilities and interests.

You may be invited to a follow up meeting after the Volunteer Welcome, to confirm or change your role. We may suggest other charities if we feel they are more suitable for you.

This handbook is packed with useful information about our charity and volunteering. Keep it in a safe place so that you can refer to it later.

We are always looking for ways to improve our work, so if you have any suggestions, ideas or comments, please let us know.

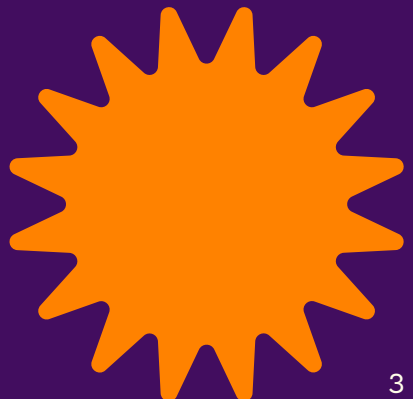
And finally, if anything is unclear, or you want to know more about any aspect of our work, please don't hesitate to ask.

Volunteer Coordinator: Ruth Carpenter, 07376 028359
Swansea Carers Centre, 79 Prince of Wales Road,
Swansea, SA1 2EX.

Phone: 01792 653344

Ty Conway, 1 Brenig Road, Penlan, Swansea SA5 7BU

Phone: 01792 578158



About Swansea Carers Centre

Swansea Carers Centre was set up as a project by Age Concern Swansea in 1994. In 2005, it became an independent charity and part of the Carers Trust network.



We offer free support, information and services to anyone who is caring for a relative, neighbour or friend who is vulnerable, sick or disabled. We have more than 3,000 unpaid carers and former carers on our mailing list and each week we help new clients.

All our services are completely confidential. They include but are not limited to:

- Carers Hub
- Welfare Benefits advice
- Grants
- Counselling
- Support groups – mental health, book club, young adult carers drop in, dementia drop in, parent carers drop in
- Helping Family Carers Project
- Ty Conway Adult-Day Centre
- Training activities and personal development
- Holistic therapies
- Young Adult Carers Project
- GP Link Worker
- Hospital Outreach
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (B.A.M.E.) Project
- Male Carers
- Dementia Project
- Live and Learn Project
- Carers Connect Project
- Extended Hours Helpline
- Short Breaks (Amser) Project
- Fuel Poverty Project

You will find more information about all these services in our main leaflet for carers. A copy has been supplied for you together with a chart of the organisational structure.

Volunteer Roles

As a volunteer, you can get involved in different activities:



- Carers Hub Volunteer
- Carers Cwtsh Volunteer: Helping offer Carers Advice and Information in the Carers Cwtsh Drop-In
- Ty Conway Volunteer: Supporting clients at our respite day centre with activities
- Youth Club Volunteer: Supporting young adults aged 16 – 25 with their caring role through activities at youth club
- Office Volunteer: Helping staff with various tasks in the office
- Outreach Volunteer: Helping us give information to carers in community settings such as hospitals and G.P. Practices
- Holistic Therapy Volunteer: Qualified holistic therapists offering free treatments for carers
- Dementia Drop-In Volunteer: helping people with dementia and their carers at our dementia Drop-In
- Male Carers Group Volunteer: male-only volunteers helping with activities support at our male carers group
- Dementia Hwb Volunteer: offering information advice and signposting to people who call into Swansea Dementia Hwb.
- TIME4YOU Volunteer: providing weekly 1 to 2 hour sits with cared for in their home so that the cared for can enjoy their company and their carer can have a respite break
- Youth Club Peer Mentor Volunteer: young adult carers who are ready to take on more responsibility in youth club, and be a support and role model to their peers
- Telephone Support Volunteers: volunteers who check-in with carers once a week by telephone to catch up and have a chat

We also have a Board of Trustees, who is unpaid volunteers with a variety of professional backgrounds and expertise, to oversee the work of the charity and ensure good governance. 5

Our Volunteers

More than 60 people of all ages, backgrounds and cultures regularly give their time to Swansea Carers Centre. People volunteer for many reasons: perhaps to get involved in their local community or to get valuable work experience.

Volunteers matter to us

Volunteers add value to our work with local carers. They contribute their own skills, experience, ideas, time and care.

We hope volunteering will give you:

- The enjoyment of working as part of a team.
- A chance to meet people, make new friends and gain confidence.
- The chance to use your skills and talents to benefit carers.
- Personal growth and development.
- The rewarding feeling of helping others.
- The knowledge that you have made a real difference.

Training

You will get all the information and support you need to help you do your best. Training may be formal or informal 'on the job' advice. Every volunteer will have a line manager whom you can ask for help and support.

Time Commitment

Some roles require a regular weekly commitment, while others are occasional.

In all roles, reliability and punctuality are essential. For example, in Ty Conway, the older people might be put at risk if volunteers come late or don't turn up.

If you are unable to attend because of illness or family illness, please give the staff as much notice as possible. Please contact your line manager or project directly, or call reception (01792) 653344. If there is a regular pattern of unreliability or unpunctuality, we may have to put you on a reserve list, ask you to swap to a different role or refer you to a different charity.

Our Commitment to You

Your time, skill and enthusiasm will make a very big difference to the lives of local carers. We will help you get the most out of your volunteering by giving you support, training and meeting any legal or other requirements.



Making you feel part of Swansea Carers Centre

We will ensure that you:

- have regular contact with other volunteers and paid staff
- are always treated fairly and without discrimination
- are treated with respect and consideration

Support and training

You will always:

- be assigned a line manager
- be given clear information about what is expected of you
- have someone to talk to about your volunteering
- know that your contribution is valued

Legal and other requirements

You will always:

- be covered by our insurance in your volunteering
- be reimbursed for travel expenses – bus fare, mileage and parking if needed
- have a safe environment in which to volunteer
- have an opportunity to share your ideas and comments

For full details of our commitment to you please see our Volunteer Agreement (V03) on the volunteer section of our website.

Your commitment to us

As a Swansea Carers Centre volunteer, you will be in a position of trust. You might be caring for vulnerable people or be responsible for our equipment. We ask you to minimise risk and to preserve our good name by:



Knowing and keeping the rules

Some rules will vary according to your role, but many will be the same for all volunteers. We will give you copies of some of our most important policies (Health & Safety, Confidentiality, Equal Opportunities), so please read these and ask if you are unsure about anything.

Being reliable

Carers and their loved ones depend on our services. If you have to change your plans, fall ill or cannot attend on time, please let us know in plenty of time, so that we can try and make other arrangements.

Keeping confidentiality

Any personal information you hear, over-hear or read during your volunteering is completely confidential. This means you must not discuss it with anyone from outside our charity – not even your immediate family. Please make sure you read and understand our Confidentiality policy, and ask for help if needed.

Safeguarding and Professional Boundaries

Please read our Protection of Vulnerable Adults policy and tell staff about any abuse that you suspect or become aware of.

It is very important for staff and volunteers to maintain professional boundaries with clients – whether carers or those they care for. You should not become over-familiar and put yourself in a scenario where you or the client could be at risk or a complaint could be made. We offer regular and essential training on these topics, so please try to attend when they are advertised.

Our code of conduct can be found on the volunteer section of our website

Health and safety



The Charity is responsible for your Health and Safety and that of the clients and colleagues you volunteer with, but you have a role to play. There are strict laws about Health and Safety, which apply to all volunteers and staff involved in our charity.

We will make sure that your working conditions are safe and will supply you with a copy of our Health and Safety policy. Please make sure you read and understand it, and ask for help if needed. Please let us know if you notice any safety hazards on any of our premises.

First Aid

In our offices and daycare centre, there will be a qualified first aider or a named person who can take charge of the situation (e.g. call an ambulance) if someone is seriously injured or taken ill. But you should find out in advance – Who are the named first aiders? What is expected of you? Where is the first aid kit kept? If you can keep calm in a crisis and provide support to the staff, the whole scenario can be dealt with more effectively.

Reporting an accident

If you or someone in your care has an accident, no matter how small, you must report it. This is essential, even if no further action is needed at the time.

Fire

Never ignore the fire alarm. Make sure you know what to do if you discover a fire or if the alarm goes off.

Lone working

Most of our volunteers are working in a team setting, but if you are ever required to volunteer on your own, please ask for our Lone Working policy and guidance from your line manager.

Money matters



Expenses

We will reimburse you for any travel expenses related to your volunteering and also parking if needed. You will be given a claim form. You can claim weekly from petty cash or monthly or bi-monthly with the claim form. If you write your sort code + account number on the form the first time you claim, your expenses can be paid directly into your bank account. Please attach bus tickets and parking receipts as appropriate. Your line manager must countersign to confirm your journeys. If you need help – just ask your manager. If you volunteer for 4 hours or more over a lunch period, we can reimburse your lunch. Please ask staff for more information.

Insurance

We have insurance protection to cover all volunteers, although there is reduced cover for volunteers aged 80+. Please ask for information if needed.

Gifts and donations

Sometimes our clients may want to show their appreciation by making a gift to you or to our charity. You may be allowed to keep an item of low value, e.g. chocolates or flowers, but please check with your manager first. Alternatively, you may want to donate the item to be used for a fund-raising event or raffle.

Any financial donations should be passed immediately to your manager or another member of staff.

Never get involved in any financial or legal matters relating to a client, e.g. being a signatory or executor.



Fair play

You and everyone else involved in our charity have the right to be treated fairly and without discrimination.

We will not accept any unfair discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender, nationality, race, religious belief or sexual orientation.

We will give you a copy of our Equal Opportunities and Managing Diversity policy. Please make sure you read and understand it, and ask for help if needed.

Comments, suggestions and complaints

We are constantly striving to improve our services and welcome your comments and ideas.

If something goes wrong, we try to resolve the situation quickly, fairly and informally. We don't want you to drop out of volunteering because there was something you were unhappy about and we were unaware.

But if you feel you have been badly treated by the charity, or you raised a problem which was not resolved, our Volunteer Grievance Procedure is the formal method for dealing with these scenarios. You have been supplied with a copy so, once again, please make sure you read and understand it, and ask for help if needed.

Please note that we have a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service any person who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult.

What happens next?

The Volunteer Coordinator will contact you, to confirm or discuss the role you applied for. They may suggest another role or charity if they feel it appropriate.

Volunteers are accepted on a probationary basis, to be reviewed by project staff at the end of 3 months or sooner if needed. A volunteer can be asked to leave at any time, if they fail to meet the requirements of the role.

Some roles require a criminal record check. If you've had convictions or cautions in the past, it doesn't mean you can't volunteer. We take into account the nature and seriousness of the offence and how long ago it was.

Some old and minor convictions no longer need to be disclosed. Please see www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-filtering-guidance or ask the Volunteer Coordinator for more information.

We treat all personal information in strict confidence, and only the Director and Volunteer Coordinator have access to disclosure information.

When the criminal record check is complete, you will receive a certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service through the post. Please phone the Volunteer Coordinator straight away 01792 653344 and leave a message if needed. She needs to see your certificate briefly and then it's yours to keep. If more convenient, you can drop it in to our office or Ty Conway addressed to her and marked confidential – but please don't send it through the post



Criminal record update



There is an update service you can join if you wish – so that if you move to a similar role with a different organisation in future, they can make the criminal record check quickly online. Joining is completely optional and is free for volunteers. You have to renew your membership annually and you will get an email reminder.

You can apply within 19 days after the certificate has been issued, using the number on the certificate. Note your Update Service ID number and keep it safe. For more information, please see: www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-update-service-applicant-guide

Final words

Thank you for offering to help. We hope you will enjoy your volunteering.

Once accepted into a role, project staff will contact you to arrange a start date. They will give you any information or training you need. The Volunteer Coordinator will send you a newsletter with details of training and events.

If there's any problem - if you want to change roles or take on additional roles, if you need to take a break or to finish volunteering – just talk to your line manager.



Swansea Carers Centre,
79 Prince of Wales Road,
Swansea, SA1 2EX
www.swanseacarercentre.org.uk
admin@swanseacarercentre.org
01792 653344

