



I
STAND
WITH
POSITIVE
EAST

WE'RE
NOT
DONE
YET



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Welcome and thank you!

Thank you again for choosing to volunteer and give your time to support the work of Positive East. We very much hope you enjoy your time with us and that the experiences you gain are both valuable and meaningful.

We hope, too, that these experiences will help you to develop your existing skills whilst also cultivating new skills, foster additional relationships and networks, and provide you with a space to share your ideas and your personal journey.

Positive East would not be able to deliver such high quality and essential services without your contributions. It's because of our amazing volunteers that our Charity has stood the test of time.

Warmly,

Maria Kubler

Volunteer Performance Manager

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Our 30-Year History



Our Positive East journey began in the spring of 1991. Community activists from across East London joined together to establish two organisations with one singular aim: to provide direct care and support to those living with HIV in the East End. Built on the key principles of community mobilisation, **The Globe Centre** and the **London East AIDS Network** were formed.

These two organisations would help see us through the height of the pandemic: a time when ARTs had yet to be developed, mortality rates were at an all-time high, and the introduction of Section 28 further fanned the flames of homophobia, firmly entrenching widespread HIV stigma.

Positive East was born from the merging of these two organisations, and the pooling together of resources and insight under one roof to create a stronger impact in the community.

30 years on, and Positive East remains grassroots in its definition. The evergreen passion of our staff, volunteers and supporters reflects our tradition of community-based HIV activism, and we continue to be propelled forward by the memory of all those who have come before us.

We have seen incredible advancements in the past 5 years (not to mention 30 years): **U=U** is a scientific statement of fact, **PrEP** is now available and **new HIV diagnoses continue to decline**.

Nevertheless, our message as an organisation remains the same: **We're not done yet.**

Our journey will not stop until everyone living with HIV is able to live empowered lives, free from stigma; where myths and misconceptions about HIV no longer guide the narrative. At Positive East we want the story of HIV to be an inclusive one of success, one which involves a legacy where no person or community is left behind.

Our Mission

To improve the quality of life of individuals and communities affected by HIV.

Positive East Volunteers



What is a volunteer?

A volunteer is anyone who freely chooses to undertake supporting Positive East through the giving of their time, skills and experience. It is support undertaken by choice and is unpaid beyond out of pocket expenses.

Our relationship with volunteers is one of mutual respect and commitment within which Positive East and volunteers have both rights and responsibilities. We hope volunteering will be a chance to enrich volunteers lives, as well as help others. We aim to ensure that volunteers enjoy their involvement and are valued by us and gain from the experience in terms of their own personal objectives. Positive East takes its responsibility to devote sufficient resources, staff and training to support volunteers in their role very seriously.

This handbook has been designed as a volunteer good practice guide to support staff who manage and work alongside volunteers at Positive East. Its aim is to set out clear guidelines and processes for all areas of volunteer management and outline the relationship between Positive East and volunteers. It includes practical steps from recruitment of volunteers to volunteer exit.

Positive East has fostered and developed a relationship with volunteers since its inception. Volunteers play a vital role in Positive East's development and ability to carry out its services. Volunteering at Positive East enables the charity to continue its leadership in the field of HIV and its contribution to the health and wellbeing of people living with HIV.

What does volunteering at Positive East look like?

Volunteers are fully active in and make a significant contribution to all aspects of Positive East's essential work.

At Positive East Volunteers can gain important skills, knowledge, and experience. Volunteers also bring specialist skills and diverse experiences that they are able to share which allow others to benefit.

Why volunteer for Positive East?

Volunteering at Positive East is a rewarding and fulfilling experience. It enables people to contribute to a valuable campaign, develop new skills, build confidence and self-esteem. Volunteering can also promote social interaction, health and wellbeing and provides a platform for the sharing and exchange of lived experiences.

Volunteers are provided with full training for their roles and are supported throughout their time with us. They also have the possibility to develop in their role and move

into different teams if they are keen to explore other aspects of the organisation and feel they have something more to offer. We also make room for volunteers who bring particular skills to carve out new roles within the charity.

At Positive East we demonstrate how we value our volunteers by acknowledging their contributions and recognising their commitment. This is done in a number of ways which include twice yearly volunteers and staff celebrations as well as opportunities to meet up socially within their teams. We produce a newsletter which highlights volunteers, our events, it provides important information and keeps a wide range of volunteers connected to the organisation. We also celebrate National Volunteers Week that takes place every June.

Recruitment

At Positive East we have a comprehensive recruitment process. We have established a number of links with local community organisations, health centres and educational institutions in order to ensure that we offer our opportunities to diverse groups of people. We are keen to ensure that there are as few barriers to volunteering as possible. One of the ways we do this is by reimbursing expenses so that no one is out of pocket as a result of volunteering for us.

Example volunteer roles

- + Volunteer counsellor
- + Information and advice volunteer
- + Fundraising volunteer
- + Volunteer peer mentor
- + Professional training volunteer
- + HIV and STI tester volunteer
- + Community engagement volunteer
- + Reception volunteer

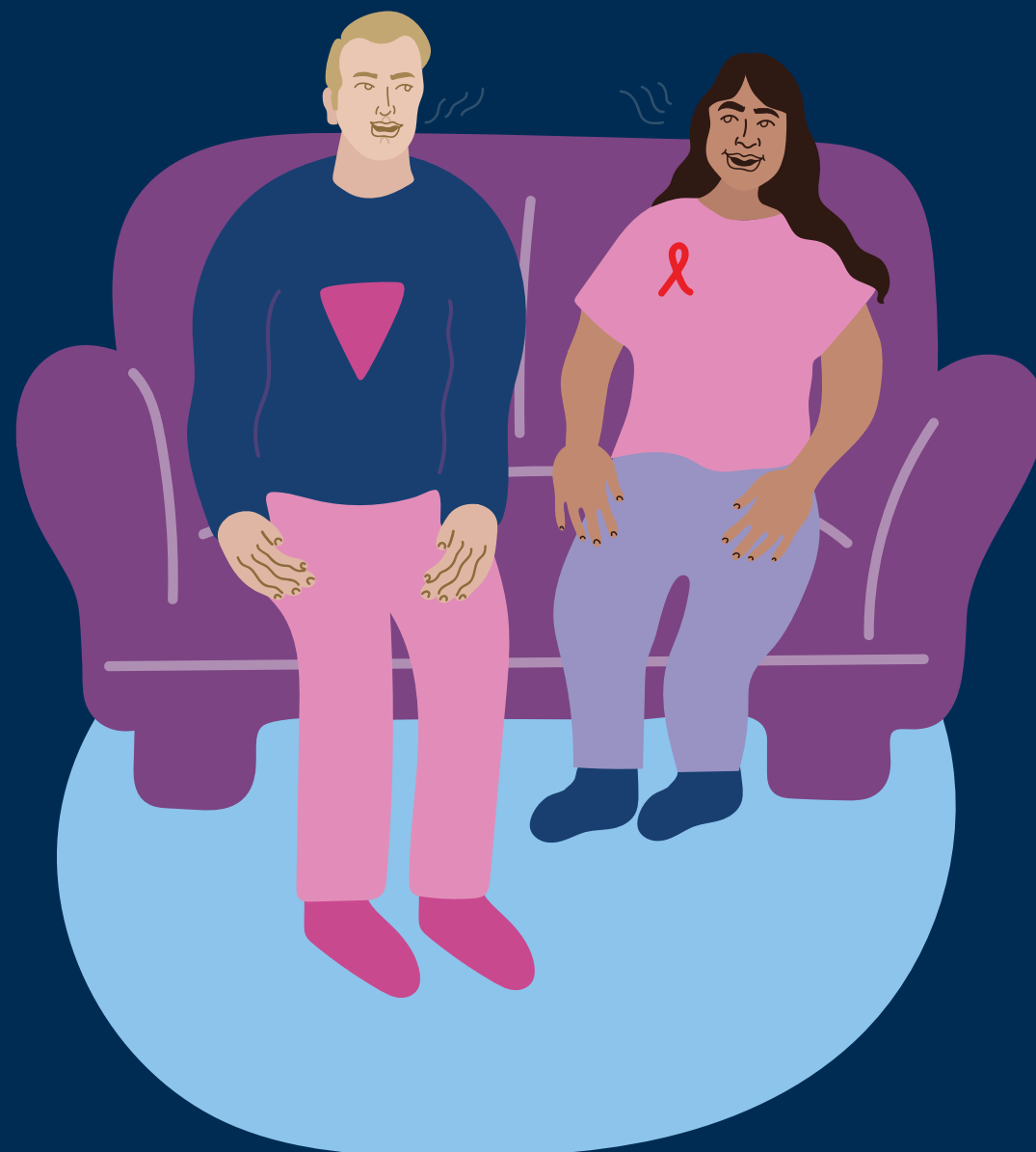
For a list of current roles available visit: positiveeast.org.uk/volunteers

All role descriptions outline:

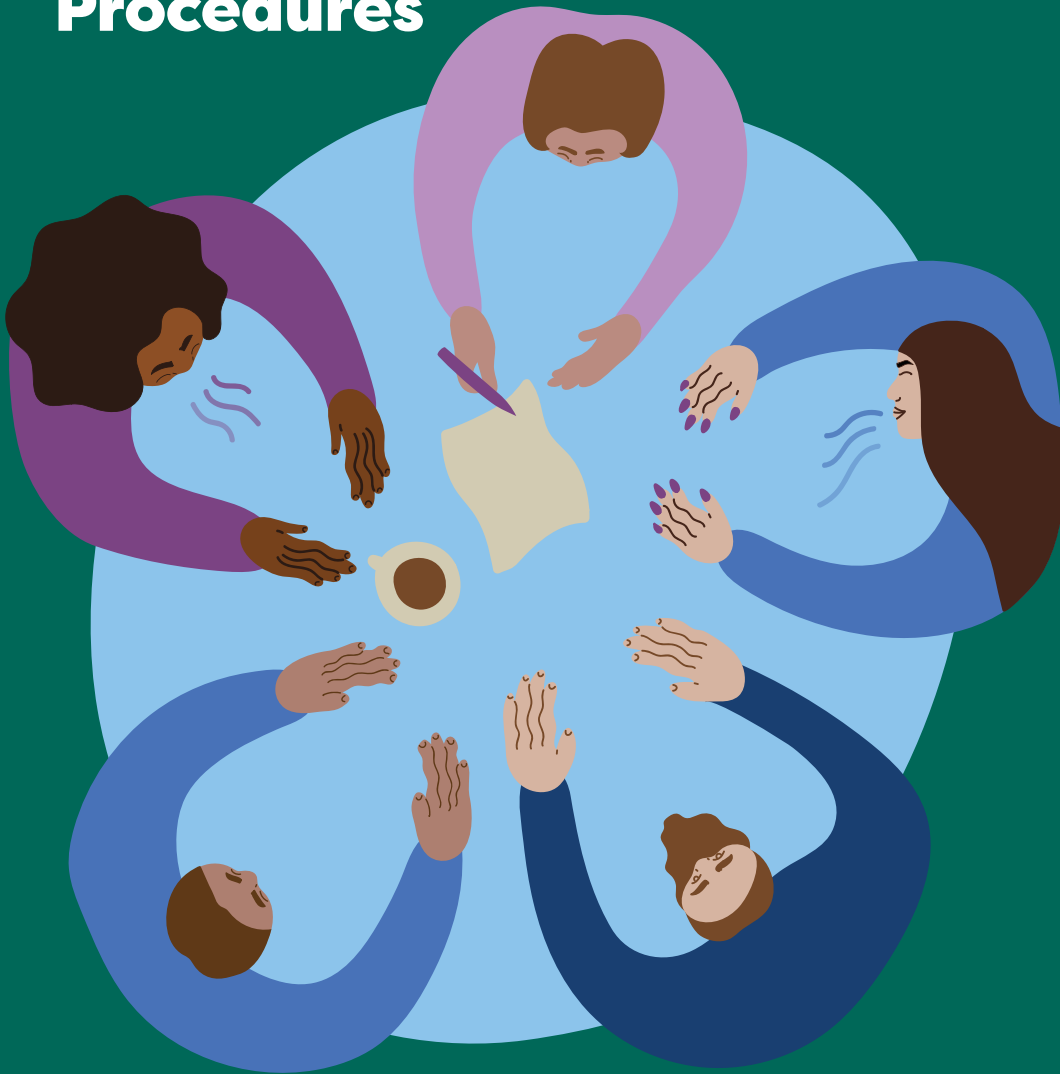
- + The overview and details of the role
- + The qualities and skills needed to carry out the role
- + The training involved in the role
- + Where the role fits within the organisation
- + Staff team responsible for the volunteer role

Recruitment consists of:

- + Advertising campaigns
- + Website information
- + Comprehensive role descriptions
- + Application form
- + Optional informal chat
- + Interview
- + DBS checks
- + Training
- + Confirmation of appointment
- + Statement of expectation
- + Probation period
- + Supervision and buddying
- + Routine reviews



Policies and Procedures



As part of our commitment to supporting volunteers and good practice we will ensure all our policies and procedures are fit for purpose, up to date and accessible. These policies will be reviewed every 3 years.

Expenses

Travel Expenses

Volunteers should not be out of pocket in order to carry out their volunteer role. Volunteers will be informed about the process to claim their expenses. Teams responsible for the volunteer will facilitate the process and aim to make it as straight forward and accessible as possible. Ideally volunteers will provide bank account details when they are confirmed in role. They are then requested to provide receipts or evidence of monies paid. In certain circumstances there may be occasion to reimburse a volunteer in cash.

To claim expenses, volunteers need to provide their bank details and payment will be placed directly into their account.

Volunteers will be asked to complete an Expense Claim Set Up form.

When claiming back expenses, all volunteers need to complete a Volunteer Expense Claim Form which should include details of the times and dates being claimed for. This should also be accompanied by receipts and signed off by a relevant member of staff.

All expense claims need to be processed within the volunteer's team and within a month of the volunteer session being claimed for.

Travel expenses are refunded up to the cost of an off-peak Zones 1-6 one-day Oyster Price Cap on production of a receipt. **We will reimburse the maximum Oyster price cap for the zone of your home address that you have provided us with, or the amount on your receipt, whichever is lower.**

All receipts must reflect your travel journey. Top up receipts alone do not qualify. Unfortunately, **if you are unable to provide an appropriate receipt you may not be reimbursed.**

Any travel arrangements which do not include Transport for London will need prior agreement.

Food

Volunteers can claim food expenses if their volunteer shift is 3 hours or more. They are entitled to claim a **£5.50** contribution towards food.

The same expense claim process applies. Appropriate receipts must be provided in order to receive reimbursement. A receipt can include a shopping receipt that is not older than one week of the date of your volunteer shift.

Other expenses

Volunteers should not be out of pocket in order to carry out their volunteer role. Volunteers will be informed about the process to claim their expenses. Staff will facilitate the process for volunteers to make it as straight forward and accessible

as possible. Ideally volunteers will provide bank account details when they are confirmed in role. They are then requested to provide receipts or evidence of monies paid. In certain circumstances there maybe occasion to reimburse a volunteer in cash.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information this includes client's personal data to which they are exposed. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination of the volunteer's relationship with the organisation. *(Positive East Confidentiality Policy 2024).*

role and the tasks they are required to carry out. This should include confidentiality in relation to use of client's personal data, social media and images. As confidentiality is a key requirement for our volunteering roles this will be clearly outlined in our role descriptions, training and confidentiality policy. Repercussions of any breach in confidentiality will also be clearly outlined.

In addition to our Positive East Confidentiality policy each volunteer team will have a separate confidentiality policy or Code of Conduct that outlines the importance of confidentiality that relates directly to the Volunteers

Data protection

All volunteer records will be stored and accessed in compliance with the Charity's policies and practice in relation to data protection.

Statement of Expectation

This document sets out the expectations of both Positive East and the Volunteer.

Positive East can expect from the volunteer:

- + Time commitment expected to carry out role
- + Agreement regarding our confidentiality policy
- + Reliability
- + Attendance at essential training.
- + Notice if unable to attend volunteer session
- + Attendance at scheduled supervision or one-to-one sessions
- + Commitment to the values and mission of the charity
- + A respectful and considerate approach to others

The Volunteer can expect from Positive East:

- + Full training
- + Support and supervision
- + Named contact person
- + Reference (after 6 months of continuous service)
- + Out of pocket expenses
- + Invitation to social events
- + Regular updates
- + Opportunities for personal development
- + Name badges
- + Access to building facilities/ complementary therapies (subject to agreement)
- + Flexibility around individual needs
- + Volunteer contribution/feedback sessions
- + Acknowledgement and recognition events

Problem solving

Where possible if a volunteer raises a concern or has a problem it is important to take the time to fully understand the issue and try and meet their needs. Having an open conversation that is honest and genuine is really important. That honesty may include highlighting what is possible and what is not.

Where there are disputes between volunteers we will always try to resolve this informally by having a conversation with the volunteers together if possible or separately if necessary. We will then ensure

that the points of the concerns and issues are recorded accurately. If this informal stage does not resolve the issue, then the next stage would be to involve the Volunteer Performance Manager.

If there is a concern with a volunteer this will be raised directly with them so that they have the opportunity to respond. There should be clarification on the concern and why it has been raised. The aim of this discussion is to get an understanding from the volunteer as to why the issue has been raised with them and

then an agreement that the issue will not reoccur in the future. If this initial conversation fails to resolve the

issue, then the next stage would be to involve the Volunteer Performance Manager.

Appointment

When the recruitment process, including background checks and training have been successfully completed and it is agreed that the person is suitable for the role, a volunteer will be confirmed in role. All volunteers must read the Volunteer Statement of Expectation which outlines what is expected

from the volunteer and what they can expect from Positive East. In commencing their role, the volunteer commits to the aims, values and key policies of Positive East. They also commit to delivering the key tasks outlined in the relevant role description.

Training

All training programmes are designed to equip Volunteers with the skills, knowledge and confidence to carry out their role on completion of the training. Training programmes will include a variety of elements that assess a volunteer's suitability as training forms part of the recruitment process. All training sessions will provide some provision of refreshment. All day training sessions will provide lunch.

buddied up with another volunteer or staff member for a set period of time. This will then be reviewed, and a decision made as to whether an extended period of buddying is necessary.

Support and supervision

All volunteers need to feel they are supported in their role and that they have back up where necessary. At Positive East we aim to be in regular contact with our volunteers. This can take the form of face to face sessions, email or contact via telephone. For particular roles Volunteers may be

We believe regular and open communication is essential to promoting a positive experience for our volunteers and long-lasting commitment to the charity. A record of these conversations and discussions should be logged alongside any actions.

Opportunities for personal development

For many volunteers, volunteering is a first step into gaining confidence and developing new skills in the workplace. For some moving into different roles or taking on additional roles helps to support this. Where possible encouraging volunteer development does not only benefit the volunteer it also benefits the services we are able to provide. Volunteers who have grown in knowledge, confidence and skills can sometimes come up with new initiatives around a particular service or a new role. For others supporting them develop new skills can lead to paid employment.

Social events

We recognise that it is important to ensure there are regular opportunities to celebrate volunteers and demonstrate our appreciation. This usually takes the form of a social event such as a summer BBQ or an end of year party. These events provide opportunities for staff and volunteers to interact outside of their normal roles, it also encourages volunteers from different teams to get to know each other. Alongside these main social events we aim for there to be team specific events. This will allow for those volunteers working in the same teams, who may not see each other, to share and learn from one another about their experiences carrying out the role. This will ensure consistency and good practice amongst all the volunteers.

Health & safety

Named contact person

All volunteers will be provided with a named staff member who is responsible for overseeing the volunteer in role. This includes providing information about volunteer sessions and having regular check-ins or one-to-ones with them. Check-ins should take place at least twice a month if the volunteer session doesn't happen weekly. If a volunteer has a problem or concern they should contact this person in the first instance. If this is not possible or if the problem is with their named contact, then volunteers should

contact the Volunteer Performance Manager.

Regular updates

Ensuring volunteers are kept up to date with information that affects their role as well as information about the organisation helps not only with the service they provide but also helps to keep volunteers feeling connected with the charity. Some volunteers may not carry out their role on a regular basis, so these communications are vital in helping them remain a part of the organisation. It can also help reduce volunteer drop off.

Name badges

We provide volunteers with name badges not only to alert staff and service users to the name of the person it also highlights the fact that this person supports our organisation in the capacity of volunteer. The name badge connects volunteers to the organisation and allows them to feel fully part of the team.

Access to Building facilities/ complementary therapies

As part of our recognition of the contribution our volunteers make our facilities and therapies are extended to them for their use. (With agreement.)

Flexibility around individual needs

In order to ensure we offer our volunteer opportunities to as many people as possible we recognise the need to provide flexibility within

the role. This includes the time commitment people are able to offer, financial considerations which may include paying expenses in cash upfront rather than on receipt. Volunteers can also negotiate having time away if their circumstances demand it.

Volunteer contribution and feedback sessions

It is important to provide space and platforms for volunteers to feedback and contribute to shaping the organisation. Their experience and insight from carrying out their role is a vital tool in informing us on how we deliver our services and what impact they may have. The ways in which this feedback is captured are multiple and include questionnaires, feedback forums, volunteer meetings and one-to-ones.



Once in Role

Volunteers will be supported in role by their named contact. They will also receive communication regarding their first volunteer hours explaining what they can expect and who they will meet. Where possible the named contact will be present for the first volunteer session to support the volunteer into role.



Ongoing support

Once in role the volunteer will be given a date of a one-to-one to review their experience and progress in their role. This will allow the volunteer to feed back any concerns they may have or any further training needs that may be necessary. It is also an opportunity for staff to raise any concerns or positive feedback about how the volunteer is fulfilling their role.

Refresher training

It may be necessary to offer refresher training if a role changes or if there are new policies and procedures that are implemented. It may also be the case that training needs have been identified in the regular one-to-one session with volunteers and staff.

Recognising and valuing volunteers

Recognising the contribution of our volunteers is very important to us at Positive East. We have a long history of volunteering at Positive East and feel that this is largely due to the importance we place on making volunteers feel valued and appreciated for their input and contribution. This recognition can take the form of highlighting groups or individuals in our newsletters. Featuring our volunteers in our marketing and publicity material, offering vouchers, sending flowers etc.

Evaluate volunteer role or service

Monitoring and evaluation of our volunteer service delivery is essential and will help to:

- + Prove our successes
- + Highlight areas for improvement
- + Identify gaps in services or roles
- + Identify new opportunities

Volunteers will be invited to complete questionnaires or surveys, attend Volunteer Feedback sessions and utilise the comments cards available in the office.

Moving on

When a volunteer decides to leave they will receive a written thank you for their contribution. We also invite volunteers to provide feedback on their experience. This feedback can be done as an end of volunteering coffee invite where a face to face conversation can take place or this can be done over the phone. If neither of these are possible then a questionnaire will be emailed requesting feedback.

Reference

After 6 months of consistent volunteering all volunteers are eligible to request a reference.

PositiveEast

Positive East is an East London based HIV charity providing a range of HIV support and prevention services for over 30 years.

Our services include: counselling, peer support, workshops, advice, volunteering, HIV and STI testing and sexual health information.

Positive East

159 Mile End Road
London E1 4AQ

020 7791 2855
talktome@positiveeast.org.uk

positiveeast.org.uk

@PositiveEast