



Information for volunteers

Introduction

THOMAS recognises and values the use of all volunteers within the organisation. Volunteers make a vital contribution; they are seen as a powerful force for change because we believe their support increases quality, quantity and accessibility in the delivery of our services. We accept applications from all sources and welcome requests from ex-offenders and/or people who have a history of substance misuse. In order to embrace the diversity of the community and our service users we seek to recruit volunteers from a broad range of backgrounds. THOMAS has an Equal Opportunities Policy and aims to ensure no job applicant, employee or volunteer is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

There are a variety of opportunities within THOMAS for volunteering in different settings and a range of different skills that can be utilised. The level of frequency required will depend on the role but we will try to be as flexible as possible.

At present we specifically require volunteers who can provide a regular commitment in the following projects:

Blackburn Drop-In (Monday to Friday lunchtimes 10 to 2.30pm for kitchen staff, 12.45pm to 2pm for supervisory staff in the dining area)

- Assisting in the preparation of meals/kitchen support
- Assistance with collection of donated food from local shops
- Supervision and support in the dining area

Furniture Restoration and Shabby Chic Project (Blackburn, Accrington, Swinton) Monday to Friday 10am to 5pm

- Vintage Furniture Restoration
- Collection and delivery of furniture – lifting/van driving
- Presentation of furniture in the shop
- Sales/Customer Service
- Advertising of products and services on social media/publicity

Process for becoming a volunteer

Step 1

- Complete 'Sign up to be a volunteer form'
- Meet with Volunteer Coordinator for initial assessment/exploration of volunteer opportunities and complete application form.
- References: Prospective volunteers need to be 18 years or older and to provide details of two referees who can be contacted. References need to be received before volunteering can commence.

- DBS (Disclosure Barring Service): THOMAS has a responsibility and duty of care to ensure that Volunteers are eligible to work with Vulnerable Adults. With the exception of volunteering in the kitchen at the Blackburn drop-in, consent will be required for Background checks by means of a Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check. A history of criminal behaviour or alcohol or substance misuse is not necessarily a barrier to becoming a volunteer but there is an expectation that you will be willing to explore this history with the Volunteer Coordinator and Project Manager in order that a risk assessment can be undertaken.
- Induction meeting with Volunteer Coordinator. This session will cover expectations, code of conduct, introduction to THOMAS policies and risk assessment relating to any information returned via the DBS checks.

Step 2

In respect of the Blackburn Drop-In

- Attend Induction briefing with the Drop-In Manager and undertake a short trial period of volunteering. This is an opportunity for the prospective volunteer to test out whether it is something they wish to commit to in the longer term, and for THOMAS to assess whether the prospective volunteer is suited to the role in question.
- Review meeting with the Project Supervisor and Volunteer Coordinator.
- Monthly review meetings with the Placement Supervisor.
- Monthly review meetings with the Volunteer Coordinator for the first three, reducing to every three months thereafter dependent on review.

In respect of the Furniture Restoration Workshops/Retail Outlets

- Attend Induction briefing at the Project base and undertake a short trial period of volunteering. Paid staff member to be present at all times during this trial period. This is an opportunity for the prospective volunteer to test out whether it is something they wish to commit to in the longer term, and for THOMAS to assess whether the prospective volunteer is suited to the role in question.
- Review meeting with the Project Supervisor and Volunteer Coordinator.
- Monthly review meetings with the Placement Supervisor.
- Monthly review meetings with the Volunteer Coordinator for the first three, reducing to every three months thereafter dependent on review.

Accessibility

If you have additional needs related to health, disability or learning then please let us know at the earliest opportunity so we can assess how best to support you and make any necessary adjustments.

Training

THOMAS is committed to ensuring all volunteers are properly trained and supported in order that they can carry out their role safely, effectively and with confidence. Training falls into two categories:

Essential – relating to specific role

Voluntary – THOMAS will provide additional training to support development of volunteers' knowledge and skills

This is a shortened version of THOMAS' Volunteer Policy which can be found on THOMAS' homepage www.thomasonline.org.uk.

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