

Lotus Community Volunteer

What is our Lotus community?

Our Lotus Community works alongside the City of Edinburgh Council to provide accommodation for 13 young people (aged 16-18), who are unaccompanied asylum-seekers. They come from a variety of different countries.

The community is a step towards independent living, whilst they the young people await a decision about their 'leave to remain' in the country. The asylum procedure can be a long, complicated, overwhelming and challenging process. We support the young people in the best way during this stressful time (and after). They are supported by their social workers and the guardianship service as well.

Location: 2 flats in North Edinburgh (Leith).

You will live in a studio bedroom in one of the flats alongside 6/7 young residents. The other Volunteer will live in the second flat with a further 6/7 young residents. You will not pay for rent or bills (including internet).

Time: As well as being a live in volunteer, we require you to commit to 20 hours per week for minimum of 6 months. This will be throughout the week. Tasks are a mixture of specific support tasks with young people and organising social activities in and out of our hub space.

You can volunteer or work part time, up to 20hrs max at the same time. You will organise your volunteering hours with the other volunteer(s) and staff to ensure full availability to our young people.

What will you do as a volunteer?

You will support the residents of the community and help look after your shared spaces in the flats. Most of the residents have basic living skills, including cooking, cleaning and budgeting. We offer further support where needed.

We can also help them gain confidence and knowledge of the local area. This will help them to take further steps towards independence and integration in the local community. We also aim to help them move on to accommodation that better suits their needs in the future.

Depending on the season, and interests and abilities of the residents, your tasks can include:

Typical Tasks
Peer Mentor Role
Being a peer mentor and staying in touch with the residents via WhatsApp
Working together with your fellow volunteer(s) to agree who is volunteering when and arranging time off, so that you can provide cover for each other.
Providing support to individual young people as part of their support plan with guidance from Cyrenians employees.
Sharing information about the residents to Cyrenians employees, including concerns, feedback from activities or interactions that you have had with them
Organising
Organising activities, which can be cooking, walks, cycling, board games night, karaoke, tea and cake (whatever your interests) for the residents to come along.
Updating your (online) calendar for the week, so everyone knows when you are volunteering and not
Organising our monthly community meeting
Looking after the Flats
Reporting issues with the flat, repairs etc.
Completing your cleaning tasks according to the rota for that week, while reminding residents to do the same.
Making sure that all rooms always have the equipment needed (cleaning products, toilet roll, hand sanitiser, condoms etc).

We will provide support and training needed for you to engage with the tasks and young people in a safe manner. Support, supervision and team meetings are every month.

You will have a volunteer phone number and email address. There is no expectation that you respond to messages when you are not volunteering.

What can you gain from this volunteering opportunity?

- **Be a part of** a positive and supportive community
- **Opportunity** to share your knowledge and shape activities and our service
- **Learn and develop your knowledge** about psychology, social policy, youth work, social work, community education and a range of other caring professions.
- **Learn about the UK asylum system**, the process for unaccompanied minor and trafficked young people
- **Meet new people** and create connections in Edinburgh
- **A reference** on completion of your volunteering
- **Get a free UK SIM** (if available)
- **Get a Leisure Card** giving access to City of Edinburgh Council gyms and sports facilities

Does this sound like you – what we are looking for?

- are over 18 years old
- enjoy engaging with young people (aged 18-30 years old)
- have strong interest in human rights
- are self-motivated and adaptable
- are resilient and can work independently
- have organising and administration skills
- are friendly and easy to approach (within personal boundaries)
- are willing to share your time with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children
- are reliable and happy to get involved with tasks
- are happy to share skills and knowledge with the residents
- can be flexible to needs and ability of individuals and groups
- know about the local authority housing bidding systems in Edinburgh or are willing to learn
- can work with individuals who may have different support needs
- do not judge and are respectful of confidentiality.

Then let us know your interest and get in touch by filling in the online form. We can then arrange a chat to get to know each other better, and we will share more information about the place and volunteering opportunity.

Your accessibility

Please let us know in the online form, if you need any support or adjustments to make our first chat together and volunteering a positive experience for you.

If you for any reason cannot fill in our online form, not to worry. Please reach out to us on 0131 333 1392 (ask for Lesley) or communitiesplacement@cyrenians.scot.

You are also welcome to submit a short video (MP4 format) via our online submission tool instead. Please include the information that we ask for in our application form.

We will ask you for the contact details of a person, who you have known for more than 6 months (1 reference). If you need support identifying a reference, please let us know.

Keeping everyone safe

When volunteering, you will engage with people, who are either young people under 18 years old and / or considered particularly vulnerable in our society. It is therefore required that you are a member of the [PVG scheme in Scotland](#).

If you are not already a member, then we will process your application with you. There are no costs to you in becoming a PVG scheme member for volunteering.

You can read [our safeguarding policy here](#) that details our commitment to keeping everyone safe. It is expected of everyone to adhere to these commitments. We expect all volunteers to do relevant training, so you can help keep yourself and others safe from harm.