



## Frequently Asked Questions

### General Volunteer Programme

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#### **When do you recruit for volunteers?**

Solace Women's Aid recruits two times a year in January/February and July/August, however if you want to submit an application form, we will keep it on file and invite you for an interview at the time of the next recruitment stage.

#### **How much time do I have to give?**

Solace Women's Aid asks for a commitment of at least 1 day or 2 half days a week, for a minimum of 6 months in order for a volunteer to benefit fully from their volunteering experience.

#### **Are there certain skills I need to be a volunteer?**

It will depend on which role you are interested in. All volunteers will be offered comprehensive training so for most services, you will not need any previous qualifications, skills or experience; however for more specialist roles in services such as legal and counselling, the relevant skills and qualifications will be explained in more detail at the application stage. However, you will need to be open-minded, non-judgmental, be able to listen, learn and work as part of a team.

#### **Will I have to have an interview?**

The interview is a two-way process. It enables Solace Women's Aid to find out more about you, to ensure that you are suitable for the role, but also for you to ensure that the volunteering opportunity meets your needs and interests.

#### **Am I guaranteed to get a volunteer role if I attend the interview?**

Unfortunately, we only have limited amounts of volunteer opportunities and we tend to have more applicants than we do opportunities, however we do endeavour to offer opportunities to as many women as we can.

#### **What training will I receive?**

All volunteers will receive one full day of induction training. All volunteers will then have access to a full accredited training course covering Domestic Violence Awareness and Working with Women and Children effected by DV.

### **Will I receive out of pocket expenses?**

You will receive costs for travelling from your home to the place of volunteering and we would also trust that a volunteer would find the cheapest option of travel i.e. bus rather than car (we are unable to pay car mileage and parking costs but can offer the price of public transport.) If you are volunteering for more than 4 hours a day (over the lunch period), you are able to claim up to £3.50 for food

### **Can I still volunteer if I have a criminal record?**

A criminal record will not necessarily exclude you from volunteering, we take these issues into account on an individual basis. As a volunteer, you may be dealing with vulnerable adults, young people or children therefore, it is essential that the correct checks are carried out, to protect our volunteers and those that they will be working with. Checks like these are important so that we can ensure the safety of all the people we work with. We work within confidentiality policies and your information will be treated as confidential.

### **What if I am not sure which area or service I would like to Volunteer for?**

If you are not sure which area or service you would like to get involved in, your Volunteer Coordinator can arrange for you to spend a 'taster' visit to shadow staff and find out more about a couple of different services, if there are appropriate opportunities in other service at the time of request.

### **Can I volunteer if I am still using the service myself?**

Solace Women's Aid is unable to offer opportunities to women who are currently using any of our services to volunteer, due to the confidentiality of all our other service users. We can however offer opportunities to women who have been out of a SWA service for 12 months or more.

### **Are there a maximum number of hours I could volunteer for if I am on Job Seekers Allowance?**

No, there are no maximum hours that someone claiming JSA can volunteer for; however, you must be actively seeking and available for work. While there is no stated limit to the number of hours a person can volunteer for, it is very likely that a claimant volunteering more or less full time, 5 days a week will be considered, **not** to have time to be actively seeking work by benefits agency staff. To be available for work, a volunteer must be available to attend a job interview at 48 hour's notice, or start work at a week's notice.

### **Will I be guaranteed a paid job with SWA after I finish my volunteering?**

Solace Women's Aid can not guarantee that a volunteer will be offered paid work. In line with our equal opportunities policy, when a paid position becomes available,

it will be advertised externally and you would be welcome to apply for the position and go through the correct recruitment procedure for paid staff.