

Volunteering with the Manchester Volunteer Advice Project

Volunteer Information Pack



Manchester Volunteer Advice Project (MVAP)

What does MVAP do?

MVAP is a partnership between Mind, Cheetham Hill Advice Centre, Manchester Refugee Support Network, Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit and the Young Peoples Support Foundation. The project provides excellent quality volunteering opportunities in advice activities across all our organisations.

It is an opportunity open to everyone to increase skills, knowledge and confidence, to meet others and we aim to make it a fulfilling experience.

How do I get involved?

How to apply to become a volunteer

Recruitment is carried out centrally by the Manchester Volunteer Advice Partnership

The procedure is as follows:

- 1. Firstly you must be a Manchester resident.**
2. Submission of an application form.
3. Informal chat with the Volunteer Development Worker.
4. Attendance and successful completion of training and induction to the organisation. There are different training requirements dependent on your role.
5. References are requested on the application form however any difficulties should be discussed with the Volunteer Development Worker.
6. Volunteer roles will be subject to a DBS check. Having a conviction will not necessarily disbar you from volunteering in this project but checks do need to be made because we are working with children, young adults and vulnerable people.

Volunteer Development Worker: Dawn Kaveney

Contact at 07816 580792 or email dawn@cheethamadvice.org.uk.

Manchester Volunteer Advice Project: The Partners

Manchester Mind

Manchester Mind has built an excellent reputation in Manchester as a provider of services to people with mental health needs.

Their advice service, which is part of this project, help people sort out any difficulties with housing, benefits and debts.

Cheetham Hill Advice Centre

Cheetham Hill Advice Centre (CHAC) is an independent community advice organisation offering confidential help, advice, information and support to residents of Manchester. They help people with a wide range of subjects including: welfare benefits, housing, money, consumer, immigration and nationality, legal problems, access to education, access to health problems and information on local services.

Manchester Refugee Support Network

Manchester Refugee Support Network (MRSN) is a grass-roots organisation directly managed by refugee communities based in Manchester. MRSN aims to build strong and independent refugee community organisations, develop the skills of community leaders and give people the information they need to settle and build new lives. Their advice service is part of this project.

The service provides information and advice on welfare benefits, debt, housing, asylum support, and access to health services to refugees and asylum seekers and their families.

Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit (GMIAU)

GMIAU provide free, confidential and independent specialist legal immigration and asylum advice and representation to people seeking entry or leave to remain in the UK. It runs a drop-in advice session and appointments and has advice pages on their website as well as information about projects and campaigns.

The Young Peoples Support Foundation (YPSF)

The Young People Support Foundation (YPSF) provides a wide range of services to support young people towards an independent life as an adult. They work with young people aged 16-25, although some of their services are available for those aged 14 and 15. It's available to anyone even if they're living with parents or relatives, in council care, sleeping rough, are single or part of a couple or have children.

Their services range from practical support and advice for those at immediate risk of homelessness, to help with learning how to find employment, cook healthy meals or budget for household bills. Their aim is to help young people to find and maintain a home life that's safe and secure, with the means to support themselves, live healthily and be free from harm.

Volunteer Roles

Volunteer roles

Our aim is to have flexible roles taking into account what you'd like to do and what the services need. The following gives you an idea of the kind of tasks that MVAP offer. You can express your preferences in the application form and with the Volunteer Development Worker.

For all roles you need to:

- Carry out all work in an impartial and non-judgemental way in compliance with policies of confidentiality and equality of opportunity.
- Follow Data Protection procedures.
- Be punctual and reliable.

Advice Worker

Advice work is a specialised form of volunteering which involves learning and using a range of skills. In order to take on the Advice Worker role you will need to be willing and able to commit to complete the full training programme and be willing to attend further training and meetings to maintain and develop your skills and knowledge.

The role

Interview and advise clients in person, by phone, by email or through home visits. This includes:

- Finding out what the client's problem is
- Helping the client identify possible solutions
- Researching and giving information clearly and simply
- Talking or writing to other agencies on the client's behalf
- Helping the client to write letters or fill in forms
- Record interviews with clients by writing up case sheets and keeping relevant statistics
- Manage own casework

Immigration Advice Support Worker

Immigration Advice Support Workers will be trained to support Immigration Advisers. This can include help with tasks such as filling in basic forms and administration.

Advice Support Worker

In some cases there are opportunities to volunteer as an Advice Support Worker (ASW) helping out advisers. ASW's can help with tasks such as filling in basic forms (paper and/or online) or writing a basic letter to an agency, photocopying, inputting data, filing and retrieving information. Some volunteers may wish to take on this role at first and then progress to doing full advice work later.

Reception Volunteer

Reception volunteers are the first point of contact for service users. They see people who come through the door and answer the telephone. Tasks will include taking messages, giving service users information about other services, photocopying documents and filing and retrieving information.

Admin assistant volunteer

An admin assistant will work in the office carrying out tasks to support the running of the organisations. This could include filing and retrieving information, inputting data and writing basic standard letters.

Interpreters

There is a great demand for interpreters in MVAP. Tasks include interpreting on reception and for Advice Workers during interviews.

Accompanying people to places

There are a number of reasons why some people will benefit from this service. It could simply be that they need another service and don't know where it is or they need someone to support them or go with them to places such as the doctors.

Volunteer recruitment assistant

Tasks will include helping with the development of advertising, attending events and using social media.

Training assistant

Tasks will include assisting the trainers in preparing materials and delivering training.

MVAP

Advice Work Training Programme

MVAP Training Programme

We have developed our advice work training programme to enable volunteers to gain the skills and confidence needed to carry out a range of roles within MVAP. However these skills are transferable and can open up other opportunities through personal development and increased knowledge.

What does it involve?

Trainees will attend 1 days training at an external venue delivered by the Volunteer Development Worker and half a day in one of the MVAP centres. Going into the Centre enables participants to relate what they are learning on the course to how the Centre works in practice. You will shadow volunteers and paid workers, undertake practical exercises and carry out tasks, all under the supervision of the Advice Work Supervisor.

The training programme is divided into 3 units.

Unit 1 will cover an introduction to the advice world and its role in the community, values and attitudes, policies within the organisations and communication skills and an overview of welfare benefits.

Unit 2 covers interview skills, advocating on behalf of service users, welfare benefits, debt and housing advice.

How much training you do is dependent on the role you wish to take up. Our aim is to provide you with the skills you need to fulfil your chosen role, to develop personally and to support you along the way. Training opportunities are ongoing whilst you are volunteering.

MVAP Volunteer Application Form

Please return to:

Dawn Kaveney, Volunteer Development Worker, Cheetham Hill Advice Centre, 1 Morrowfield Avenue, Manchester, M8 9AR or email dawn@cheethamadvice.org.uk or call on 07816 580792.

If you have any questions or would like any assistance in completing the form please contact Dawn.

Please note you must be a Manchester resident to be part of this project.

Why do you want to volunteer for MVAP?

What particular area of volunteer work are you interested in?

What do you want to achieve?

Do you have any access needs or special requirements (for example dietary requirements)?

Full name :

Address :

Telephone :

Email :

Skills and experience

Please use this space to let us know about current or past experience which you can bring to MVAP. This may be through employment, voluntary work or within your home.

What languages do you speak?

How many hours a week are you able to volunteer?

Which days and times are you available?

References

Please give the name, address, phone number and email address of 2 people we can contact for references. This could be a past employer or a personal reference. Please speak to the Volunteer Development Worker if you have any concerns or questions regarding references.

Referee 1

Name :

Address :

Telephone :

Email :

Referee 2

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

Do you have any unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings?

YES / NO (please delete as appropriate)

Any confirmation of offer of a volunteering role will be subject to a police check. Having a conviction will not necessarily disbar you from volunteering in this project but checks do need to be made because we are working with children, young adults and vulnerable people.

Where did you hear about MVAP?

Signed :

Date :

