

THE BUS SHELTER



BOX OFFICE



Volunteering Guide

Make a difference, get involved!

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Contents

- 2 - Make a difference, get involved
- 3 - General volunteering & Specialist volunteering
- 4 - Cooking & Behind the scenes
- 5 - What our volunteers say
- 6 - Volunteer stories - Rachel
- 7 - Volunteer stories - Alexandra
- 8 - Volunteer stories - Phoebe
- 9 - What next?



Make a difference, get involved

Volunteering not only helps us to deliver our services to the homeless community, but it can be a life-enhancing experience for both the volunteer and those we help.

This guide helps you to understand the opportunities we have for volunteers and hear first-hand about what makes volunteering for The Bus Shelter MK so great.

We hope you're inspired!



General volunteering

Our general volunteering, affectionately known as “the bus crew”, is based on site in Milton Keynes and covers 3 different shifts across the day. These cover mornings, afternoons and evenings. This is the volunteer role that will give you the most involvement with guests on a daily basis. Things will vary from shift to shift and week to week. However, the evening shifts tend to focus more on serving the evening meal and helping build the community, while daytime shifts are more likely to involve one-to-one chats and helping the manager run the site. **Volunteers are expected to:**



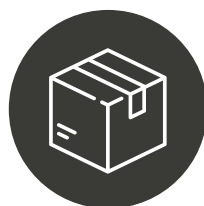
Heat up and
serve food



Greeting &
chatting



Assisting the
manager



Checking
supplies



Laundry &
housekeeping



Specialist volunteering

Support typically involves offering some kind of mentoring or buddying and may be something formal or informal. It usually starts with work to build trust and rapport and then works towards helping one or more of our guests to set objects and achieve specific tasks. It might be help managing a budget, learning to cook, or something more specialist. If you have a specific skill, such as applying for benefits, can offer counselling support or helping with interview techniques, then we also need your help. We understand that your time may be limited, so we can work with you to get the most out of the time you do have.

If you think your skills could help our guests then please get in touch.

Cooking

Our Cooking volunteers are the hidden gems who work in the background to help us plan and prepare meals for our guests. Meal planning is done online and is led by our food coordinator. Cooking volunteers can make everything at home and just drop food to our site ready to warm up, but they are also welcome to come and cook with our guests on site if they prefer.

Typically, you would cook for around 8 people, and you are welcome to cook as regularly as you wish. We are happy to reimburse the cost of ingredients up to £2 per meal per person.



Behind the scenes

We have a number of tasks that we need help with behind the scenes. From managing fundraising, to applying for grants, or assisting the Shelter Manager or Trustees with admin tasks, it takes a lot to keep our charity running smoothly. If you have time to give, but prefer to work at your own pace, either with or without support, then we probably have something you can help with.

So, from helping us with some specific skill or experience you have, down to cooking and making a difference to the daily life of those on the bus, we have something that's perfect for you.



What our volunteers say

Maybe you have been thinking about how you could give something back to society. Why not think about volunteering for The Bus Shelter MK?

Here are some of what our current volunteers say about their experiences:



“We enjoyed shepherd’s pie and bread and butter budding, followed by guitar playing and singing...what a lovely bunch of guys we have on the bus. Looking forward to next time”

“I always go home feeling privileged to have shared time with them”

“I was touched by the way they all rallied around when a homeless man turned up looking for a blanket. They immediately invited him to dinner and made him feel welcomed, showing real concern for his welfare”



Volunteer stories



Rachel's story – Cooking volunteer

I'm a mother of a four year old, a hands-on busy business owner who has zero time. However, one thing I can do is cook! Just don't ask me where the time comes from... it turns up.

I was actually inspired by my Great Grandma. She was widowed, her four sons had gone to fight in WW1, and she was left to run a whole farm largely alone. Yet, amongst all of this, she still found the time and energy to cook supper for an orphaned family and walked it across the fields to deliver it to them every evening. There were no supermarkets, microwaves or ready-made jars of sauces. She made everything from scratch.

The truth is that cooking to help this cause is not a drain it's a pleasure - this is the way I think my great grandma might have felt too. It leaves me with a lovely feeling of connection in an otherwise distant world.



Volunteer stories



Alexandra's story – General volunteer

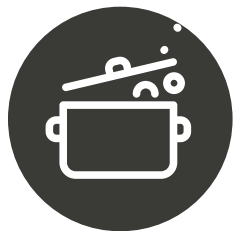
Initially I was drawn to volunteering with The Bus Shelter MK through my passion for those who - for whatever reason - find themselves homeless. I wasn't quite sure what to expect initially, but right from day one I absolutely loved it. It is about so much more than giving people a roof over their head! The whole ethos is to give dignity to those who are vulnerable, to show them respect, to encourage them and give them hope. All this in addition to giving them a safe place to live.

I look forward to my weekly volunteer evening as the guys are always great company. We talk about their week, their hopes, and their gripes and always have a really good laugh. I feel privileged to spend time with them and always leave feeling valued and appreciated.

They are also fiercely loyal and protective towards the volunteers, and it's just like one big family really. I have to admit, though, I do miss them when they move on, but it's so rewarding to feel that I played a small part in their journey to normality again.



Volunteer stories



Phoebe's story – General volunteer

I started at The Bus Shelter MK just after it opened and what kept me volunteering was the guests. Although guests are constantly changing as people move into housing, it's always an interesting mix of personalities. I look forward to my shifts and always leave having learned something new; occasionally a recipe, usually a bad joke but sometimes something more meaningful.

When I started volunteering I thought I had an idea of what homelessness was like. The Bus Shelter MK has changed that view. The guests' backgrounds, skill sets and outlooks all vary and it's a pleasure to play a small part in their journeys.

There are around 50 regular volunteers currently and it's great to see the group mobilise when guests have a particular need, but more importantly, we support each other. The Bus Shelter Manager and Trustees are super approachable which is vital should any issues arise.

All in all it's a sometimes challenging but always a positive experience that I feel lucky to be a part of.




What next?

If you want to volunteer, then please get in touch via:

 www.thebussheltermk.org/volunteer

 facebook.com/thebussheltermk

or leave a voicemail on our message service on

 01908 429 889



The Bus Shelter MK is a charitable incorporated organisation with limited liability.

Registered as a charity with the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

Registered office: Box 75, Elder House, 548-550 Elder Gate, Milton Keynes MK9 1LR