



Volunteer Handbook

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A message from Paul Hackwood, Chief Executive

Dear Volunteer,

Thank you so much for giving your time to Toc H. Without the enthusiasm and commitment of people like you, many of our community projects just wouldn't be possible. Our aim is to support you to get the most out of your time with us, offering activities that will provide you with the experience and skills to achieve your personal goals. Whether you have joined us to improve your employability prospects, to give back to your community or for personal fulfilment, we strive to offer opportunities suitable for you.

We very much value and appreciate the knowledge and talents volunteers bring to our organisation, and in return we hope you have an enjoyable and rewarding experience with us.

Best wishes,

Paul Hackwood
Chief Executive

Volunteer Handbook

We are delighted that you have chosen to volunteer with Toc H. We depend on volunteers like you to make a difference and help us achieve the biggest impact in our work.

This handbook is a useful reference tool, so please take the time to read it and keep it in a safe place so you can refer to it in future. It gives you background to who we are and what we do, an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of our volunteers and a summary of our policies and procedures that we have in place to support and protect you.

We are looking forward to having you join us!

Welcome to Toc H

Toc H Mission

... to build the common good in local communities through mutually supportive friendship, neighbourly service and reconciliation, with a commitment to social justice and a sustainable environment.

Toc H Values

Friendly: we listen and are attentive

Serving: we encourage all to contribute to the good

Just & Fair: we treat people with respect and integrity

Reconciling: building bridges and partnerships

Eco-Friendly: we value the earth and its sustainability

Who we are & The Road Ahead

Our vision is to create local opportunity, personal and social growth and sustainable impact for the good in every community with which we work.

At our board meeting at the beginning of 2022 it was agreed that we would relaunch our work of building the common good, serving local communities informed by our strategic plan.

The organisation's foundation remains its work in neighbourhoods supplemented by work across country.

This will be focused on **neighbourhood hubs funded through social enterprise** and aimed at promoting neighbourliness and supporting those in need based on a retail offering which is likely to be a traditional second-hand clothing offer, a small cafe/coffee shop and a meeting space.

Initially we aim to work on the chronic loneliness which has come to characterise the experience of many exacerbated by the Covid pandemic and also to work on supporting young people with mental health problems.

We will have three national programmes working locally which aim to:

Work with older People (This is your Life): Promoting work with older people to address loneliness and promote good mental health.

Work with Young People (Under Pressure): Promoting work with young people (especially young women) to build resilience and good mental health.

Into Work: Providing training and support for into work schemes for young people in danger of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training).

The History of Toc H

Toc H's origins lie in the First World War and the welfare of troops on the front line.

In 1915 Tubby Clayton, the organisation's founder set up Talbot House which provided hospitality to troops regardless of their rank, colour or creed travelling to and from the Ypres salient, which became known by its Morse call sign 'Toc H'.

After the war Toc H was re-founded as a movement aimed at promoting social justice and fairness, friendship, neighbourly service, and reconciliation.

Over the last 100 years our modus operandi has been to establish local branches and then match the skills of members to the needs of the local community. At its peak Toc H had a membership of circa 50,000 and hundreds of branches across the world. The organisation supported its members but also provided support to those in need in the communities it served and more widely. Chad Varah, Founder of the Samaritans was a member of Toc H and used it as his base to set up Samaritans, it also played a key part in the development of the Blood Transfusion Service providing volunteers and acting as link with local communities.

Toc H would be justified in making the claim that it was the very first community development organisation, certainly its mode of operation was copied all over the world until the professionalisation of the voluntary sector during the 1980's and 90's.

The Covid Pandemic brought many of the branch activities of Toc H to an end and the organisation is now focussing its initiatives in some of the locations of the remaining branches and areas where we feel the need is not fulfilled by other charities/organisations.

Our Volunteers

We have many volunteers across Toc H nationally. Volunteers get involved with Toc H for all sorts of reasons, from wanting to make a difference in the communities we serve to developing skills and experience. Everyone that volunteers, plays a vital role in helping us achieve impact.

We have several Volunteer Role Descriptions, and you will receive a copy of the one appropriate for your role so you are aware of what is & what is not expected of you.

Our commitment to you

You will have a dedicated member of staff who will support and guide you in your volunteering role with us.

We want to make sure that you enjoy your role and get the most out of it, we are committed to supporting our volunteers.

How we will support you:

Induction

Your dedicated staff member will introduce you to the Toc H staff and volunteers you will be volunteering with. They will also provide more detail about the sections in this handbook. Please use this opportunity to ask any questions and highlight any areas where you would like further training and support.

If you will be volunteering with us over a significant period of time, you will undergo a trial period which gives both you and the organisation, a chance to assess how things are working out.

Training

We want to ensure that you feel happy and confident to carry out your role. Where needed, your dedicated member of staff will offer you training to help you do your role.

Support

Each volunteer will have a review meeting and the frequency of these will vary depending on the nature of your role and your time commitment. The 1-2-1 meeting will focus on how the role is going, what support you need. It is an opportunity for volunteers and staff to raise issues and for you to talk constructively about your involvement with us.

What we expect from you

To ensure you get the most out of your role, volunteers will:

- Always treat Toc H volunteers, staff and the people in the communities we serve with respect, consideration and appreciation.
- Act in a professional way whenever you represent Toc H in public.
- Act in a way that doesn't discriminate against or exclude anyone.
- Provide as much notice as possible if you are unable to fulfil your volunteering commitment, or if you no longer wish to volunteer.

- Ask your designated staff member if you don't fully understand your role and responsibilities or need any other guidance.
- Speak to your designated staff member, as soon as possible, if at any time, you feel the role is not for you, or your circumstances have changed and you need to leave your role.

The essentials – policies and procedures

As a volunteer, you'll need to be aware of the following policies and procedures. Please take time to read through these and familiarise yourself with them.

Accidents & Insurance

All accidents and incidents must be reported to your designated staff member as soon as possible. If you feel that it's a real emergency, please contact the emergency services immediately.

You are covered by our 'Employers Liability Insurance' and our 'Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance' when carrying out your volunteering role on our behalf.

Expenses

We want to make sure that volunteers are not out of pocket or financially worse off as a result of their volunteering with us.

We cover travel costs, based on the journey from your home, place of work or study to the place where you volunteer. In some exceptions, we will cover any out of pocket expenses provided these have been agreed beforehand by your designated staff member and are aligned to your volunteering activity.

All volunteers' expense claims must be completed, signed and submitted with receipts to their designated staff member by the 1st of each month.

Holidays & Sickness

If you're planning to go on holiday, please let us know so that we can make alternative arrangements to cover your role.

If due to sickness you are not able to fulfil your volunteer activity, please inform your designated staff member as soon as possible.

Reliability and commitment

It is important that you are punctual and ready to start your volunteer role at the agreed time.

This is a matter of courtesy to service users, other volunteers and staff. If you are persistently late or fail to meet agreed commitments, your designated staff member will meet with you to discuss any problems or difficulties in meeting existing commitments.

What to wear

As a volunteer for Toc H, you're also an ambassador for the organisation. You're responsible for presenting a positive image to visitors, service users and the community. Please use your judgement to dress appropriately for the activities you're asked to carry out. If you're ever unsure about what to wear, just ask your designated staff member.

Data Protection

Before we can collect, store, or use data about an individual, the data protection law and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), requires us to ensure that we have that individuals consent to do so. The way we do this is by making sure we work within our data protection policy and procedures. You may, in your volunteer role with us, have access to and handle the personal information of the people you are helping. It's vital that you are aware of our policy and procedures, which can be accessed in the appendices at the end of this handbook.

Toc H has a duty to protect the confidentiality of volunteers involved in our work. We will only collect and retain personal information that is relevant to your volunteering role. In accordance with the Data Protection Act, personal information about volunteers is kept secure and no personal information will be shared with other organisations or individuals without your consent, unless we are legally obliged to do so.

Confidentiality

As a volunteer you may be party to confidential and sensitive information about our service users. You are responsible for maintaining confidentiality and must not disclose information outside of the organisation.

Safeguarding Children & Adults

All volunteers have a duty to promote the welfare of children and adults and are required to act in such a way that at all times safeguards their health and wellbeing. Familiarisation with and adherence to our safeguarding policy is an essential requirement for all volunteers. (see appendices for policy).

As part of volunteering with Toc H you may need to undergo a DBS check.

Depending on your volunteer role, some volunteers are also required to participate in related mandatory / statutory training.