

Overseas Volunteers at Leonard Cheshire Disability

Bells Piece

Leonard
Cheshire
Disability



What is my 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.

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. Volunteers will support groups of people with art and craft, gardening, cooking, exercise and social clubs and outings. 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 helps 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 Bells Piece

Bells Piece is a Leonard Cheshire service located in Farnham, Surrey close to the border of Hampshire with good rail and road links to London, Godalming and surrounding areas. We run from one site operating 4 services and supporting around 85 adults with a Learning Disability and Autism.

Our services are a friendly and sociable environment and volunteers find great people to work and be involved with. The people we support have a range of learning disabilities including people with Downs Syndrome, Autism and Aspergers Syndrome. Within each service different activities take place:

Residential - Our residential service is home to 12 people. People live and run our service through recruitment, cooking, cleaning and all the normal day to day tasks we all do! Many people often go out on a daily basis, and the evenings are full of stories from the day before. People are encouraged to be as independent as possible, some have work placements and everyone plays an active part in telling the staff what they want to do, and how they want to do it.

Supported Living - We support 23 people in Supported Living. People here are often more independent, and will have their own homes. Some share, which is a great social opportunity. We encourage get-togethers monthly over lunch at a local pub, and meetings are held for people to give us feedback about what works and what doesn't. Activities vary: some people need help with banking and shopping whereas some people just want to go out shopping and watch the football. Each person's support is unique to them - no day is the same!

Activities Services - Our biggest service supporting 65 people. We offer art therapy, horticulture and gardening, cooking, literacy, computers and a thriving music group. There is always something for everyone. We run themed sessions throughout the year which are individual to what people want to do, and what they want to achieve. We host events and organize summer fetes, Christmas fairs and have an art exhibition yearly. People also go out to work, volunteering to sell items we have made at a local craft fair weekly.

Bells Piece is a community within a community - people are free to work, learn, live and express how they are and what they want from life.

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 eating and drinking or taking part in personal care.

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.

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

Volunteers will be accommodated in a rented 4 bedroom house in Farnham. Each volunteer has their own bedroom. Shared communal lounge, fully fitted kitchen with laundry facilities and bathroom. All bedding is supplied.

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, from a health and safety perspective, that our volunteers follow all procedures in place for their own and our residents' safety.

It is helpful if 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

At Bells Piece, we aim to expand people's horizons, ensuring they are given the same opportunities as anyone else within the world. To this end, we need a team of volunteers that will learn skills, contribute cultural and social opportunities, and give the people we support the best opportunity to get out and about and experience new things.

EVS volunteers will support our staff teams in providing an active and stimulating environment for adults with learning disabilities, which will ensure that they can fulfill their long-term personal goals in accordance with the person-centered plan. EVS volunteers will support disabled people at Bells Piece to access their local community, its services and social opportunities, more easily and regularly, as well as supporting them to do activities, thus improving their confidence, independence and quality of life. We strongly believe in being a

learning and mentoring service, and would like the opportunity to host people to allow them to develop new experiences within their lives.

Proposed activities:

The specific objectives for each future EVS projects will differ, the main aim of all projects is to empower and enable disabled people to access social and leisure activities in Farnham.

Typical tasks within Bells Piece will vary on a one to one basis and include befriending, supporting people with social activities such as arts and crafts, creating art related products to be sold in Bells Piece charity shop, garden projects, sports, supporting with events and fundraising activities, getting the people involved, running IT classes. Specific areas we would like to develop:

- 1) Production of jams and chutneys and building our brand - helping with managing marketing, booking of events and taking people to the events
- 2) Healthy eating projects - providing people with different foods and cultural experiences. Hosting overseas volunteers would allow us to benefit from sharing their experiences and skills e.g by organizing international nights, cooking their national dishes and telling us about their cultures.
- 3) The development of a volunteering programme at Firgrove Hill, our new transition service for young people looking to gain skills to move on to their own flats at the end.

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