

Flexible Roles

The Volunteering Together 4 Health service is delivered by a partnership team of volunteering experts across the five boroughs of North Central London. Whether looking for volunteering advice and guidance at a system-wide or local level, you will find dedicated and expert support.

Flexible volunteering is about shaping a role around the person. By matching tasks to a volunteer's specific motivations, expertise, lived experience or availability, they can make a difference whilst not compromising their commitments. It's about empowering people to volunteer and respecting them so they feel listened to and can bring their whole selves.

Breaking Down Barriers for Our Communities

When we talk about being inclusive, flexibility is one of our best tools. We want our volunteer teams to reflect the diverse communities we serve, including those who are harder to reach and the **Core20PLUS5 population** (those living in the most deprived areas or from specific inclusion health groups).

Many people face significant barriers to traditional volunteering, such as:

- **Busy Lifestyles:** Competing priorities and other personal commitments often make 'fixed' roles impossible.
- **Health and Accessibility:** People who are disabled or have long-term health conditions need adaptable arrangements to participate.
- **Financial Pressures:** Volunteering can be difficult in a cost-of-living crisis and people may need opportunities that fit around prioritising paid work.

By offering flexible options, we send a message that everyone is welcome, regardless of their circumstances. It helps us build a volunteer base that is representative of our community, bringing in a wider range of life experiences and fresh ideas and improves volunteer retention.

How to Get Started

Creating a flexible role doesn't have to be complicated. In the role description show you're happy for helpers to fit the work in when they can. It can start with a simple conversation. When meeting a potential volunteer, try asking:

- What do they personally want to achieve in the role?
- What talents, perspectives and life experiences can they bring?
- What other commitments do they have? How can the volunteering role fit around them? Could they volunteer on an ad hoc basis or do small tasks rather than a recurring schedule?
- What would make it easier for them to volunteer? Check your internal processes and the environment aren't barriers for them to take part. Do they have any specific health needs to be accommodated for?

Quick Ideas for Flexible Roles

You don't have to redesign everything at once. Here are a few ways to add flexibility:

- **Role Sharing:** Splitting tasks between two people.
- **Micro-volunteering:** If activities require a greater time commitment, it may be possible to convert traditional volunteering roles into micro-volunteering opportunities by breaking them into segments. Create 'bite-sized' tasks or one-off opportunities that can be finished quickly or at their own pace.
- **Remote Volunteering:** Can they help with tasks from home?

Top Equality, Diversity and Inclusion TIPS

- To ensure your roles are truly inclusive, focus on removing barriers by reviewing if all 'fixed' requirements are necessary and offer varied opportunities (like remote or out-of-hours roles) to suit different lifestyles and skillsets.
- By adapting roles to individual needs and motivations, you create a more accessible environment where harder to reach applicants can contribute their unique lived experience, expertise and skills.

For further support contact your local volunteering experts:

Bridge Renewal Trust (Haringey)

CBPlus (Barnet)

Enfield Voluntary Action

Haringey Community Collaborative (Public Voice)

London Plus (Lead Partner)

Voluntary Action Islington

Volunteer Centre Camden (Operational Lead)

Volunteering Barnet (Groundwork London)

