

# Volunteer Handbook

## Introduction from Chief Executive, Nick Mayo



Thank you! Firstly, for being interested in volunteering with the Genesis Trust and, secondly, for reading this important Volunteer Handbook.

Genesis is largely here to mobilise a significant volunteer effort to the benefit of those in our community who are vulnerable, marginalised and disadvantaged. We aim to do this responsibly and effectively so that the help you offer is done in a way that works for everyone involved.

This may sometimes seem to involve administration that has little obvious value, but I can assure you that everything we ask is necessary.

So, thank you again, for whatever your contribution is. Large or small, it all makes a huge difference. And I love hearing about why people volunteer and what they learn about themselves so please do let me know.

## Vision

A thriving and supportive community in the Bath area where everyone has hope and a future.

## Mission

To support disadvantaged and vulnerable people in the Bath area, offering opportunities for them to make healthy choices and improve their lives and prospects.

## Our Motivation

The heart of Genesis is to love our neighbour as ourselves.

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# 1. Genesis Trust Bath

## 1.1 What We Do

Genesis Trust Bath (“Genesis” or Genesis Trust”) provides a range of practical and empowering support services to help disadvantaged and vulnerable people in the local community.

We enable people:

- To minimise self-neglect and constructively seek help
- To develop healthier lifestyles
- To engage with community, meaningful activity and work.

## 1.2 Our Values

- We act with **compassion** and kindness
- We **honour** each person as unique and valued
- We believe that there is always **hope** for the future
- We believe everyone has the potential to **transform** their lives
- We believe that every person can discover **purpose** for their lives
- We believe in a mutually supportive **community**
- We are **straightforward** in all our dealings
- We believe in **partnership** and collaboration.

## 1.3 Who we are

The Genesis Trust began when a local hairdresser, Gail Hodges, saw homeless teenagers rummaging in a bin for food. Realising that they were sleeping rough, Gail began to provide them with soup each night and so the Bath soup run was born and which still operates today. Genesis Trust was officially set up as a charity in 1995 and since then has helped around 4,000 adults each year.

Today, Genesis is a thriving community of over 700 volunteers and staff who dedicate their time to achieving the goals of our vision and mission. Genesis employs approximately 18 people on a full or part time basis, working under a Chief Executive and a Board of Trustees. Much of our work is done by a body of volunteers gathered from many different churches in Bath who bring their love, time and energy to help people in need. We encourage those who have sought our support to share their experience and enable them to develop their own skills, thereby contributing to the community.

We are supported by the majority of churches in Bath who provide teams of volunteers, much needed financial support and the use of their premises. We believe in collaboration

and channelling passion by helping people to work together, reaching people in need in the Bath area, and helping individuals to put their faith into action. Genesis Trust is a Christian organisation, although we are strictly non-discriminatory and welcome people from all walks of life and faiths.

Genesis has expanded significantly since we started. The recent Next Step Appeal will result in a new Lifeline & training centre. This will enable us to offer further courses and opportunities for beneficiaries and volunteers. Collaborating with local businesses, churches and the wider voluntary sector, we have established good networks around the city. We also provide courses in tandem with the Wellbeing College, Bath College, Bath Spa, the Volunteer Network and B&NES Heritage Services.

## 1.4 The people we help

We are here to help people who are vulnerable or disadvantaged and find life difficult in many ways and need our support in order to move forward in their lives. This includes people who are homeless, dealing with drug or other addictions, influenced by alcohol, and who may be vulnerable and desperate. They may also be people affected by family breakdown or grappling with chaotic, uncertain lifestyles. They may be long term unemployed, in some way marginalised, or have learning disabilities or mental health issues which limit their abilities.

In 2018 there were roughly 36 rough sleepers in Bath. This figure only accounts for those sleeping rough on the streets on one particular night and does not account for 'sofa surfers' or those experiencing serious hardship or persistent problems with housing and employment. Homelessness at a national level is worsening with numbers increasing steadily year on year. In 2017 B&NES provided 424 accommodation-based housing units and commissioned 17 homelessness advice providers.

Genesis is a key player helping to address these significant issues by providing food, clothing, advice, skills and training, and a place to seek help in a non-judgmental and accepting environment. Our aim is to support people in gaining access to the right help and services to enable them to flourish: ultimately to help people help themselves in a context of "Good Help".

Homelessness is a result of a complex number of factors. It is estimated that 8 out of 10 homeless people have physical health conditions and 7 out of 10 have mental health conditions, thus limiting their ability to find employment and secure housing. We work closely with local organisations such as DHI, Bath MIND, CAB and Sirona to help alleviate homelessness in the Bath area. To find out more about homelessness please visit our website:

<http://genesistrust.org.uk/the-need/>

## 2. Our Projects

Genesis Trust works through various projects across Bath and the surrounding area to deliver opportunities for clients and visitors to create a **Pathway** to improve their circumstances and options for their future.

### 2.1 Lifeline Centre

A centre for the homeless and vulnerable, providing friendship, advice and practical help, including **Life Skills** supported training, activity and courses for vulnerable and homeless adults. **Lunch Box** serves hot meals twice a week, largely to the homeless or recently housed community.

### 2.2 Social Enterprises

We have an expanding Social Enterprise effort to offer opportunities to clients to gain confidence and learn the skills needed to become independent, and to help fund the rest of Genesis:

#### Furniture Project

Collecting donated furniture and selling to those on low incomes or benefits.

#### TBA

Exciting new gardening and horticulture social enterprise to be announced soon.

### 2.3 Volunteer Run Projects

A number of the projects within the Genesis family are almost entirely volunteer run and managed:

#### Soup Run

Serving soup and sandwiches to the homeless every night of the year in central Bath.

#### Sunday Centre

Serving an affordable lunch and providing warmth and shelter on a Sunday.

#### Bath Foodbank

Providing emergency food parcels to those in crisis.

#### Bath Street Pastors

Keeping people safe on the streets late at night.

#### Home for Good

Working with individuals and families to offer children a home

### 2.4 Pathways

Pathways incorporates a number of programmes or modules to coach and mentor people:

## Family Matters

Supporting families in need in Bath.

## Housing Matters

Helping people get housed and be housed successfully.

## Health Matters

Helping people improve their health.

## I Matter

Helping people understand their value, identity and purpose.

## Work Matters

Helping people get work and succeed.

## Money Matters

Helping people manage money.

For further information on our varied volunteering roles and contact details, please visit the Genesis Trust website [www.genestrust.org.uk](http://www.genestrust.org.uk)

## 3. Our Volunteers

Volunteers are the heart of Genesis and we couldn't provide our valuable services in Bath without their help. Every volunteer is highly valued for their skills, experience, dedication and compassion. We hope that every volunteering experience with Genesis will be positive and life enhancing. We believe in creating partnership with our volunteers and together achieving and portraying our Vision, Mission and Values. We are committed to supporting you on your volunteer journey and providing you with appropriate development and training opportunities.

### 3.1 Why Volunteer for Us

Volunteering is a fantastic way to contribute to your community and to develop your own skills and experiences at the same time. Helping homeless and vulnerable people is not an easy task, but it can be extremely rewarding and it opens our eyes to the complex range of issues facing both our communities and individuals. At Genesis Trust we encourage an open and friendly team atmosphere as well as providing ongoing support and training for volunteers. We offer a sense of hope to staff, volunteers and beneficiaries, enabling everyone to feel that we are collaborating together for positive and inclusive change. We encourage you to ask questions if you are unhappy or unsure about anything. It is important to us that you are equipped for and comfortable in your role.

### 3.2 Commitment and Dependability

Some volunteering roles at Genesis require a longer-term commitment, whereas others are more flexible and can take volunteers for one hour a week, once a month or every day. We

just ask that volunteers are honest with the time they can commit to and to be dependable and responsible. In return for your commitment Genesis Trust will ensure a safe environment for our volunteers to work in, with supportive and encouraging staff or project management team. We will provide volunteers with clear descriptions of their roles, a named person as a supervisor and treat all volunteers equally and respectfully. We also offer encouragements and recognitions.

### 3.3 Faith in the Community

Through the Genesis Trust volunteers can make a tangible difference to the community and can put their faith into practice: loving our neighbours as ourselves. Valued for the experience and effort they bring to each project, volunteers can also gain experience in new areas, leading to personal, practical and spiritual development. We encourage the kinds of activities that allow people to feel that the work they are doing is helping those most in need.

## 4. Induction, Training and Development

On becoming a volunteer with one of the Genesis projects you will be given an induction to the Genesis Trust. Each project will have its own specific induction training for volunteer roles which will be conducted either or both through a course or on-the-job training. Please ask if you feel that you would benefit from extra instruction as it is important that you feel confident in your role.

Depending on the nature of your role there may be training sessions that you will be asked to attend and refresher sessions as appropriate. Training courses are also offered to volunteers who wish to develop their skills and awareness (e.g., Mental Health Awareness, Boundaries, Conflict Resolution, Listening Skills and Motivational Interviewing). We aim to support volunteer development and learning where possible although may not always be able to provide these opportunities for free.

What Genesis offers:

- Introduction and induction to Genesis Trust
- Project specific induction and training
- Opportunities for further training and personal development
- Support and supervision
- Regular updates and newsletters
- Reflection events

Volunteering with Genesis provides:

- Opportunities to develop of valuable transferable skills
- References for future employment or voluntary positions
- Boost for a CV
- Greater experience and awareness of social issues

- Greater connectedness and improved wellbeing
- Confidence building and the chance to meet new people
- An opportunity to help others in your community.

## 5. Supervision and Support

Genesis Trust is here to offer guidance and advice and will always be supportive in resolving any problems or difficulties you may experience. We encourage an open, respectful and mutually-beneficial environment for volunteers, staff and beneficiaries alike. Genesis Trust values the work of its volunteers and encourages feedback. Genesis gives volunteers and staff opportunities to reflect on such things as what they have learnt during their experiences, challenges they may have faced, the benefits and motivations of volunteering, the role of faith and the value of the work done through our projects.

## 6. Communication

Genesis aims to keep in regular communication with volunteers to help them get the best out of their partnership with the Genesis Trust. News, useful information, upcoming events and opportunities for training and development will be in the volunteers' newsletter which is sent by email. Information will also be provided by project management teams. For regular updates please sign up for the relevant email.

We value feedback, suggestions and ideas from volunteers. Please speak with your project leader or with the Operations Manager. In addition, we aim to hold forums to capture volunteers' experiences and feedback. If someone stops volunteering, we ask them to complete a short questionnaire which will help shape our future decisions.

## 7. Policies and Procedures

As part of the introduction to the Genesis Trust all volunteers must make themselves aware of the relevant policies and procedures for the charity as a whole.

These include:

- Volunteer Policy & Handbook
- Health and Safety Policy and Procedure
- Policy for safeguarding Adults at Risk
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Policy
- Data Policy
- DBS Policy and guidelines
- Complaints Procedure
- Insurance Policy
- ID Card Policy

These can be found on the Genesis Trust website. Please ask for a copy if you do not have access to the website.

In addition to those listed above, volunteers should familiarise themselves with the fire procedures at their project location.

## 8. General

### 8.1 Confidentiality

It is essential that volunteers understand the need to observe and respect people's privacy. Due to the nature of the work undertaken at Genesis Trust it is imperative that volunteers treat all information they access as being confidential, unless stated otherwise. All volunteers will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. In addition, we ask that volunteers do not give out their phone numbers or addresses to beneficiaries.

### 8.2 Inappropriate Behaviour

Working with homeless and vulnerable people can be challenging and may lead to a volunteer inadvertently behaving inappropriately. Such issues can arise due to training needs, a lack of support or misunderstandings. In the first instance, the project leader will try to resolve any problems through informal discussion.

Where informal discussions are not enough, the project leader will raise the issue in a formal meeting with you to ensure everything is fully explained and understood. You will be entitled to put your case. You can be accompanied at the meeting by a third party.

A period of time will be allowed, and support provided as appropriate, to make the necessary changes. However, Genesis Trust reserves the right to refuse voluntary assistance from any volunteer for any reason.

Any of the behaviour listed below would result in us refusing any further voluntary assistance from you with immediate effect:

- Gross indecency or immoral behaviour
- Deliberate acts or unlawful discrimination or serious acts of harassment
- Dangerous behaviour, fighting or physical assault
- Incapacity at work or poor performance caused by intoxicants or drugs
- Possession, supply or use of illicit drugs
- Doing anything which could result in adverse publicity to Genesis Trust
- Theft or unauthorised possession of money or property
- Destruction/sabotage of property
- Breaches of health and safety policy and procedures
- Maltreatment of any person
- Convictions of any offence which might affect your suitability for volunteering duties
- Any breach of Genesis Policies & Procedures.

### 8.3 Boundaries

Working with homeless and vulnerable people can be a challenging task that requires patience and discernment. We ask that volunteers are considerate and respect boundaries when communicating with beneficiaries. If in doubt seek advice from your project leader.

### 8.4 Dress Code and Personal Property

Genesis would ask that volunteers dress comfortably and appropriately. If protective clothing is required you must wear it. Genesis cannot accept responsibility for personal items, vehicles or anything else of a personal nature that is used in your volunteering duties. Some projects can provide a locker or safe place to store personal belongings, so please check with your supervisor if required. It is your responsibility to insure your belongings.

### 8.5 Statements to the Media

Volunteers must refer requests for statements to the Communications Manager before communicating with the media.

### 8.6 Sickness and Holidays

If you are unable to make it to a volunteering activity due to sickness or any other reason please contact your project leader as soon as possible so that they can arrange alternative cover.

### 8.7 State Benefits

Voluntary work may affect your eligibility for state benefits. We advise you check this with the appropriate agencies. Genesis is not responsible for any affects your volunteering may have on your personal circumstances.

### 8.8 Smoking

Smoking is prohibited within any of the Genesis buildings or project locations.

### 8.9 Age Policy

Any person working or volunteering for Genesis Trust must be over the age of 18.

### 8.10 Leaving Genesis Trust

Volunteers are vital in carrying out the important work we do, and we value the time, dedication and commitment provided. Each volunteer has their own personal reasons both for starting and stopping volunteering. If you are able, please advise your project leader if you are unable to continue with your role as soon as you are able in order to allow them time to find a replacement. In most circumstances, your project leader will be happy to provide you with references. We will welcome you completing an exit survey.

## 8.11 Volunteer Agreement

Volunteers will be required to sign a Volunteer Application form and undertake necessary checks (e.g., DBS) before starting as a volunteer. This applies whether you are volunteering for Genesis Trust directly or, for example, via another group or organisation such as a church.

Genesis Trust takes its responsibility for volunteers seriously, but this is only possible to do if you do your part. It is your responsibility to ensure that our records for you are up to date at all times, including that current emergency contact details. Further, you agree to your details being held on our databases and that you have opted in for any and all communications relevant to both being a volunteer for Genesis and for Genesis generally.

Some roles will require regular checks such as DBS and for the avoidance of doubt any volunteer whose checks have reached their expiry date then they are no longer a recognised volunteer for Genesis Trust.

## 8.12 General Statement

For general reasons including safety, security, risk and reputation Genesis Trust reserves the right to deny any person for any reason from being a volunteer for any of the activities of Genesis Trust.

## 9. Final Thoughts

The whole team, staff and trustees of Genesis Trust would like to thank you for your support, enthusiasm and dedication to helping those in our community who are vulnerable and marginalised. Thank You!

## Annex A – Project Specific Guidelines

These will be provided by your Project Leader.

## Annex B – Induction Confirmation

Please sign and return this final page as confirmation of receipt and understanding of the Volunteer Handbook

Name:

Signed:

Dated: