

Overseas Volunteers at Leonard Cheshire The Grove



What is my role?

Role: At Leonard Cheshire Disability, we value the role our Overseas Volunteers have in our services throughout the United Kingdom. Due to the length of the placements for overseas volunteers (12 months) volunteers have the opportunity to acquire a range of skills, improve their English, enjoy the best of British culture and life, and develop fulfilling working relationships with our residents, staff and local volunteers which often develop into long-term friendships.

Overseas volunteers help support our staff teams in providing an active, involving and stimulating environment for our residents. Through our overseas volunteers, disabled people in our care homes are able to access their local community services and social opportunities more easily and regularly, thus improving their independence and quality of life. This means that in their roles overseas volunteers are engaging in a wide range of activities both inside and outside the home.

There is no typical day for volunteers as our services users needs and interests determine what volunteers will be doing on a daily basis. Volunteers may be required to accompany residents on activity weekends and short holidays, as well as providing support to those service users who have regular work, education or volunteering commitments. While it is a lot of fun going out with residents, it is also very challenging as volunteers experience first hand the issues faced by people with disabilities everyday.

Overseas volunteers will be expected to volunteer 35 hours within a week. They will be entitled to 2 days off these may not necessarily be at the weekend or

consecutive. There can be a greater requirement for volunteering at the weekends to attend sporting events and other activities.

What opportunities can I expect for training & skills development?

Thorough training on working with vulnerable adults is provided to all our volunteers and Leonard Cheshire Disability staff help volunteers during the induction process to understand each individual. Risk assessments ensure that volunteers are not asked to contribute outside of their capability or boundaries.

Volunteers acquire a range of knowledge, skills and experience including a greater understanding of the issues affecting disabled people. They gain improved interpersonal skills and the ability to interact with a wide range of people. There will also be an opportunity to learn about the wider activities of the charity, for example our campaigning/lobbying activities and fundraising events.

About The Grove



The Grove is part of the Leonard Cheshire charity and is a care home with nursing for 31 adults with physical disabilities. The service was developed in response to a need for a local service that could provide 24-hour high quality nursing care for people with physical disabilities.

The home was adapted to serve its residents in such a way as to promote good social interaction amongst the residents - with living room, dining room, television lounge, activities and tranquillity rooms. Residents take part in activities ranging from IT, fishing, art, physiotherapy and games. Amongst the most popular activities at The Grove are outdoor games which are accessible to wheelchair users, bingo, quizzes, karaoke, and a range of arts and crafts.

The Grove is a lovely country house, surrounded by woodland and overlooking a picturesque lake with plenty of wildlife, situated in a rural setting, which most people find very pleasant. Located only 6 miles south from Norwich, the main city in the region, and 5 miles from Wymondham, the nearest town. While East Carleton is a very small village, The Grove is only a short walk from Mulbarton, a much larger and well serviced village with shops and a pub. There are half hourly buses running between Mulbarton and Norwich. Norwich is 1 hour and 50 minutes from London by train.



Expectations & Accommodation

Volunteers are expected to comply with Leonard Cheshire policy & procedures & codes of conduct. Failure to comply with this could result in the programme being terminated.

Volunteers are not to take part in activities that are staff tasks they therefore will not be assisting with feeding, taking part in personal care or doing domestic activities for the services.

Behavior that causes concern as a result of excessive alcohol is not tolerated. The misuse of illegal substances will not be tolerated and will result in instant dismissal. Volunteers are expected to behave in a socially responsible way, and in consideration to fellow volunteers and residents.

Overseas Volunteers have a self-contained flat within the main building of The Grove, though on a separate floor to the rest of the building. This comprises two bedrooms, a lounge, kitchenette and bathroom. The flat is fully furnished and has recently been redecorated with all furniture replaced where necessary. Three meals a day are provided on site. In addition there is a micro-wave, kettle and refrigerator in the flat and stove rings on site, should the volunteers wish to organise their own meals. Packed lunches are provided for volunteers who accompany residents on outside excursions.

This is a year-long placement and volunteers are expected to commit to the service for the whole duration of their project.

Volunteer Profile

It is important that the volunteers are eager to learn and have an interest in working with people with disability. Simultaneously, it can be demanding and emotionally difficult to support people with disabilities, and require patience, understanding and confidence. It is therefore an advantage if the volunteers have some experience with and/or exposure to disability prior to their placement so they have better idea of what to expect. It can be everything from volunteering in a disability organisation, working in a care home or having a friend/family member with a disability. We also encourage volunteers that are interested in a career in social or health care to apply for a placement as it will allow them an insight into the sector, and thereby a better idea of whether it is something they want to pursue.

Since we work with vulnerable adults, it is essential that the volunteers understand instructions, policies and procedures explained in English. Therefore, it is a requirement that the volunteers can carry a conversation in English, and understand basic instructions. This will also ensure that we from a health and safety perspective can ensure that our volunteers follow all procedures in place for their own and our residents' safety.

It is also important that the volunteers have interests they are willing to share with the residents and staff through activities and one-to-one conversations. Furthermore, we are looking for volunteers with a proactive attitude, and willingness try new activities and encourage residents to do the same.

Activities

The specific objectives for each EVS projects can differ. Activities at The Grove are based on person centred planning, i.e. developed around what residents themselves have expressed a wish to take part in. The role of EVS volunteers in these sessions is to act as enablers. Making sure that residents are enabled to participate as much as possible. Therefore, it is not essential for volunteers to have specific skill sets in these areas, rather a positive attitude towards helping others is far more important. EVS volunteers will also have an opportunity to build activities around their interests; e.g., if they are musical, arrange music therapy sessions, likewise for art, sports and so on.

Main tasks for EVS Volunteers:

- To assist with activities (the most typical activities are arts and crafts, music, games, quizzes)
- To accompany groups of people living with disability on excursions in the community
- To take the lead in organising fundraising activity at The Grove, or in the local community.
- To take responsibility for organising regular activity
- To draw on volunteer's own cultural background to develop activities based on cross-cultural understanding.
- To use one's own hobbies and/or interests as means of interaction with people with communication difficulties

The tasks will also include organizing regular activities, such as:

- “Culture Cafe”: Held on alternate weeks, this will be an event to highlight one specific country per week. This should, ideally, be a country that someone (EVS volunteer, another volunteer, resident or staff) has either experience of or a keen interest in. This will be a celebration of culture with food, presentations, music, art, quiz, etc. Initial Culture Cafe would focus on UK/local area to introduce the Overseas Volunteers, followed by Culture Cafes focused on Overseas Volunteers own countries. Then residents can make suggestions based on their own interests and experiences.
- “Language Lounge”: This is an opportunity to learn about different languages, or to expand on knowledge of languages in common. This idea came from one of our residents who feels that her own language knowledge is slipping as she no longer has the opportunity to converse with people who speak different languages.
- Other activities include: Trips Out, going out as passenger escorts on visits to areas of local interest, as well as shows with residents.
- Fundraising Events: EVS Volunteers will be also involved in event planning, publicity and organisation; One Volunteer will be responsible for photographs, one for event write ups.

Contact details

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