

I've never worked with homeless people before, what can I expect?

The services provided by Whitechapel are used by a variety of people, not just those who are homeless. These include those who are vulnerably housed, people living in hostels, those who experience mental health issues and female sex workers. Our service users use Whitechapel for a huge variety of reasons - from helping to support them in gaining secure housing to providing a hot, healthy breakfast in welcoming surroundings.

What's the atmosphere at the centre like?

The centre is a hive of activity throughout the week, particularly during our open access drop-in sessions. The atmosphere is relaxed and supportive.

How do the staff at Whitechapel help to prevent any trouble?

The Whitechapel Mission has very clear policies relating to key issues such as safety, drug and alcohol use and appropriate behaviour. These will be clearly outlined to you as a volunteer and are posted up around the centre for service users to read as well. Staff are trained to deal with any difficulties which may arise.

Will I be expected to deal with difficult situations?

Volunteers are asked not to intervene in problems arising in the centre. No volunteer is ever expected to deal with any situation they are not comfortable with and support is always available.

Why not consider inviting a speaker from the Mission to come to your Church service, school assembly or weeknight meeting to share more about our work

What work goes on in the centre?

The Whitechapel Mission provides clients with access to a huge range of services including health services, substance misuse advice, emergency housing and resettlement advice, and work with women. We also run adult learning sessions, and creative groups.

What support will be available while I'm volunteering?

Volunteers always work alongside staff members who are there to provide support when needed. The volunteer co-ordinator is the main person who will support you during your time at Whitechapel.

We wish to assure you of our appreciation of your volunteering with us and will do the best we can to make your volunteer experience with us enjoyable and rewarding.



For detailed and up to date information, please visit our web site at: www.whitechapel.org.uk



**Whitechapel
Mission**

Caring since 1876
Registered Charity No: 227905

Volunteering at Whitechapel

We make a promise that every penny donated to the Whitechapel Mission will be spent directly to help people who are homeless. No donation will be used to pay for administration or fundraising. No donation will be used to pay for electricity, gas, or telephone. We will never use your money to advertise or to generate more money.

**212 Whitechapel Road
London E1 1BJ
020 7247 8280**

Caring for the poor and homeless of London regardless of race or religion, in their struggle against hunger, poverty, disease, prejudice and exclusion since 1876

Volunteering at The Whitechapel Mission

Volunteers are a vital source of support for the staff and those who use the Mission. The centre currently has over 4000 volunteers, who help with a range of activities including informally supporting centre users, serving tea, coffee and meals, sorting and distributing clothing, leading our client activity groups, fund-raising and administration.

We want to make sure you are an informed volunteer, so that you get the most out of your volunteer experience.



Whether you plan on volunteering one hour a week, one day a week, or daily, your efforts make a difference throughout the lives of the poor and homeless in London.

Thank you for your interest in Whitechapel Mission. We look forward to working with you in the future.

Tony Miller MBE
Director

Commitment

Whether you are volunteering on a regular basis or for a one time project or event, arrive early so there is time for communication and direction. Also, be sure to let the staff member or volunteer team leader who is supervising your work know when your schedule changes or if you cannot make it when you are expected.

Communicate

As a volunteer, it is crucial that the lines of communication stay open and clear. If you are unsure about what is expected of you, or how to use certain office equipment, please ask someone for direction. Communication is key to having a successful volunteer program.

Benefits of volunteering

Our volunteers find their role at Whitechapel very rewarding. The centre's relaxed and informal atmosphere provides opportunities for volunteers from all walks of life to play a part in helping us meet our clients' needs. Whitechapel is a place where you can give your time and energy to others whilst receiving plenty in return – new experiences, meeting new people, gaining new skills.

Other benefits include:

- Getting involved in your community
- Supporting homeless and disadvantaged people
- Meeting like minded people
- Gaining a qualification
- Starting on the road back to work
- Having an enjoyable time
- Putting back some structure in your week

Training for volunteers

All volunteers are given our volunteer handbook, full of useful information that will help you understand the role of a volunteer at Whitechapel and how your contribution fits into the whole organisation.

Newer volunteers are invited to an induction session where policies, procedures and other important information contained in the handbook are looked at in detail. Regular training sessions are also offered to volunteers.

Volunteer supervision

Volunteers will always be supervised by a member of staff, and the volunteer co-ordinator who is always available to discuss any issues or problems you face while volunteering.

If you require further support on any particular issue relating to volunteering then this can be more formally arranged with the volunteer co-ordinator.

The Whitechapel Mission Forum

The Whitechapel Mission Forum meets quarterly and is open to all volunteers. It provides the opportunity for volunteers to give and receive feedback on developments at the centre. It also includes a training session on issues such as drug and alcohol awareness, reasons for homelessness, mental health awareness. Staff and trustee representatives attend each meeting.

Frequently asked questions

I don't have much time to spare, can I still volunteer?

There are many volunteering opportunities available at Whitechapel, some requiring a larger time commitment and some requiring an hour or two. We are extremely flexible and volunteering can be negotiated to suit you.

