



# **VOLUNTEER INFORMATION PACK**

Thank you for your expression of interest in volunteering your time and services to HOPE for Autism. Enclosed you will find:

- A brief overview of the organisation's history and services
- Information on volunteering and its benefits
- The benefits of volunteering
- Volunteer person specification and role description
- Information about our application process
- Contact information

## About HOPE

HOPE for Autism is described as a 'life-line' by families affected by Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in North Lanarkshire. Set up by local mothers whose children were diagnosed with autism, HOPE became a registered charity in 2002. Since then we have grown to provide a variety of support services to children and young adults on the Autistic Spectrum and their parents/carers who live in North Lanarkshire.

HOPE currently runs activity and sports groups for our service users 7 days a week. Additionally our support staff provide private support meetings with families, advocacy services, regular training, and a range of other services. With increasing representation in the area demand for our services is extremely high; we rely on the contributions of volunteers and paid staff to facilitate this support to our service users.

As a volunteer for HOPE, you can assist in the running of our activity and sports groups, providing support to children and young people; you could contribute to the administrative and organisational aspect of HOPE; you could join our fundraising team and help plan and manage fundraising opportunities; or aid our organisation in any suitable fashion.

Many of the opportunities are flexible and we strive to help our volunteers find the role most suited to their wants, skills, and to the needs of the organisation. If you are committed, we can help you find something to suit you.

## Why Volunteer?

HOPE's range of services could not be delivered without the continued dedication and support of its many volunteers. Our volunteers contribute to every aspect of our service: from our various groups and activity sessions to the administration work that helps facilitate our services.

People have come to volunteer at HOPE from all walks of life: from students looking for experience to those just looking to give back, everyone has something to offer and something to gain from giving up their time to help us support our service users. Rather than telling you why we think you should volunteer, we thought it would be better if real, local volunteers told you some of the reasons why they do it:

**Claire, 21:** "Volunteering makes me feel like I am doing something worthwhile with my free time. These kids teach me so much!"

**Derek, 29:** "Helping families who live with the challenges of Autism has given me insight into the value of volunteering. Moreover, working at Hope continues to be a learning experience for myself. Having the opportunity to make a positive

contribution to the community is something that I take seriously and never for granted.”

**Suzy, 24:** “It gives me a sense of achievement and makes me very happy; I always look forward to a Thursday night.”

**Gordon, 18:** “It allows me to give something back and the kids are great!”

**Tracy, 42:** “I enjoy working with both the staff and the young people. It is the highlight of my week”

Making a difference to the lives of others can be immensely rewarding, but the benefits don't stop there. Volunteers at HOPE have also reported seeing a difference in their skills and personal development, such as:

- improved communication and inter-personal skills
- building confidence and self-esteem
- experience working as part of a professional team of staff
- improved mental well-being
- access to useful training opportunities
- a fantastic opportunity to work with children and young people in a practical and active environment
- unique insight into autism spectrum disorder

HOPE also accepts work experience placements from students and others looking to develop their skills in a professional environment. Ranging from practical support to organisational and administrative experience, we offer various placements tailored towards the needs of the volunteer and where they best fit within our service. Such partnerships have proven greatly successful in the past and we strive to continue developing these reciprocal relationships.

### Saltire Awards

HOPE recognises the contribution of its young volunteers by supporting the Saltire Awards.

Saltire Awards is an initiative, supported by the Scottish government, aiming to formally recognise the hard work and commitment of young volunteers in Scotland. As part of the process, volunteers are able to record any skills and experience they have gained, which can help when pursuing a career.

HOPE's dedication to its volunteers means that any eligible volunteer (aged 12-25) will be encouraged and supported to pursue an award.

## Role Description and Person Specification

<b>Role</b>	The role of a volunteer session worker is to communicate and interact with children and young people with ASD in an environment that is safe, supportive, and enjoyable, while maintaining the practices and upkeep of HOPE for Autism.
<b>Specific Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish relationships with our children and young people</li> <li>• Help the development of our young people through supported play, communication, and other interaction</li> <li>• Support the senior group worker in the implementation of session plans and agreed upon support strategies</li> <li>• Help arrange and carry out structured group activities</li> <li>• Carry out tasks assigned by the senior group worker</li> <li>• Participate in staff briefings and debriefs in which sessions and support is evaluated and discussed</li> <li>• Maintain the cleanliness and organisation of the working environment</li> </ul>
<b>Skills and Qualities Needed</b>	<p>Volunteers will come from a wide range of backgrounds and will have many different qualities and skills. Essential qualities for this role are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aged 16+</li> <li>• Able to work with and support children and young people</li> <li>• Able to follow direction and apply themselves with an open mind</li> <li>• Willing to undergo any essential training</li> </ul> <p>Desirable qualities and skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience working with children and young people</li> <li>• Knowledge of Autistic Spectrum Disorders</li> <li>• Confidence to cope with any challenging behaviour</li> </ul>

<p><b>Commitment</b></p>	<p>We have opportunities ranging from just a few hours a month up to several days per week. Many of the opportunities are flexible and so if you are committed, we can help you find something to suit you.</p> <p>Volunteers must adhere to their agreed shift times, and any changes to these times must be communicated to the volunteer's line manager/HOPE office as soon as possible.</p>
<p><b>Support and Training</b></p>	<p>The volunteer will be given regular one to one guidance and support. During this support any relevant training that may be required will be identified and the volunteer will be offered suitable training to meet their need.</p>
<p><b>Probationary Introduction</b></p>	<p>Volunteers will commence their role under a 6-week probation period, where they will be supported in their introduction to the role. After this time volunteers will meet with their assigned line manager and/or the volunteer development officer to feedback on their time in the role and evaluate their suitability to volunteering. An alternative arrangement may be suggested in such situations where volunteers are best suited in other aspects of the service, otherwise their role will continue as originally planned.</p>
<p><b>Expectations of Volunteers</b></p>	<p><b>Turn up when you have agreed to:</b></p> <p>To maintain an appropriate staff to child ratio, we need to know that you will attend all sessions you have committed to. If for any reason you cannot attend, please give sufficient notice so that alternative arrangements can be made.</p> <p><b>Attend any necessary training:</b></p> <p>For the wellbeing of both volunteers and children, we ask that you attend some training to equip you with the necessary knowledge and skills to work safely within HOPE.</p> <p><b>Adhere to HOPE's policies and procedures:</b></p> <p>HOPE has various policies in place to ensure the safety of everyone in the organisation. All staff must adhere to these. You will be provided with a copy/made aware of policies relevant to your work</p>

	<p>at HOPE.</p> <p><b>Act as an ambassador for HOPE:</b></p> <p>As a volunteer with HOPE you are part of the HOPE family. We ask that you speak respectfully about your work with us to your friends and the local community and respect the confidentiality of the organisation and our service users.</p>
<p><b>Location of volunteering</b></p>	<p>Most of our volunteering opportunities will be based in: <i>The HOPE Centre, 145 Chapel Street, Airdrie, ML6 6LH</i></p> <p>However, we also have some opportunities in: <i>St Margaret's High School, Waverley Drive, Airdrie, ML6 6EU</i> <i>Tryst Sports Centre, Tryst Walk, Cumbernauld, G67 1EW</i></p>

## **Timetable for Volunteers**

### **Submitting your application:**

You will receive acknowledgement of receipt of your application within seven days of submission, after which time you will be invited to collect and complete the relevant Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme (PVG) form. You will then be invited to attend a Volunteer Induction Session, which will introduce you to our organisation, the job roles involved in our services, and any other information relevant to supporting our service users. After successfully completing this application process you will be contacted to arrange shift times and a date for commencing your voluntary role.

### **Checks and paperwork:**

Your deployment at HOPE is subject to the successful return of a mandatory PVG check, the results of which may affect the outcome of your application.

### **Finding the right position for you:**

When a suitable position becomes available, you will be contacted to arrange a suitable date to commence your voluntary role by the Volunteer Development Officer and will be assigned a line manager.

**We look forward to hearing from you and hope you take your interest in volunteering to the next step.**

Callum Creaney  
Volunteer Development Officer

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