

The Simon Community, St Joseph's House, 129 Malden Road, London NW5 4HS

PRE-APPLICATION INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIMON COMMUNITY AND THE ROLE OF PART-TIME VOLUNTEERS.

The Simon Community is a registered charity which works with people who are homeless. Founded in 1963 by Anton Wallich Clifford, a probation officer, the Simon Community today runs residential therapeutic communities and a variety of outreach services to people who find themselves sleeping on the streets of London.

The charity has always been run by volunteers, more recently with the assistance of paid staff.

The purpose of the residential projects is to support the residents in developing their confidence and skills after what can be the deeply traumatic experience of living on the streets.

Our outreach is intended to build and sustain relationships with people sleeping out, to offer them assistance and where appropriate to offer them a place in a residential project. The Simon Community provides a range of outreach services, including:

- Regular early morning tea runs
- Regular evening soup runs
- Regular Street Cafés, where we offer some food, friendship and an opportunity to chat, to get to know Simon and a chance to relax
- At certain times of the week, 129 Malden Road offers hospitality to those without a home, by providing food, access to the internet, our clothes bank and showers, use of a washing machine, friendship
- Street work, where we engage with people who are sleeping out, offering tea, a sandwich and friendship
- Regular visits to ex-residents and others who are now living in the community, offering support, advice and friendship

Other activities

- General driving
- Office work
- Data entry
- Fundraising
- Campaigning
- Mentoring
- If you have specialist knowledge, for example delivering training
- Writing material for use in talks etc
- Giving talks to schools

Part-time volunteers are involved with all or any of the above.

The role of part-time volunteers.

The residential projects are home to the people who live in them (residents and full-time volunteers); all live together co-equally, although the role of the full-time volunteers is to encourage and support the residents. This is a mutual process and all volunteers will find they in turn receive support and help from residents and from each other. As in any shared accommodation there is housework and cooking to be done. Residents who have been living out on the streets are likely to need to be encouraged and possibly shown how to take on their share of responsibility for running the houses.

The residential projects are run as therapeutic communities. This means that everyone who is involved in any way with the regular routine of the Community is expected to be as fully involved in all aspects of decision making and organisation as possible. There are daily Breakfast Meetings and regular House, and Community Meetings where all aspects of the life and work of living together are discussed.

Some part-time volunteers volunteer every day, some volunteer once a month: it is for you to choose your involvement with the Community and this will be respected and valued.

Rules

There are some important rules for part-time volunteers to observe whilst volunteering in the Community. They are:

- 1) Volunteers must uphold the ethos, policies and practices of the Simon Community, including the Health and Safety, Confidentiality and Equalities policies
- 2) Volunteers must not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol whilst volunteering with the Community
- 3) Sexual relationships between volunteers and residents and other vulnerable homeless people are totally inappropriate and are forbidden

If Simon Community volunteers do not comply with these rules, they are likely to be asked to leave the Community

What you can expect from the Simon Community

1. Induction

- To provide an induction on the work of the Simon Community, the ethos of the Community, our staff, your volunteering role and the information you need to meet the responsibilities of your role. The Volunteer Handbook provides full details of the organisation, including the ethos.

2. Expenses

- To reimburse your travel expenses to and from your home to Kentish Town/the outreach location; please keep all your receipts to support your claim and use the claim form and process laid out in the Volunteer Handbook

- 3. Health and safety**
 - To provide adequate advice and feedback in support of our health and safety policy, a copy of which is in the Volunteer Handbook
- 4. Equal opportunities**
 - To ensure that all volunteers are dealt with in accordance with our equal opportunities policy, a copy of which is set out in the Volunteer Handbook
- 5. Problems**
 - To try to resolve fairly any problems, complaints and difficulties you may have while you volunteer with us, in line with the process set out in the Volunteer Handbook

Selection Process

Once we have received your completed application form, an initial decision will be taken as to your possible suitability for your chosen role. You will be invited to attend the next Volunteer Induction Session, generally held every four to six weeks; you may also be invited to volunteer in your chosen role, in advance of the Induction Session, although this is not always possible.

If you decide volunteering at the Simon Community is for you, you will be expected to volunteer four times, and to come to 129 for an evening meal. Following this, the Community will decide on your application, at a Community Meeting; we aim to take up references during this time. If your application is successful, you will be welcomed as a Co-worker. You will also be invited to apply to become a member of the Company Limited by Guarantee; members are entitled to vote at the Annual General Meeting.

We keep in touch via email, a regular weekly email enables us to sort out the Rota and to update you on forthcoming events.

In addition, we produce a quarterly newsletter, Simon Star (see the website for recent editions).

How to apply.

Please download the relevant application form and either send it by post to:

THE SIMON COMMUNITY, 129 MALDEN ROAD, LONDON, NW5 4HS

OR VIA EMAIL – INFO@SIMONCOMMUNITY.ORG.UK

Community office telephone: 0207 485 6639