



Volunteer Information Pack

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1. Background

Adapt (North East) is a registered charity, a company limited by guarantee and a social enterprise which is managed by a Trustee Board of volunteers with a wide range of areas of expertise.

We are a community-based organisation providing services to people in North East England with the aim of promoting an inclusive society.

We aim to improve the quality of life of disabled people who have sensory, physical and learning disabilities or mental health problems; also people who are disadvantaged in being able to access services because they live in a rural location.

To become more self-reliant, we have developed a range of services, including provision of an enterprise hub and community cafe, whilst still holding on to our primary aims. By using our services, other organisations are assured of quality attention whilst at the same time as helping us in our work.

We hope you find this handbook useful; it is yours to keep and refer to during your time as a volunteer. The aim of this book is to provide all volunteers with a reference manual that supports the information received in the Induction Training. It contains a limited amount of information and guidance; therefore please contact us if you would like further information, advice or support.

Thank you for giving your time to volunteer for Adapt (North East), we hope you enjoy volunteering with us!

2. Adapt (North East) Volunteers

Adapt (North East) offers opportunities for volunteers to get involved in a number of roles including the Café, Site Maintenance/Gardening, Administration, Advocacy, Transport and Healthwatch. Volunteers are required to follow the Good Practice Guidelines for Volunteers (Appendix 1) and follow the Adapt (North East) Code of Conduct (Appendix 2).

This document is intended to explain the different roles volunteers can get involved in, what Adapt (North East) will expect from volunteers in specific roles and the support that will be provided.

Where it is appropriate, Adapt (North East) volunteers will be required to go through a Disclosure and Barring Service check.

2.1 What is a volunteer?

The following description is taken from 'The Volunteering Code of Practice' "...An important expression of citizenship and essential to democracy. It is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community and can take many forms. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain".

2.2 Supporting our volunteers

Adapt (North East) volunteers will have the support they need to enable them to fulfil the role they undertake with confidence, including induction, training and supervision. Volunteers will be provided with appropriate briefing information, documents and resources where required.

2.3 Induction

Volunteers will go through an induction process to ensure that they understand what Adapt (North East) does, have access to relevant policies and procedures, are aware of the support available and are clear about the role of volunteers and our expectations. We will discuss their skills and experience and agree the most appropriate volunteering role for them. They will be provided with any information they need to undertake this role.

2.4 Training

Adapt (North East) volunteers will be given the training they need to undertake the role and tasks they are involved in. The training each volunteer needs will be identified through the induction process and supervision sessions. Training will aim to ensure volunteers gain the knowledge they need and are prepared for the tasks expected of them. Some training will be mandatory.

2.5 Supervision

All volunteers will have access to supervision from a member of the Adapt (North East) staff team. The session will enable the volunteer and member of staff to review activity undertaken by the volunteer, identify any support and training needs, as well as to ask questions, raise concerns, resolve problems and agree any changes required. The sessions will also ensure volunteers have the information and resources they need to undertake their agreed role.

2.6 Confidentiality

All information about service users, volunteers and staff is confidential, and should be treated as such. We ask that volunteers refrain from divulging any information gained during the course of their duties to any third party.

2.7 Expenses

When volunteering for Adapt (North East), you are entitled to be reimbursed for all travel expenses completed while volunteering at a rate of 45p per mile. If you are directly volunteering for Adapt your expenses will be covered by Adapt and if you are volunteering directed from a partner organisation they will reimburse your expenses.

All information provided relating to expenses should be used to complete the volunteer expenses form. Expenses claims are processed each month and reimbursement is by BACS transfer for which you will be asked to provide your Bank Details.

Volunteers who submit expenses claims to the Adapt (North East) office by the 15th of the month will receive reimbursement by the end of the same month.

2.8 Insurance

Adapt (North East) has personal accident and public liability insurance for all staff, volunteers and service users. If you sustain an injury whilst carrying out your voluntary work, you may be eligible for compensation.

Prior to volunteering for Adapt (North East) if you are using your own vehicle in any role you will have to inform your own insurance company that you are undertaking a voluntary role for which we have a standard form. Failure to notify your insurance company that you are undertaking this could invalidate your cover.

If you change insurance companies at any time, please inform the Adapt (North East) office in order for us to amend our records and provide you with a new form for the insurance company.

2.9 Duty of Care

All voluntary and not-for-profit organisations have to undertake a 'Duty of Care', under the Health and Safety at Work Act, to identify risk areas and procedures. The Health and Safety at Work Act affects all of us. It is considered good practice by the HSE to apply the same standards to voluntary workers as to paid staff under the 'Duty of Care'. We advise that you do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure the health and safety of yourself, staff and service users therefore it is necessary for volunteers to feedback any concerns, however minor.

2.10 Smoking

Smoking is prohibited in Adapt's premises; there is a designated smoking area outside for staff and volunteers.

2.11 Complaints Procedure

If volunteers or staff have a complaint or are unhappy about a service user, member of staff, or any aspect of our service please refer initially to the Volunteer Co-ordinator at Adapt (North East) on 01434 600 599.

All information will be treated confidentially.

2.12 Equal Opportunities

We are committed to developing and maintaining an organisation in which differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are fostered and valued, and where those with diverse backgrounds and experiences are able to participate and contribute.

3. Adapt (North East) Volunteer Roles

There are a number of ways in which you can become involved with the work of Adapt (North East), depending on how much time you have, what your skills and interests are, and how involved you want to be. Volunteer roles are outlined as follows:

3.1 Administration

Individuals who help out our staff team with administrative tasks at busy times which could include answering the phone, sorting the post, photocopying/printing and shredding.

3.2 Site Maintenance/Gardening

Individuals who maintain and keep tidy the small garden and outside areas.

3.3 Community Café – Café @ Burn Lane

Individuals who support our Café team by serving customers and ensuring the smooth running of the Café.

3.4 Advocacy

Individuals who provide support on information signposting and file management within the Northumberland Independent Advocacy Service (NIAS).

3.5 Healthwatch

Individuals who provide support during community engagement activities across Northumberland.

3.6 Transport

Individuals who assist passengers on the bus and opportunities to drive the buses.

3.7 Getabout

Individuals who help people to overcome their transport difficulties by providing volunteer driving. We have an additional handbook for the Getabout access scheme, if you are interested in volunteering for this please ask for a copy.

3.8 Trustee Board

Adapt is looking for additional volunteer trustees to join its current board. Therefore if you have experience in business development and/or marketing please contact Adapt (North East) to find out more.

Please see Appendix 4 for more information on role descriptions.

4. Application Process

Individuals who express an interest in volunteering with Adapt (North East) will receive an information pack.

4.1 Volunteers Application form

Anyone interested in volunteering with Adapt (North East) will be asked to fill in the application form providing two referees for references. When a completed application form has been received and references have been sourced the applicant will be invited to meet with the Volunteer Co-ordinator. The meeting will cover the skills and experience they feel they would bring to the role at Adapt (North East) and identify how they would meet the requirements of the volunteer role(s) they are interested in.

4.2 Disclosure and Barring Service check

Volunteers recruited by Adapt (North East) will undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check before they can start volunteering. The cost of a Disclosure and Barring Service check will be covered by Adapt (North East). DBS applications can take up to 4 weeks to process. As Disclosure Certificates only cover previous histories, it may be necessary to make new checks to keep up to date.

4.3 Ongoing support, supervision and communication

Volunteers will be kept up to date with relevant information and will have the opportunity to speak to a member of the team when they need to. Feedback from volunteers about activities they are involved in will be required and should be submitted promptly in the required format. Supervision sessions may be with individuals or groups where this is appropriate, however, individuals will have the opportunity to speak to a member of the team in confidence about any issues of concern.

In the unlikely event of an emergency whilst carrying out any voluntary duties for Adapt (North East) please contact the office on 01434 600 599.

4.4 Identification

Volunteers will be issued with an identification badge which we ask you to wear whenever you are volunteering for Adapt (North East).

4.5 Policies and Procedures

Volunteers will adhere to Adapt's policies and procedures alongside staff and are available to be viewed in the office or can be provided. Please find within the appendices policies that are most relevant in your day to day volunteering.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Good Practice Guidelines for Volunteers

Appendix 2 – Code of Conduct

Appendix 3 – Adapt (North East) Equality Policy

Appendix 4 – Volunteer Role Descriptions

Appendix 5 – Volunteer Application Form

Appendix 1

Good Practice Guidelines for Volunteers

- Volunteers must maintain service user confidentiality, including the fact they are a service user.
- Volunteer and service user relationships can be friendly, caring and supportive but must remain professional. The Volunteer Co-ordinator must be notified if the nature of a relationship with a service user is in question.
- Volunteers must maintain organisational confidentiality, including (but not limited to) information about employees, volunteers, service users, customers finances, statistics and board policy.
- A volunteer's obligation to maintain service user and organisational confidentiality does not end when the volunteer leaves Adapt (North East).
- Volunteers must not contact or speak to the press or media in relation to their duties as a volunteer except as authorised by Adapt (North East); or publish any information in relation to their duties.
- Volunteers are supported by the Volunteer Co-ordinator who should be advised of any urgent concerns immediately as they arise. Issues not requiring urgent attention should be recorded and reported as required.
- Training is delivered according to tasks and roles. Additional / Extended training can be requested and will be provided when and where appropriate.
- Performing volunteer duties while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs is cause for dismissal.

Appendix 2

Code of Conduct

As an Adapt (North East) volunteer, you may come into direct contact with service users, staff, and the public. Great care must be taken at all times to ensure that your actions do not interfere with or compromise services in any way.

In any activity you undertake as a volunteer, you are an ambassador for Adapt (North East) and you are expected to abide by the following principles of conduct and behaviour.

Respect

- Treat each other, and anyone else involved with the work of Adapt (North East), with equal respect, courtesy, sensitivity and dignity.
- Have respect for individual confidentiality.
- Behave in a responsible, reasonable and proportionate manner at all times.
- Be aware and respectful at all times of the needs of service users you come into contact with.
- Communicate appropriately with others you come into contact with.

Openness and accountability

- All volunteers will conduct themselves fairly and openly.
- All actions and decisions made on behalf of Adapt (North East) will be appropriate to and in the interests of Adapt (North East).
- Carry an identity card at all times.

Honesty

- Personal views must be set aside and you must not attempt to take advantage of your involvement with Adapt (North East) to pursue these.
- Any private interests or conflicts of interest must be declared and steps taken to resolve these conflicts.

Best interests and objectivity

- All activities must be in the best interest of Adapt (North East) and the wider community.
- Pursuing specific issues at the expense of other Adapt (North East) priorities must be avoided.

Integrity

- No Adapt (North East) volunteer will put themselves under any financial or other obligation to any person or organisation that may attempt to influence any decision or action that is taken by Adapt (North East).
- Comply with all health and safety requirements.
- Not make unreasonable requests or demands.
- To dress appropriately for the activity being undertaken.

Equality and diversity

- All volunteers and staff will comply with the Equality Act 2010 at all times.

This code of conduct must be followed at all times.

In the event of a breach of the Code of Conduct, the following steps will be taken:

- **Informal warning**
- **Formal warning**
- **Suspension from volunteering for Adapt (North East)**
- **Removal from volunteers database**

I agree to follow the Adapt (North East) Code of Conduct and understand the actions that may be taken should I fail to do so.

Signed:

Date:

Print Name:

Appendix 3

Adapt (North East) Equality Policy

The activities of Adapt (NE) are firmly based on a policy of equality for all. Adapt (NE) aims to create conditions whereby people are treated solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of age, disability, gender (including gender reassignment), race, religion/belief and sexual orientation, or other irrelevant distinctions.

Through its activities, Adapt (NE) aims to:

- ◆ increase awareness of the abilities, potential, needs and wishes of disabled and disadvantaged people in the area of benefit
- ◆ further advance positive attitudes identified within the Equality Act
- ◆ promote collaboration between both statutory and voluntary bodies who have similar objectives
- ◆ promote inclusion and support the rights of individuals.

Adapt (NE) aims to encourage good practice in equality with all groups and organisations with whom it works.

Appendix 4

Volunteer Role Descriptions

Administration

General administration duties could include answering the phone, sorting the post, photocopying/printing and shredding. More specialist areas may include:

- Uploading digital content
- Community engagement activities (with Healthwatch Northumberland)
- Finance (General Office)
- Information technology/database management
- File management, information signposting (within Advocacy)

Site Maintenance / Gardening

There is a small garden at Adapt (North East) which needs maintaining. There is the opportunity to be creative with the space. We also have pots and planters at the café and would welcome the development of a herb garden. Duties could include:

- Weeding
- Grass cutting
- Planting
- Basic DIY tasks

Community Café – Café @ Burn Lane

Providing good and friendly customer service carrying out duties that could include:

- Serving food and drink to customers
- Taking telephone food orders
- Taking cash and card payments
- Clearing and cleaning tables and general housekeeping

Transport

There may be opportunities to drive the buses or assist passengers on the bus. Duties could include:

- Driving
- Passenger Assistant
- Basic bus maintenance

Getabout

The voluntary car service is an important element of Getabout we are always looking for volunteer drivers to ensure we can offer a service across Northumberland. If you are interested in volunteering for this please ask for a copy of the Getabout Volunteer Handbook.

Trustee Board

Adapt has been very successful over the last ten years and is looking for additional volunteer trustees to join its current board. We have exciting plans to develop further, therefore if you have experience in business development and/or marketing and wish to support a local successful social enterprise we would be delighted to hear from you.



Appendix 5

Volunteer Application Form

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

_____ **Post Code** _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

MOBILE _____

E-MAIL _____

Date of Birth _____

Please explain your reasons for applying to become an Adapt (North East) volunteer:

Which volunteer role(s) are you interested in and why?

Please describe any relevant skills or experience you feel you would bring to this volunteering role:

Please tell us about any other volunteering experience you have.

Would you be prepared to use your vehicle in your volunteering role? (please tick):

Yes No

Do you have any disability or health conditions which may affect your volunteering role? E.g. back problems

Times available to volunteer (please tick all appropriate):

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Am							
Pm							
Evening							

Please provide contact details for two people who will be able to provide you with references.

Name _____

Name _____

Address _____

Address _____

Post code _____

Post code _____

Tel no _____

Tel no _____

e-mail _____

e-mail _____

Please return your completed application to:

**Adapt (North East)
Burn Lane
Hexham
Northumberland
NE46 3HN**

Or e-mail generaloffice@adapt-tynedale.org.uk