Handbook for our volunteers

Together, we can achieve great things for people affected by dementia
Welcome and a big thank you for choosing to volunteer with us!

We are delighted to welcome you to Alzheimer’s Society. As a volunteer with us, you are at the heart of our mission to provide the very best advice and support to anyone affected by dementia.

By becoming a volunteer you are joining a growing number of amazing dedicated people who give their time, energy and skills. Our volunteers bring a fresh approach, add real value to what we do, and allow us to reach out to and support more people affected by dementia, both locally and nationally.

Volunteering is a special activity, highly respected by the Society and by the thousands of people we support each year. Our work simply wouldn’t be possible without you.

This handbook will guide you through your journey as a volunteer with us, and explain how we will support you at each stage.

Jeremy Hughes
Chief Executive
‘I volunteered because I wanted to change things. What I didn’t expect was that volunteering changed me.’
About Alzheimer’s Society

Alzheimer’s Society is the leading support and research charity for all people affected by dementia. There are 800,000 people living with dementia in the UK, and that figure is set to rise to one million by 2021.

We work across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and support activities in the Channel Islands and Isle of Man. Alzheimer Scotland, a separate charity, provides support to people in Scotland.

We are a member of Alzheimer’s Disease International (ADI), the international federation of Alzheimer’s associations (alz.co.uk). We also work with many other groups and organisations to help increase our impact.

Our vision and mission

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<th>Our vision</th>
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<td>is a world without dementia</td>
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- change the face of dementia research
- demonstrate best practice in dementia care and support
- provide the best advice and support to anyone dealing with dementia
- influence the state and society to enable those affected by dementia to live as they wish to live.

By pursuing these four goals together we’ll mobilise thousands of people. With them we’ll reduce the impact of dementia on lives today and create a world without dementia tomorrow.

Please ask your manager if you’d like to learn more about our five-year strategy, Delivering on dementia. You can also download a copy of our strategy booklet from [alzheimers.org.uk/strategy](http://alzheimers.org.uk/strategy)
Our amazing volunteers

Volunteering involves personal commitment and responsibility, but we hope it will give you a huge sense of achievement and fulfilment, too. Whatever your reasons for volunteering, the most important thing to remember is to enjoy what you’re doing and to let your manager or volunteering officer know how you’re getting on.

We have many ways that you can support the work of Alzheimer’s Society. Here are a few examples:

In our services

One of the ways that Alzheimer’s Society supports people affected by dementia is through local services. Our volunteers can get involved in the following:

- local information and signposting
- support groups
- Singing for the Brain® groups
- cafes and drop-in centres
- befriending schemes
- Dementia Adviser services
- office and publicity support.

Fundraising

To reach everyone who has dementia, we need vital funds. Our volunteers help raise this money through:

- local fundraising events and activities throughout the year
- supporting Memory Walk, our annual flagship fundraising event, and Dementia Awareness Week™ activities
- presentations and talks to community groups
- administration support – we have a lot of people to thank for their donations!
- joining our local volunteer fundraising groups.
Campaining

We’re an authority on dementia issues and it’s important we use our position to campaign for change that will improve all aspects of care and support. Our volunteers get involved in:

- local campaign groups
- awareness-raising in local communities
- providing compelling stories to the media
- influencing decision makers in local and national government.

Research

Our vision is a world without dementia, and, through funding research, we’ll ultimately find a cure. Our volunteers:

- influence how we spend our research funds by joining the Research Network
- use their personal experience of dementia to help develop research.

There are also other roles, in training, volunteer recruitment, finance, and many other parts of the Society.

One of our key volunteer roles is to become a volunteer local representative. This volunteer role will champion the Society’s vision and values. Volunteer local representatives use their knowledge, skills and experience to represent the Society with external organisations, statutory agencies, local groups and at awareness-raising events.
The benefits of volunteering

• Making a difference – the knowledge and satisfaction that you have made a positive difference to people affected by dementia.

• Meeting new people – volunteering can bring you into contact with like-minded people. It’s also a good way to meet people with different backgrounds and experiences to you.

• Having fun – many volunteers tell us about the fun they have volunteering.

• Building your confidence – volunteering brings new challenges, experiences and the opportunity to develop new skills, which can be really confidence-building.

• Personal growth and development – volunteering can give you transferrable skills for the future.

Down Lisburn Fundraising Group, Northern Ireland

The Down Lisburn Fundraising Group is made up of former carers who benefited from the support of the Society. This dedicated group get great satisfaction from their tireless fundraising for the Society.

Left to right: Anne Carroll, Robert Hunter, Clare Keenan, Bryan Clay and John Huddleson of the Down Lisburn Fundraising Group
Bethany Evans and Chelsie Davies – volunteers at our Memory Café in Wrexham, Wales

Bethany and Chelsie are both sixth-form students at Mold Alun School and both are hoping to go to university next year to study adult nursing and care. They chose to volunteers with Alzheimer’s Society after attending a volunteer recruitment event at Theatre Clwyd in Mold, and because they wanted to experience different fields of care before going to university.

Suffolk Campaign Group, England

The Suffolk Campaign group is led by volunteer, Sue Vincent. The group has campaigned on a range of issues, like early diagnosis and the quality of care in hospital.

Sue believes that enthusiasm, passion, good communication and the ability to be a diplomatic ‘pain in the neck’ are key to successful campaigning.
What we can offer you

Volunteers are very important to us: without you, we would not be able to achieve everything we want to with and for people affected by dementia. So we are committed to giving you a fully supported volunteering experience.

Induction
At the beginning of your volunteering journey, you will receive a copy of your volunteer role description with agreed tasks and expectations, and a full induction from your manager and/or your local volunteering officer.

Training
You may want to develop new skills – or refresh old ones. We offer a range of ways in which you can do this. This could be traditional classroom-based training courses and workshops, or online learning, shadowing, coaching, or leaflets, books and factsheets. You can talk to your manager or volunteering officer about what would help you in your role.

Recognition for all you do
We hope you will feel that you are recognised and valued every time you volunteer. But we also run an annual volunteer and staff awards programme to formally celebrate the amazing contributions and achievements of our people.

Expenses
You will also be reimbursed for any agreed out-of-pocket expenses you incur through your volunteering.

Regular communication
We are committed to keeping you up-to-date with information and news about dementia and the Society.
• Alzheimer’s Society website (alzheimers.org.uk) – this is the ‘go to’ place for all you need to know about dementia and what we do.

• If appropriate to your role, your line manager can arrange access to the Alzheimer’s Society intranet, Arena. (Ask your manager if you want to know more.)

• Volunteer Voice magazine three times a year – contains all the latest volunteer news and information.

• Local one-to-one support meetings (depending on your role).

• Local newsletters, email updates and publications.

• Local team meetings, volunteer meetings and social events.

• Dementia Knowledge Centre in our central office in London – an information service for professionals and others with an interest in dementia care and research.

We are continually looking at how we can communicate with our volunteers more effectively, and welcome any ideas to tellvolunteering@alzheimers.org.uk
What we need from you

It takes a special person to volunteer, and we are confident that you’ll do a great job.

Alzheimer’s Society has five values at the heart of everything it does. These are qualities we show every day, in providing excellent support to people with dementia, or in supporting colleagues to do their jobs well. Volunteers act in line with our values every time they volunteer and represent the Society.

Inclusive

• We are an inclusive organisation. Please respect the mission and goals of the Society, our property, our people and everyone you meet as an Alzheimer’s Society volunteer.

• Think about how you dress and if it is appropriate to some of the groups we are working with or the activity you are running.

Challenge

• We can’t all agree all of the time. Please deal with conflicts or difficulties in an appropriate manner.

• Tell us what you think – we love to hear constructive feedback.

Excellence

• Be willing to learn and take part in induction and training sessions.

• We want to achieve great things together. Please volunteer within the aims and objectives of the Society, following all the Society’s rules, especially around health and safety and data protection policy and procedures.
Integrity

- Honour confidentiality – this is so important, as you may be volunteering with vulnerable people or using sensitive Society information.

- Do seek guidance if you feel that there may be a conflict of interest between your volunteering role and other commitments (conflict of interest isn’t always obvious, so it is important to check this if you are in any doubt).

Enable

- We rely on our volunteers and so do the people you support. Please do let your manager, volunteering officer or other contact know as early as possible if you are unable for whatever reason to carry out your volunteering duties.
The important bits and pieces

Policies help us to be consistent in what we do. They tell us about the standards required, help us comply with the law, and, above all, help us to work within a safe environment.

Here is a brief summary of Alzheimer’s Society policies and procedures that affect volunteers. It is not a complete list, and things do change from time to time. We will try to tell you about any changes in a timely manner.

If you have any questions or would like more information about anything that follows, please ask your manager or volunteering officer.

Volunteering policy
This policy, devised with the help of existing volunteers, sets out how the Society intends to support its volunteers, highlights some reasonable expectations and confirms the importance of volunteering in all the Society does.

Confidentiality
In your role as a volunteer, you may have access to personal information. It’s essential that you treat this information confidentially. If you have any concerns about this, please speak to your manager.

Safeguarding vulnerable adults
The Society actively promotes the empowerment and wellbeing of vulnerable adults. We make sure that we meet our own standards for staff and volunteer conduct and incident reporting.

If you’re involved in delivering a service, and volunteer directly with people with dementia and carers, you must read and be familiar with the Society’s policy on safeguarding adults. Contact your manager if you want a copy of the policy.
Depending on the volunteer role, our recruitment process usually includes interviews, references, criminal record checks and appropriate risk assessments. We know this can seem like a lot of paperwork, but we hope you understand that we need to ensure the wellbeing of everyone as far as we possibly can. A thorough recruitment process really helps us to do this.

Your manager or other named contact will be able to let you know what level of knowledge about safeguarding you will need for your role.

**Out-of-pocket volunteer expenses**

This policy tells you about what can and can’t be claimed and the processes to follow. We reimburse all pre-agreed out-of-pocket expenses incurred by a volunteer as part of their volunteering activity. You will need to submit your receipts, so remember to hang on to them. You can find out more about the process from your manager.

**Data protection**

It is vital that you comply with our data protection policy and keep personal information confidential, safe and secure, whether on computer or on paper.

You need to complete the Alzheimer’s Society data protection awareness module if you have access to any personal data. You can do this online or via a paper workbook, with support from local colleagues. You may be exempt from this module if you have no access to personal information of any type. Check with your manager if you’re not sure.

Alzheimer’s Society is committed to meeting and exceeding its legal obligations in this area because the safety and security of personal data is for everyone’s benefit.
As a volunteer, Alzheimer’s Society will store information about you, on paper and on computer. You can rightly expect high standards in how we look after your personal information. We will not sell your information to third parties; we will only use it in connection with your agreed volunteer role and to keep in contact with you.

You have a legal right to request access to the data we hold about you. If you’d like to do this, please contact your manager or volunteering officer. Please be aware that we may need to charge you a small administration fee for this request.

Health and safety
Alzheimer’s Society is required by law to comply with health and safety legislation. Your manager will tell you about any workshops or online learning relevant to your role. We believe that high standards in health, safety and welfare are essential to our success. We aim to minimise risk and remind all our people that we have a personal responsibility to act at all times in the best interest of our own safety and that of others. This is often referred to as a ‘duty of care’.

Identity cards
Providing volunteers with identity cards is an important step in ensuring safer volunteering for you and people affected by dementia. It’s important that you don’t use your card inappropriately and that you hand it back if you leave your volunteering role before the card expires.

Whistleblowing
Alzheimer’s Society is committed to maintaining the highest standards of honesty, openness and accountability, and recognises that all our people have an important role to play in achieving this goal. We will not tolerate malpractice, and encourage anyone to come forward with their concerns.

Equality and diversity
Alzheimer’s Society is committed to inclusion, equality and diversity, both as a service provider and as an employer.
Our staff, volunteers and trustees are committed to a culture that actively promotes inclusion, diversity and equality of opportunity for everyone. This means we challenge discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, religious belief, class, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability and age.

Alzheimer’s Society recognises that Alzheimer’s disease and other forms of dementia affect the lives of individuals, groups and communities indiscriminately, and that people with dementia and their carers often experience prejudice and exclusion. We welcome people with dementia as volunteers wherever appropriate.

Resolving concerns
We love to hear when things are going well. But we also want you to tell us, as soon as possible, if things have gone wrong.

We usually recommend responding to issues and concerns informally to start with. However, if it’s a serious matter or one that has escalated, we have formal systems in place to support both volunteers and employees. This usually includes assistance from the regional volunteering development manager.

Insurance
Alzheimer’s Society has employers’ liability insurance, which covers authorised volunteers too, public liability insurance and professional indemnity insurance.

Receiving gifts
Alzheimer’s Society has set principles on receiving gifts. Common sense applies, of course, and small gifts, inexpensive Christmas tokens, like a diary or calendar, or the occasional paid-for working lunch during the course of official business are acceptable. However, if you’ve been offered a more substantial gift or hospitality, you should talk to your manager. You can’t accept a gift equal to the value of £25 or more.
Driving while volunteering
Volunteering is considered a leisure activity and your insurers should not ask for a business charge. If this happens, you may be interested to know that some car insurers have made the commitment to avoid extra charges for volunteering. More information is available from Volunteering England, VolunteerNow for Northern Ireland and the Wales Council for Voluntary Action.

Volunteering while on benefits
If you’re getting state benefits, you can be a volunteer and, in nearly all cases, your benefits will not be affected. If you’re getting benefits, you must always talk to Jobcentre Plus before you start any volunteering.

Taking a break
Sometimes volunteers need to take a break from volunteering, and this is perfectly fine. We just ask you to keep your manager informed of any decisions you make.

Providing a reference
We can provide you with a reference for any volunteering you may do. This is available for up to one year from your last day of volunteering with us.

Leaving
When you decide to leave the Society, we would welcome your feedback and suggestions on your time with us. You can email tellvolunteering@alzheimers.org.uk or talk to your manager or volunteering officer. Remember to hand in your identity card and any Society resources you have to your manager.

For more information or copies of the policies, please contact your manager or volunteering officer.
Handbook for our volunteers
Volunteer checklist

This checklist includes all the things that your manager should cover in your induction. Have a look through these questions with your manager and add anything else you think might be useful.

☐ Have you been given information about dementia?

☐ Do you understand how and where your role fits within the Society’s strategy?

☐ Do you know how to contact your manager?

☐ Do you have a list of useful local contacts and what they do?

☐ Have you received an induction, covering health and safety and data protection?

☐ Do you have a copy of your role description?

☐ Have you received an identity card?

☐ Have you familiarised yourself with the relevant policies and procedures?

☐ Have you told your manager how much time you can commit to?

☐ Have you been told about training opportunities?

☐ Are you clear you know what to do in an emergency?

Contacting us

To contact us, email tellvolunteering@alzheimers.org.uk

For dementia information and support, call our National Dementia Helpline on 0300 222 11 22.
How else do people support Alzheimer’s Society?

Volunteering is just one of many ways in which people, associations and companies support Alzheimer’s Society. Other ways you can get involved include:

**Fundraising**
Fundraising can be an incredibly rewarding and fun experience. Request a fundraising pack to get fundraising tips, sponsor forms and everything you need to get started.

[alzheimers.org.uk/fundraising](http://alzheimers.org.uk/fundraising)

E: fundraising@alzheimers.org.uk

T: 0845 306 0898

**Membership**
Become a member of Alzheimer’s Society and receive our regular magazine *Living with dementia* and much more.

[alzheimers.org.uk/membership](http://alzheimers.org.uk/membership)

E: membership@alzheimers.org.uk

T: 0845 306 0868

**Campaigners’ Network**
Receive email updates about our campaigning priorities and help to campaign for change.

[alzheimers.org.uk/campaign](http://alzheimers.org.uk/campaign)

E: campaignersnetwork@alzheimers.org.uk

T: 020 7423 5128

**Legacy and remembrance giving**
Gifts in memory or through a will help us continue our work.

[alzheimers.org.uk/legacies](http://alzheimers.org.uk/legacies)

E: legacies@alzheimers.org.uk

T: 0870 011 0290

**Shop**
Buy cards, gifts, books, daily living products and more.

[alzheimers.org.uk/shop](http://alzheimers.org.uk/shop)

E: alzheimers@mosaic-fs.co.uk

T: 0844 245 1175

*Call charges may vary depending on your telephone service provider, price plan and the time of day.*
Get in touch
T 0845 504 9300
E tellvolunteering@alzheimers.org.uk
W alzheimers.org.uk

Sign up for one or all of our newsletters at
alzheimers.org.uk/enewsletter

Find us on Facebook at alzheimers.org.uk/facebook
Follow us on Twitter at @alzheimerssoc

Leading the fight against dementia
Alzheimer’s Society