

Become an Activity Mentor

FAQs



Everything you need to
know about volunteering

What is the point of Activity Mentoring?

With just a small contribution of your time, you can support a disabled person so that they can connect into their community and do something they enjoy. It will be rewarding to know that you are making a positive change in your community.

What can you get out of Activity Mentoring?

This opportunity is ideal for people looking for professional development opportunities or just anybody wants to do something valuable with their spare time.

We offer lots of training opportunities, the chance to learn new skills and the opportunity to get a good reference and great material for your CV. You will be part of a proactive, friendly and dynamic team and work alongside people from all walks of life.

Loneliness and social isolation has really been in the spotlight recently thanks to the work of the Jo Cox Commission. More than half of disabled people say they experience loneliness, a quarter of them say they feel lonely most days. It can be much harder for disabled people to get out

and about and do all the things they want to for a variety of reasons, we do not believe this should be the case. A lot of these barriers can be removed with just a little thought and effort from others. As an activity mentor, you can support them on their journey to independence.



What does an Activity Mentor do?

Activity Mentors will support a disabled individual to engage with an activity of their choice. Trying new activities can be daunting for many disabled people because organisers are not always aware of the need to make adjustments that would enable them to attend. An Activity Mentor will bolster their confidence and offer them whatever emotional and practical support they need to get the most out of their hobbies or social life. Activity Mentors will help them to use public transport, to access activities and make sure they feel settled and fully able to participate. A disabled person might, for example, need extra help memorising a bus route and you might decide to support them with the use of pictures and train them up until they feel confident travelling alone. A good activity mentor will help their client to grow in independence.

Who do Activity Mentors support?

People living in Manchester, Middleton and the Holyrood area of Bury who consider themselves to have a disability and would like a little extra support to get out and about.

Do volunteers get training?

Yes, all our volunteers will go out completely prepared. You will be given a full induction in the role and some training on the Social Model of Disability to help you understand and promote the values of the organisation.

How do you vet volunteers?

We complete a DBS check for all volunteers and request two references. We would never let anybody work with our clients if we didn't have full confidence in them.

Who would make a good Activity Mentor?

No prior experience is required. All our volunteers will be given training and there will be fully-supervised introductory sessions so you will go out feeling completely prepared.

We are just looking for people with a 'can do' attitude who are looking to make change in their community. It is important that Activity Mentors think positively about disability and share our values of promoting independent living and inclusion.



Do you do risk assessments?

The training we give our volunteers will explore possible risks and scenarios to prepare them should these arise. We have a general Risk Assessment for the Activity Mentor role and specific risk assessments

will be conducted around individual activities and clients. Volunteers will not be expected to do anything that they don't feel comfortable with.

Can I volunteer for a one-off activity?

No, continuity is important so we ask that our volunteers commit for a period of at least 12 weeks to ensure that they are seeing the same client through to the end of the project. It will be rewarding for you to see the people you work with grow in independence over your time with them.

Who will a volunteer be matched to?

Our team will select a disabled person who's location and timetable is a good match. The client and the volunteer will then be introduced in a relaxed, supervised session before their first outing.

If the relationship doesn't work out for any reason, both parties can be re-matched to somebody who is a better fit.

Do you cover volunteers' expenses?

Yes, we cover all reasonable travel cost and offer a small meal allowance if an Activity Mentor is volunteering for a long continuous period. We do not want our volunteers to ever be out of pocket.

What kind of activities might the volunteers be supporting a disabled person to attend?

Whatever the client chooses. This could be almost anything! We have seen examples such as maths lessons, Tai Chi or sports clubs - but whatever they're into, we'll find a way to get them there!

Do you organise your own activities for disabled people?

No, one of our main objectives is to get our clients to connect into their



community, to get out about in their local area and become less isolated.

We don't want people to feel limited to only doing activities specifically for disabled people. We want to make sure they have a greater choice of clubs and activities to join.

Does an Activity Mentor ever need to assist with a client's personal care?

No. That is not part of the Activity Mentor role and you will never be asked to do so. Most of our clients do not need any support with this. If you are matched with a client that does need assistance in this way, they will be accompanied by a personal assistant, for example, who would attend to this for them.

What if I'm ill?

This can't be helped, now and again. If you are unable to attend, you need to contact the Volunteer Co-ordinator or the Community Connector on duty, giving as much notice as possible.

What will I need to wear?

This depends on the activity and the Manchester weather of course. If you're still unsure, check with the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

Will Breakthrough give me a reference?

Once you've been a volunteer for 6 months we will happily provide you with a reference if required. Please mention it to your Co-ordinator if you need a reference.

What if I don't want to volunteer any more?

Whilst we hope you can carry out the 12 weeks (or more) you have committed to, we understand that circumstances sometimes change. We would ask for as much notice as possible so we can ensure that the client can continue their chosen activity.