

fire
support net



VOLUNTEER

H A N D B O O K

fire
support net



Established 2007
www.cfsnet.org

Cleveland Fire Support Network Charitable Organisation

www.cfsnet.webs.com

Hello and welcome

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with the Cleveland Fire Support Network.

Volunteers are at the very heart of our organisation and as such are the face of the local community and are essential to everything we do!

It is our ambition to make sure everyone who gives their time to us feels valued, understood and proud to be part of Cleveland Fire Support Network. This handbook is here to explain the things you need to know about volunteering with us. Thank you once again for deciding to make a difference. We hope you find it helpful. If you'd like more detailed information on any of the subjects covered, please speak to your main CFSN contact in the office. They will be more than happy to help you.



Heather Whyman
Chief Executive Officer

A little bit about us

The Cleveland Fire Support Network is an independent Registered Charity which aims to make every home in the Cleveland area secure and fire safe. By promoting and engaging with the local community through the Network's volunteers, issues relating to fire safety as well as providing practical support to any individual or community in need, involved in, or affected by fire.

The Charity works in partnership with Cleveland Fire Brigade and has a Board of Trustees.

The charity's OBJECTS are:

To advance the education, to preserve and protect the health, life and property of the public within the United Kingdom by promoting the issues, services and equipment relating to fire safety and other support to any person in need involved in, or affected by fire or other related emergencies.



A little bit about our volunteers

Incredibly, we now have over 100 volunteers within the Cleveland area. They live within Middlesbrough, Stockton, Redcar & Cleveland and Hartlepool.

Volunteers get involved for a variety of reasons, such as:

- Learning or enhancing a skill
- Be part of your community
- Motivation and sense of achievement
- Boost your career options
- Build confidences
- New interests and hobbies
- New experiences
- Meet new people

We don't have a typical volunteer; but each one has the same thing in common: they are absolutely vital to our work.

Leigh-Ann, (pictured below) 24yrs of age volunteered for 5 years

'I started volunteering after being at a training session for Heart Start, Heather was the trainer with one of the volunteers, this was at The Stages Academy where I was living at the time, volunteering gives me an opportunity to meet new people, help in the community and gain new skills as

well as keeping me busy, during my time here I have graduated from University, I am the first in my family to have achieved this and I am now also in full time employment, do I think the Network made a difference, yes, absolutely'.

David, 65yrs of age, volunteered for 5 1/2yrs

'When I stopped full time employment due to retirement, I became bored at home and felt useless, volunteering with the CFSN has given me a new lease of life and I really enjoy being part of something worthwhile, I have made loads of friends and feel part of an extended family'.

Tony, 72yrs of age, volunteered for 1 1/2 years

'Being Retired from full time work I was becoming bored and decided to volunteer as I now had lots of spare time, being involved in the Network gives me an opportunity to help my community.'

Lauren, 21yrs of age, volunteered for 1 ½ years

'I have always admired the work of the Fire Brigade as both my parents worked for the Fire Brigade, my dad was a fire fighter and my mum still works in the control room at the headquarters. I wanted to get involved and help my community, and I really love being here it is such a nice place to work.'

Aside, 28yrs of age, volunteered for 4 ½ years,

'I really enjoy volunteering, it has got me out of the house, I am trying to find a job and this helps me'



Ways to get involved

There are oodles of ways for you to get further involved in our work. Here are some examples of the opportunities and roles we offer:

- Leaflet Distribution
- Home Fire Safety Referrals
- Events / Exhibition Stands
- Cold Calling—Promoting Fire Safety
- Office Duties / Administration
- Delivery of Risk Reduction Equipment
- Heart Start—CPR Training
- Learn & Live Support
- Interpretation Skills for Operational Fire Fighters
- Pre /After Fire Support
- Home fire safety visits
- Ban the Pan - Feb (National Chip Week)
- Chip Pan Unit Demonstration
- Surveys - telephone
- Sensory Loss Alarm Installations
 - Management of the sensory loss alarms
- P.A.T Testing (Portable Appliance Testing)

What you can expect from us

We want to make sure that you enjoy your role and get the most out of it.

Our commitment to our volunteers, we will:

- always treat you with respect, consideration and appreciation
- ensure you have a clear idea of your responsibilities, including the length of time we'd like you to be involved in a project
- give you information about the training and support available to help you carry out your role
- provide you with support through regular meetings or discussions (the format will depend on your role)
- offer you fair, honest and timely feedback on your work
- update you on how your work has made a difference



Ronnie, 44 years of age (SN), volunteered for 2 years. 'I love volunteering for the Network to meet new people. I am always treated with respect and receive training for the tasks I carry out'



What we expect from you

We expect high standards from all our supporters, whether they are paid staff or volunteers.

To ensure you get the most out of your role, please try to do the following:

- always treat CFSN's staff, supporters and fellow volunteers with respect, consideration and appreciation
- act in a professional way whenever you represent Cleveland Fire Support Network or Cleveland Fire Brigade
- act in a way that doesn't discriminate against or exclude anyone
- provide as much notice as possible if you are unable to fulfil your volunteering commitment, or if you no longer wish to be involved in a project
- if you don't fully understand your role and responsibilities, please ask your CFSN contact for guidance

We will support you

Induction

After your very informal induction, your CFSN contact will introduce you to the team and anyone else you might work with. They will also go over health and safety requirements. Please use this opportunity to ask any questions and to highlight any areas you would like further training and support in.

We recommend a 3 month settling in period for all of our volunteers; it gives us both a chance to assess how things are working out.



Training

We want to ensure that you feel happy and confident to carry out your role. As a CFSN volunteer you will receive on-going training relevant to the role/s you are interested in.

Support

You'll receive on-going support from your CFSN contact. As part of your development, please make a note of how each task you carried out went, what you did and if there were any issues that arose. Most volunteers will have a review meeting and the frequency of these will vary depending on the nature of your role and your time commitment.

The review meeting, in person or by phone, will focus on how the role is going, what support you need and, if necessary, update you on what's happening at Cleveland Fire Support Network. It should be an opportunity for volunteers and staff to raise issues and for you to talk constructively about your involvement with us.

Reliability and commitment

It's very important that you are reliable and you stick to any arrangements you have made with us. If your circumstances change, please let your CFSN contact know as soon as possible.

If you're planning to go on holiday, please let your CFSN contact know that you'll be unavailable for certain dates and when you plan to return.

The essentials

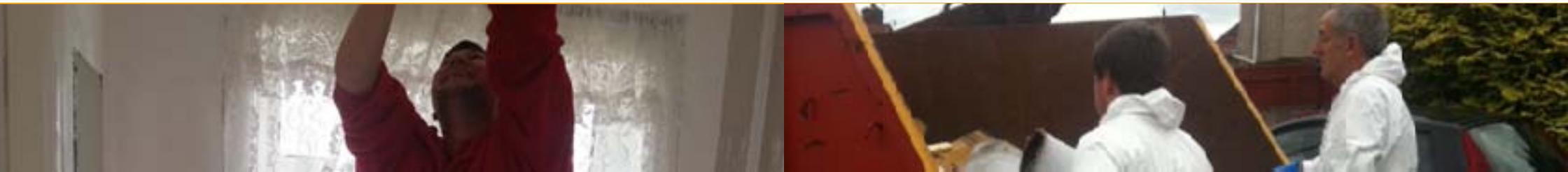
As a volunteer, you'll need to be aware of the following policies and procedures. Please take a few minutes to have a good read through and familiarise yourself with them.

Expenses

CFSN will reimburse volunteers for any reasonable out-of-pocket expenses. We will only reimburse the amount that you have spent as a result of your volunteering, up to agreed maximum levels. Tickets and receipts must be provided in order to reclaim this money and expenses forms are to be completed and signed. It remains the decision of the volunteer as to whether they wish to claim expenses or not.

Gifts

Giving or receiving gifts may give the impression of favouritism and could raise expectations of the level of support you can provide in your role. As such, we ask that volunteers don't give or receive personal gifts to or from staff or anyone receiving services from CFSN.



Health and safety

CFSN is committed to looking after the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone who works for us, on our premises or who is in receipt of our services. This commitment applies equally to our large team of volunteers who are vital to the services we provide.

Any activities carried out on a voluntary basis are covered by the same health and safety legislative requirements as those carried out by CFSN employees. It's therefore important that you understand and expect your personal responsibility towards promoting and maintaining health and safety standards in order to provide a safe working environment for all.

Volunteers with specific responsibilities for health and safety will receive training and guidance to help them fulfil their responsibilities. Suitable risk assessments are prepared for all activities being carried out in the name of CFSN.

It's important that you:

- Carry out your duties without endangering either your

own health and safety, or that of colleagues, third parties and/or the general public.

- Comply with all relevant instructions and procedures relating to safety and follow guidance provided by CFSN.
- Inform your CFSN contact of any personal health and safety requirements that you have.

If you have any doubts regarding your health and safety role or responsibility please speak to your CFSN contact as soon as possible.

Accidents and incidents

All accidents or near misses must be reported to your CFSN contact as soon as possible. If it is a real emergency, please contact the emergency services directly.

Personal safety and ID cards

On your application form you will have provided us with a next of kin contact who will be contacted in the unlikely event of an emergency. You will be issued with an identification card after your settling in period which should always be worn when carrying out your activities.



Boundaries

Clear boundaries are important for staff and volunteers. They enable us to carry out a service according to agreed expectations and ensure that everyone receives the same quality of service.

We realise that staff and volunteers may sometimes have contact with clients in a personal capacity - as friends, family or colleagues. In this situation, please take care to avoid any apparent conflicts of interest.

Confidentiality

Volunteers must maintain confidentiality during their time with CFSN. For this reason, after your induction you will be asked to sign a confidentiality declaration. This means that confidential information about volunteers, employees and clients, people we support and our work is kept private, unless sharing this information is required by law.

Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

CFSN is involved in working with or supporting children, young people and vulnerable adults in a variety of ways. Each volunteer will be required to undergo a Criminal Records Bureau check as part of our policy on safeguarding to an advanced level.

Data Protection

Before we can collect, store or use data about an individual, the law requires us to ensure that we have that individual's consent to do so. The way we do this is by using what we call 'Data protection statements'. Our statements comply with the Data Protection Act. This is a legal act that protects people's personal information.

You may, in your work with us, have access to and handle the personal information of the people you are helping. It's vital that you are aware of our policy, if not please ask your CFSN contact for a copy of this.



Diversity

We are committed to a policy of treating all volunteers and volunteer applicants equally and fairly. We accept volunteers based on their suitability for the role. We would never discriminate against any volunteers because of their age, disability, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, nationality, political beliefs, race, religion, sexual orientation or socio-economic background.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted within the property of CFSN or any adjoining buildings or whilst carrying out your activities. Please ask your CFSN contact to point out the designated smoking areas.

Insurance

As a registered volunteer you are covered by CFSN's Employers and Public Liability Insurance when carrying out your volunteer duties on our behalf. This covers our legal liability to pay compensation for injuries or illness to a third party or damage to the property of third parties, which are due to CFSN's negligence. It does not cover pure accidents (e.g. if a spectator at an event trips over their own feet, or malicious damage e.g. deliberate damage to equipment).

Car drivers

If a volunteer has a full driving licence and are interested in being a volunteer driver; they will take a driving assessment provided by Cleveland Fire Brigade which will allow you to drive the Brigade vehicles which are fully insured.

How we talk

When you're volunteering for CFSN it is essential that we maintain a voice that's consistent, clear and easy to understand. Whether you're speaking on behalf of CFSN, drafting an email or writing a letter. If you would like any advice, tips or help with being clear and communicating positively please contact your CFSN support.

What we wear

As a volunteer for CFSN, you're also an ambassador for the organisation and Cleveland Fire Brigade. You're responsible for presenting a positive image to visitors, clients and the wider community. It is essential that you wear the full uniform that is provided for you and that is always neat, clean and tidy.





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