

Dear applicant,

**Re: Volunteering**

Thank you for your enquiry about Volunteering Opportunities with The Camden Society. I enclose the following:

- A brief history of the Camden Society
- Volunteer Charter and Code of Conduct

The documents relating to each volunteering opportunity are downloadable from the 'Volunteering' page on our website together with the volunteering application form and equal opportunities monitoring form. Our website address is: [www.thecamdensociety.co.uk](http://www.thecamdensociety.co.uk)

Please note that applications are to be returned in an envelope marked for the attention of Volunteer Coordinator, The Camden Society, 60 Holmes Road, London NW5 3AQ or email to [admin@thecamdensociety.co.uk](mailto:admin@thecamdensociety.co.uk).

Thank you for the interest you have shown in The Camden Society. We look forward to receiving your completed application.

Yours sincerely

Volunteer Coordinator

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## **THE CAMDEN SOCIETY – AN OVERVIEW**

### **Our History**

We are a London based organisation working in the boroughs of Camden, Greenwich, Havering, Enfield, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth and Southwark. Our head office is in Camden and we employ just over 200 employees.

We were set up in 1965 by a group of parents of people with learning disabilities who wanted to improve the lives of vulnerable people. We are managed by a voluntary executive committee which sets the policy and strategy for the organisation and monitors our performance.

### **Our Purpose**

We work to enable vulnerable people to improve the quality of their lives and the Camden Society defines a good quality life as having:

- The opportunity to gain new skills to become as fully independent as possible;
- The opportunity to build networks in the community;
- The freedom to make choices about how to live your own life;
- The chance to build positive relationships with friends, neighbours and relatives.

To achieve this we:

- Provide a wide range of high quality, person centred services to people across London;
- Mount campaigns in defence of people when their quality of life is threatened;
- Work in partnership with other agencies to ensure people receive the best possible support.

## **Our Services**

The Camden Society has a wide and varied range of services, take a look at the following to give you some idea of the kind of work we do.

### **Supported Living Services**

Our supported living services provide individually tailored support to people living independently in their own homes.

### **Employment & Vocational Training Services**

This service provides support to people who want to train for work and look for paid employment. We have two employment agencies, six community cafes, a garden centre and a warehouse and mailing business. We are working to develop successful social enterprises from some of these businesses and are always looking for new ventures. We support people with learning disabilities to gain essential work qualifications such as NVQ levels 1 and 2 and give people the opportunity to develop their work skills and experience.

### **Community & Day Services**

At the Camden Society we strive to provide a wide range of day and community services for over 100 adults and children through specialist services, social clubs, holiday schemes and other activities.

### **Short Stay Respite**

Hotel in the Park opened in Tower Hamlets in July 2005 changing the face of respite care. We provide hotel style accommodation and support to people with learning disabilities who stay with us for short periods. It's a very exciting and innovative concept and is very popular with our guests and their families for whom respite care is essential.

## VOLUNTEER CHARTER

In every community in Britain, volunteers are playing an important part in sustaining and improving the quality of life of others. Many people undertake voluntary work on an informal basis, helping friends, relatives or neighbours in need. Others offer themselves as volunteers to local community groups, charities, or other organisations working with or for the community. The Charter applies to volunteering undertaken in a formal or structured way through organisations, but the principles of fairness that underpin the charter the Charter apply to any form of volunteering.

Everyone has a right to volunteer and the right to expect equal treatment from both the organisations they work for and the clients they work with. This includes:

- The right to open and fair volunteer recruitment procedures
- The right to an interview based on equal opportunities principles
- The right to a clearly defined role
- The right not to be discriminated against by the organisation involving the volunteer (or clients of that organisation) irrespective of race, colour, sexuality, gender, religion, age, disability or class
- The right to equal status with paid staff including the right to express in an appropriate way, views and comments about the work they do and how it could be improved
- The right to a complaints or grievance procedure based on principles of natural justice
- The right to join a Trade Union (if the volunteer wishes)
- The right to have out of pocket expenses met by the organisation
- The right to say no to inappropriate demands outside the volunteer job description/volunteer agreement
- The right to proper Health and Safety procedures, and insurance cover, for the activities undertaken by volunteers
- The right to information on Health an Safety procedures, and equal opportunities procedures, and the extent of the insurance cover
- The right to proper support and supervision (including the right to know before commencing the role what arrangements have been made for such support)
- The right to induction training, on-going training related to the job, opportunities for personal/skill development, and periodic reviews of the work of the volunteer
- The right to a reference.

## **Volunteer Expenses**

We do not expect volunteers to be “out of pocket” when they have been working for The Camden Society. As a general rule we support and fund the use of public transport to and from a project. Any other items particular to your post should be discussed, and agreed on, prior to purchase and in all cases, a claim, must be accompanied by a receipt from the projects own petty cash.

## **VOLUNTEERS CODE OF CONDUCT**

The following code of conduct sets out what the Camden Society expects from volunteers working within the service. The code applies at all times that a volunteer is engaged in work for the Camden Society.

- Volunteers will respect service user's rights to confidentiality, by not discussing individual's personal circumstances with others. If a volunteer is concerned by something that they are told, then they should inform the Service Manager responsible for Volunteers or the Line Manager of the service in which they are volunteering.
- Volunteers will treat all the people who use Camden Society services with respect and dignity and will ensure that their behaviour towards users of the service does not humiliate or degrade.
- Volunteers must under no circumstances consume or bring any illegal drugs into Camden Society services or premises.
- Volunteers must under no circumstance drink and drive either a Camden Society vehicle or another vehicle in which clients of Camden Society are passengers.
- Volunteers must under no circumstance use physical force on any users of Camden Society services.
- Volunteers should ensure the personal safety of all Camden Society service users at all times.
- Volunteers should be aware of the Camden Society's commitment to Equal Opportunities and that any behaviour contrary to this commitment is totally unacceptable.

- Volunteers should ensure that in situations where alcohol is being consumed, services users who are unused to drinking do not drink to excess.
- Volunteers should be aware of the effects of alcohol upon themselves: the safety and well being of the service users is your primary responsibility.
- Violence or the threat of violence directed against service users, workers, or members of the community is unacceptable under any circumstances.

**I have read, understood and agree to abide by the Camden Society's Code of Conduct as stated above.**

**Signed.....**

**Date.....**