

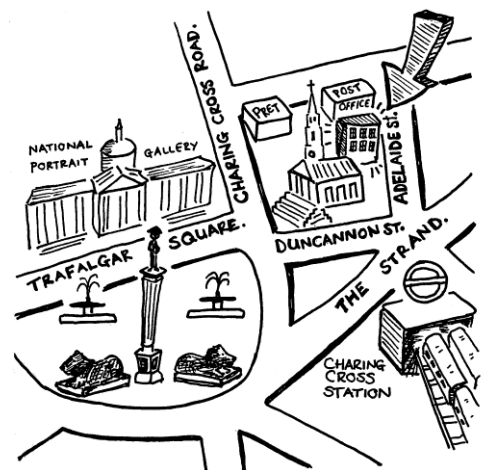
## CORPORATE VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



### THE CONNECTION AT ST MARTIN'S

12 ADELAIDE STREET  
LONDON  
WC2N 4HW

T: 0207 766 5544  
E: [INFO@CSTM.ORG.UK](mailto:INFO@CSTM.ORG.UK)  
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1078201



## HELLO AND WELCOME!

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with the Connection at St Martin's and for helping to improve the lives of vulnerable people affected by homelessness.

Volunteers are at the very heart of our organisation. We significantly rely on you to assist us on our mission and appreciate that you have chosen to support our services. Volunteering is also a great opportunity for you to meet new people, share stories and have new experiences. It is our aim to make sure that everyone who gives their time to us feels valued, respected and proud to join the Connection.

### WITHIN THIS HANDBOOK, YOU WILL FIND:

- ABOUT US
- POLICIES & PROCEDURES
- SUPPORT AND COMPLAINTS

We hope you enjoy volunteering with us as much as we enjoy having you with us. Thank you for making a difference!



*Volunteers serving lunch in the centre*

## ABOUT US

At the Connection, we work with people, not for them, to help them to recognise their strengths and talents, improve their wellbeing, learn new skills and increase their confidence. With society facing so many complex difficulties from isolation and poverty to refugee displacement we need to remain a beacon of hope to people on the edge, homeless and with nowhere to turn. We help tackle social issues in a meaningful way and work around the clock to support over 200 people every day.

## OUR MISSION AND VALUES

The Connection at St. Martin's empowers those who are on the edges of society to take control of their lives by:

- Providing practical support in an active environment designed to help people to recognise their own strengths, recover from crisis and move on;
- Collaborating with others who share our vision and mission not just in London, but other parts of the UK and the world;
- Sharing our learning with others, to deepen our own understanding and create a more socially just society for those on the margins.

## EMPOWERING

We work with not for people, starting with their strengths and ability to shape their own future. We value healthy relationships and open communication. We believe that people can find a future that's better than the present.

## INCLUSIVE

We provide an accessible environment and celebrate diversity. We are open for those who have been excluded from everywhere else.

## COLLABORATIVE

We are always learning, sharing our experiences and collaborating with others to ensure we understand emerging needs and maximise our opportunities. We engage with our clients to help to develop, deliver and evaluate our work.

## HONEST

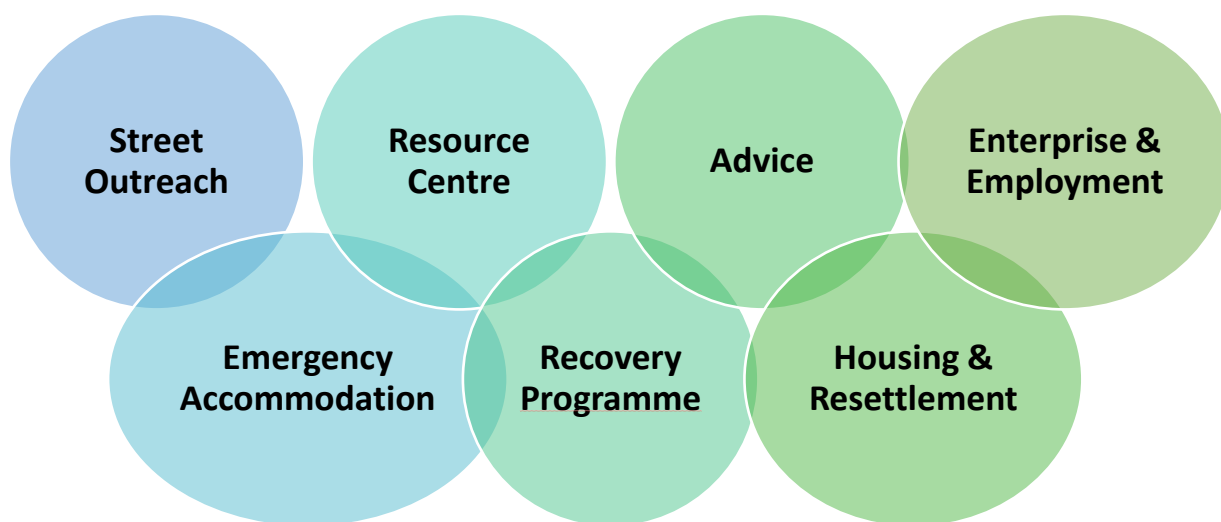
We hold realistic expectations about ourselves, one another, our clients and our partners. We acknowledge both positive and negative experiences compassionately and without pre-judgement.

## TENACIOUS

We go the extra mile to address need. We challenge decisions that adversely affect people on the edge. We pioneer new approaches to address homelessness and its underlying causes. We do not walk away from people when they don't evidence the outcomes we want or expect.

## OUR BUILDING AND SERVICES

The Connection is a busy multi-resource centre, located near Charing Cross and Trafalgar Square, running services around the clock. We work in three key areas – Engagement, Recovery & Independence:



## ENGAGEMENT RECOVERY INDEPENDENCE

Everyone accessing the centre will have an initial assessment designed to understand more about their situation and how we can support them. We do not only ask questions about “what has gone wrong”, but we also ask about people’s interests, their goals and their aspirations. Once we know where people want to get to, it’s then our job to be with them as they get there, providing the support that they need every step of the way.

The best way that we can demonstrate our impact is this distance travelled – where did someone start when they came to us, and how far have they come in reaching where they want to be.

### ENGAGEMENT

Our Street Engagement Team will be out on the streets between 7am and 7pm, proactively making contact with people to offer them pathways away from the streets and building up trusting relationships which help people to access support.

Our Resource Centre is open from 9am to 1pm Monday-Saturday and remains very busy, providing an average of 150 people every weekday with showers and laundry facilities, hot meals, appointments with nurses and mental health specialists, and access to telephones, computers and a postal address.

Day services are replaced by an Emergency Accommodation service between the hours of 9pm and 7:30am. The service can take up to 75 clients at night, is free of charge and consists of camp beds set up on the first floor, ground floor and in the basement.



## RECOVERY

Once we have engaged with people, we then work hard to tackle the root causes of their homelessness. The Recovery Programme contains a number of support groups and therapeutic activities, including Art, Mindfulness, Gambling Support, and Psychological therapies.

Our advice teams have a range of specialisms, including Migration lawyers, Mental Health nurses, and people with lived experience of homelessness.

Once we have addressed these root causes of people's homelessness, we can then promote their Recovery by making referrals into accommodation and assisting people to resettle with practical support including Moving In Packs of bedding and kitchenware.

## INDEPENDENCE

Finally, we support people to live independently. This includes in-tenancy support. People can also access our in-house volunteering scheme, Step Up, to build key employability skills. We also have an in-house Employment & Training service which creates supported pathways into employment, the most sustainable route away from homelessness.



### 1 First floor

Employment, Training,  
Art Room, Computer Room

### 0 Ground floor

Reception and Information,  
Telephones, Computers

Please speak to reception for advice services

### -1 Basement

Food, NHS Services, Laundry,  
Toilets, Showers



Right: Volunteers in our Gardening project, which is located in St Martin's Courtyard outside the building.

Left: Products from our Social Enterprise, sold at St Martin's.



## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

As a volunteer of The Connection, you'll need to be aware of the following Policies & Procedures. Please read through these and familiarise yourself with them.

### HEALTH & SAFETY

The Connection is committed to looking after the health, safety and wellbeing of every volunteer. It is important that you understand and accept your personal responsibility towards maintaining health and safety standards in order to provide a safe working environment for all. Any activities carried out on a voluntary basis are covered by the same health and safety legislative requirements as those carried out by our staff. Volunteers with specific responsibilities for Health & Safety will receive training and guidance. Suitable risk assessments will be prepared where appropriate.

It's important that you agree to:

- Carry out your duties without endangering either your own health & safety or that of fellow volunteers, staff, clients, third parties and members of the public;
- Comply with all relevant instructions, guidance and procedures;
- Inform staff of any personal health & safety requirements you may have;
- Bring to the attention of staff any health & safety risks observed as you are volunteering;
- Report any accidents, incidents and near misses;
- If it is an emergency, call the emergency services immediately;
- Dress appropriately for your volunteering activity.

On certain occasions staff may have to deal with challenging circumstances or behaviours and consequently, there may be a situation where you could feel threatened or frightened. In these circumstances staff will always be on hand to support you and as they are best placed to deal with such matters, please bring any concerns you may have to staff's attention.

In case of an emergency, the building is equipped with several panic alarms located on each floor. Panic alarms are only used in emergencies when immediate assistance is required. You can activate an alarm by simply pushing the red button. Then it will sound on all floors and staff will quickly attend the area activated. Security guards are available on the St Martin's-in-the-Fields site and can be requested to attend anywhere in the building via our reception desk.

In the event of a fire alarm sounding staff fire marshals will direct clients, staff and volunteers to the nearest exit. The meeting point in the event of an evacuation is the Oscar Wilde statue at the Charing Cross/ Strand end of Adelaide Street. Do not retrieve items from the lockers or try to re-enter the building unless directed to do so by the staff fire marshals.

### PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

The relationship between a worker or volunteer and an individual using the service may appear to have much in common with friendship or other relationships. However, it is a professional relationship with a defined purpose – to promote the wellbeing of the individual using the service (the client).

Boundaries keep you safe, and they keep our clients safe. They are the invisible line which ensures that relationships at work do not stray from the professional into the personal. This is important in setting realistic expectations, safeguarding, building and maintaining trust.

All volunteers of The Connection at St Martin's are expected to understand and agree to the following principles from our Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults policy:

- Your role as a volunteer will be clearly communicated to clients by staff of The Connection who are facilitating your volunteering;
- If you feel uncomfortable whilst volunteering, raise this with staff at The Connection at the earliest opportunity;
- If you are unsure, please do not give advice to clients – direct them to a member of staff instead;
- Please do not agree to keep secrets or carry out actions on our client's behalfs, e.g. to talk to their caseworker about an issue they may have;
- Please do not give your phone number, email address or any personal details to clients with a view to continuing a relationship with clients outside of The Connection. If you do see our clients outside of The Connection, it is perfectly fine to stop and have a friendly chat – but not to develop a relationship any further. This includes offering advice, training, work, accommodation, money or other gifts to our clients;
- Please do not donate items directly to clients – you can donate these via The Connection instead.

It is absolutely fine to have friendly and wide-ranging conversations with our clients, bearing the above guidelines in mind – in fact, it is incredibly important that you build rapport and conversation. This is one of the most valuable things that you can bring to The Connection!

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Vulnerable adults accessing social care services still have a general right to independence, choice and self-determination including control over information about themselves. But in the context of adult safeguarding these rights can be overridden in certain circumstances. If there is a safeguarding concern, sharing it may be justified.

At The Connection, all clients sign a Confidentiality Agreement upon accessing our services which permit us to share information about them internally. This ensures that our staff team are all aware about any safeguarding issues or actions plans so that we can work with clients without duplication or insensitivity.

All volunteers of The Connection at St Martin's are expected to understand and agree to the following principles from our Confidentiality policy:

- The Connection operates an internal information sharing policy, which all clients agree to upon accessing our services;
- The Connection may share information with external agencies in the interests of safeguarding, avoiding duplication, and promoting the wellbeing of our clients;
- There should be no confidences or secrets between volunteers and clients;
- If a client discloses information which indicates a risk to themselves or others, please share this with staff at The Connection;
- Please do not share any information outside of your volunteering role at The Connection.

## SAFEGUARDING

If you feel distressed following a conversation with a client, or having observed their physical presentation or behaviour, please share this with staff at The Connection. At the end of each day we hold a debrief in which all staff who were on duty that morning or night share information and any difficult emotions they are experiencing.

It is important that you do not take difficult emotions away with you. We understand that volunteering with vulnerable adults can at times be distressing. It is important that you share this with us as we are here to support you too.

### **Some tips for handling conversations with vulnerable adults**

If someone wants to tell you something, that is a sign that you have built good rapport. The person clearly trusts you at a time when they are vulnerable.

By letting people know “I can certainly listen to you, but I need to let you know that if you tell me something that I feel I need to share, I will have to tell staff”, you are setting realistic expectations and maintaining appropriate boundaries. It is important to be transparent about this from the beginning as if people perceive that their trust has been broken this may be very distressing for them.

### **Managing difficult situations**

It is not your responsibility as a volunteer to manage difficult situations. If you feel uncomfortable at any point, it is important that you make a member of staff aware of this. You can get out of difficult situations by alerting a member of staff, getting up to use the toilet, or going to get a cup of tea.

## DIVERSITY

We are committed to a policy of treating all volunteers, staff and clients equally and fairly. We won't discriminate against anyone because of their age, disability, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, nationality, political beliefs, race, religion, sexual orientation or socio-economic background.

## DATA PROTECTION

Before we can collect, store, or use data about an individual, GDPR requires us to ensure that we have the individual's consent to do so. The way we do this is by asking for your consent on the Volunteer Sign-up Form.

*Volunteers wrapping presents for Christmas*





## SUPPORT AND COMPLAINTS

The Connection is a learning organisation, committed to continuous improvement that values its volunteers and receives them positively. After you have volunteered, we will send you a quick feedback form to better understand your experience with us, identify the areas that need to be improved on and collect some suggestions and concerns. Feedback from our volunteers is invaluable in shaping our volunteering opportunities going forward.

## WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US

Volunteers play an integral role and we would not be able to do what we do without your help. We want you to enjoy your volunteering with us and get the most out of it.

Our commitment to you:

- Always treat you with respect, consideration and appreciation;
- Ensure you have a clear idea of your responsibilities, including the length of time we'd like you to volunteer with us for;
- Give information about the training and support available to help you carry out your role;
- Offer you fair, honest and timely feedback;
- Update you on how you have made a difference;
- Your personal data will be protected, and we process any information about you in line with GDPR legislation.

## WHAT WE EXPECT FROM YOU

To ensure you feel ready and get the most out of your role, we expect you to do the following:

- Attend the induction, training and fill out the volunteer sign up form;
- Always treat fellow volunteers, staff and clients with respect, consideration and appreciation;
- Act in a professional manner when representing us;
- Provide as much notice as possible if you are unable to fulfil your role or no longer wish to be involved in the project;
- Ask our Partnerships Assistant for clarification if you don't fully understand your role.

You will be introduced to the Partnerships Assistant at The Connection who will help you to schedule your training and induction, acting as your key contact whilst you are volunteering with us.

On your arrival at the Connection, please press the buzzer outside and introduce yourself to staff mentioning the company you work for and the volunteering role you are involved in. Lockers are provided to keep personal belongings in.

## KEY CONTACTS

Partnerships and Philanthropy Manager: [sonja.ashbury@cstm.org.uk](mailto:sonja.ashbury@cstm.org.uk)

Partnerships Assistant: [emmanuelle.parre@cstm.org.uk](mailto:emmanuelle.parre@cstm.org.uk)

0207 766 5555

**Thank you.**