

# Changes East Lothian

## Volunteer Information



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## Volunteer with Changes

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**Be positive about mental health  
for people in East Lothian**

# About Changes

## Who are we?

Changes is a community health charity based in East Lothian, here to help people achieve and maintain positive mental health and wellbeing.

### OUR VISION

Our vision is that everyone in East Lothian enjoys positive mental health and wellbeing.

### OUR VALUES

Compassion,  
Welcoming and  
Community – we live  
and breathe these  
values!

### OUR MISSION

Changes has grown from within the community to enable people to achieve and maintain good mental health and wellbeing.

## What do we offer?

At Changes we offer a wide range of wellbeing services including but not limited to:

- One-to-one counselling
- Support groups and courses
- Training
- Volunteer opportunities

We aim to help with varying challenges such as:

- Stress
- Low mood
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Negative thinking

We also offer a range of activities through which individuals and communities of East Lothian can improve their wellbeing, such as:

- Nature-based activities
- Relaxation workshops
- Mental health swims
- Wellbeing walks
- And more!

# About Volunteering

## Why volunteer?

Our volunteers are a key part of Changes and without them, we wouldn't be able to offer all our services.

Making a difference in someone's life can be greatly rewarding. By volunteering your time, you can positively impact an individual's mental health and wellbeing and, in return, see your skills and confidence grow.

People tell us they like to volunteer because:

- It gives them a sense of purpose and an opportunity to give something back
- It's a way of helping maintain their own health and wellbeing
- It's a fantastic way to develop new skills and meet new people

We aim to find you a mutually beneficial and enjoyable role that suits your skills, experience and interests.



## Why Changes?

Changes has been established as a fundamental mental health and wellbeing service in East Lothian since 1996. We have worked with various organisations including the NHS, Volunteer Centre East Lothian and Health in Mind. We understand the importance of volunteering for individuals, communities and organisations and can provide a supportive and welcoming environment throughout your volunteering role.

## What kind of volunteer roles are available?

Due to the breadth of services we provide the local community, we can offer a variety of volunteering opportunities at Changes, such as those outlined below\*. Detailed role descriptions are available for our opportunities - and if you have another role in mind, we are happy to discuss ideas.

### Volunteer with individuals

**Volunteer buddy walker** – encourage someone on a one-to-one basis to start walking regularly.

**Volunteer befriender** – provide long-term, one-to-one support to individuals in East Lothian, who may be experiencing loneliness, isolation, or challenges with their mental health.

### Volunteer with a group

**Volunteer facilitator (groups and courses)** – volunteer alongside staff to ensure the smooth delivery of mental health support groups and courses.

In these roles, where appropriate, you can draw on your lived experience of mental health challenges to inspire and encourage others in their recovery.

### Volunteer outdoors

**Nature projects support volunteer** – lead a small group on weekly ‘ponder wanders’ or help run a variety of outdoor, nature-themed workshops on a flexible basis.

*\*Please note, not all opportunities are available at all times.*

## What qualities do you need to volunteer?

We want our volunteers to reflect the community of East Lothian we serve, so we accept volunteers of all ages, experiences, cultural backgrounds and genders.

Whilst requirements vary depending on the volunteer role, we've put together a general checklist of the qualities we look for, to see if you'll be a good fit as a volunteer.

These include:

- Warmth
- Empathy
- Good communication
- Interest in positive mental health
- Respect and value for community
- Good time management
- Sensitivity
- Reliability
- Awareness of common mental health challenges

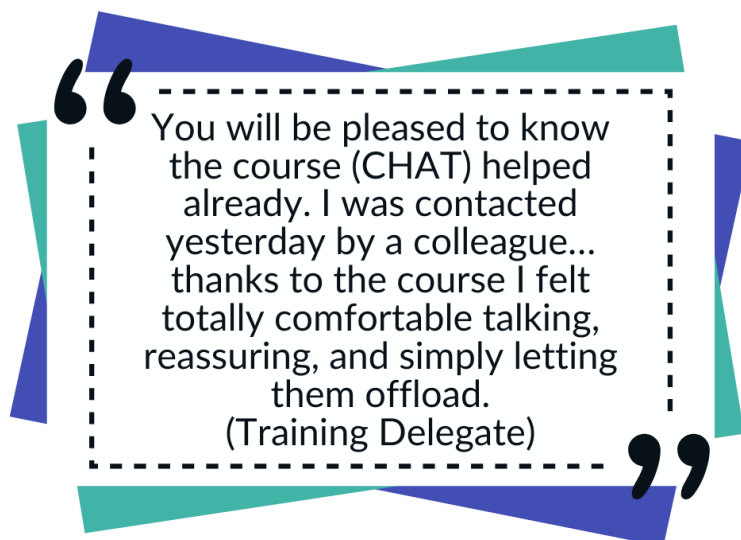
Enthusiasm and a willingness to engage in induction and training are also required. This will involve learning about important aspects of volunteering including confidentiality, boundaries and reliability. You will learn about, and be expected to adhere to, Changes' policies and procedures.



## What to expect from Changes

Our aim at Changes is that your volunteering experience with us is enjoyable and rewarding. You will be provided with **regular support and supervision** and opportunities to feedback on your progress, discuss future development and express any views or concerns.

All volunteers go through an induction session, covering all aspects of Changes. You will be provided with role specific **training** to ensure you have the skills and confidence to carry out your role. Access to other training such as Crisis Handling Awareness Training (CHAT) and Mental Health First Aid is also available.



You will receive **full information** about your chosen area of work and have plenty of opportunities to ask questions so you can be sure the role is right for you.

Key information is provided in a **volunteer handbook**. We will reimburse reasonable expenses and can also provide a reference for any future volunteer work or job applications, if required.

We also organise **social opportunities** to allow volunteers from across the organisation, who would not otherwise meet, to get to know each other.

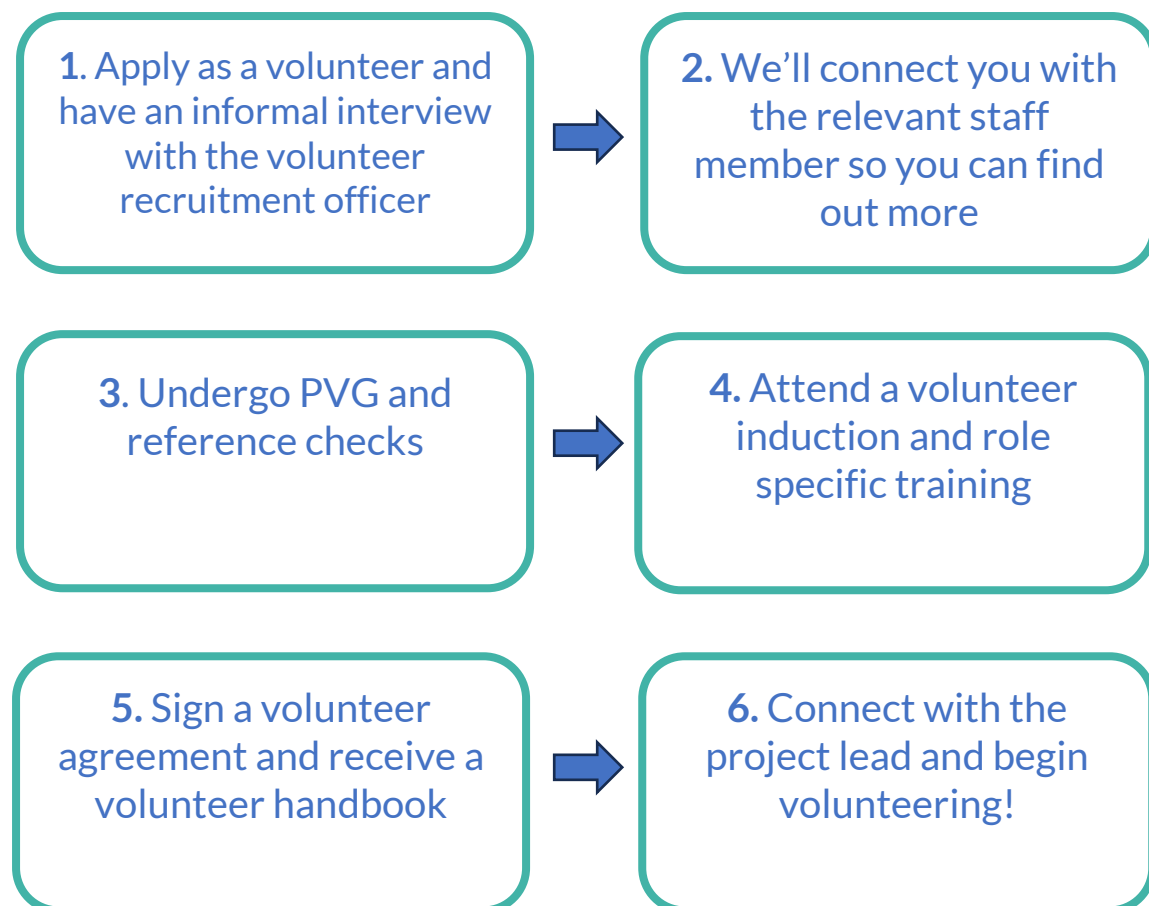
As a volunteer you're welcome to participate in our community activities while volunteering with us.

# The Volunteer Recruitment Process

At Changes, we have a process in place to ensure we recruit the right volunteers to the right roles, whilst keeping in line with our safeguarding policies.

After submitting a brief application form, you'll be invited to have a conversation with the volunteer recruitment officer and other relevant staff to find out more.

If you wish to proceed with your application, we'll take up references and carry out a [Protecting Vulnerable Groups \(PVG\) check](#). Volunteers are required to submit a PVG form to Disclosure Scotland (the cost is covered by Volunteer Scotland) and undergo an induction.



We'll keep you informed throughout all stages of the recruitment process, and you'll have plenty of opportunities to ask questions or raise any concerns.




## How to apply

Please complete the volunteer application form and return it to the volunteer recruitment officer at Changes. A volunteer information pack and application form is available by contacting our office.

## Further information

: [info@ChangesEastLothian.org](mailto:info@ChangesEastLothian.org)

: 0131 653 3977

[www.ChangesEastLothian.org](http://www.ChangesEastLothian.org)

**Volunteer Recruitment Officer, Annette Murray:**  
[annette@ChangesEastLothian.org](mailto:annette@ChangesEastLothian.org)

**Stay informed:**

[Sign up for our newsletter](#)



# Thank you