

BLUE SKY TRUST

# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

blue sky  
TRUST



together for the journey

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Year 2020: 24 Volunteers

Over 2573 Hours

# WELCOME

Welcome to Blue Sky Trust – we're delighted you're considering volunteering with us!

Should you choose to volunteer, you will be joining a passionate and diverse community of people who share the common goal of improving the lives of people living with and affected by HIV.

At Blue Sky Trust, volunteers play a vital role in shaping and delivering a wide range of projects, applying their knowledge, skills, life experience and connections to strengthen our work and help us reach more people.

Throughout 2020, 24 volunteers- many of whom are living with HIV – were involved in everything from sharing their stories to leading peer support groups, supporting people 1-2-1 and helping develop new projects. Our volunteers gave a whopping 2,573 hours of their time to Blue Sky Trust!

But it's not just about what you can give! We hope that, if you join us, you will enjoy yourself and develop confidence and skills too! We aim to provide you with high quality training and support and give you opportunities that will help you in other areas of your life and career. Whatever inspires you to join us at Blue Sky Trust, we hope you will feel valued and supported throughout your journey with us.

This handbook will help you gain an insight into what it means to be a volunteer and the roles available. Please use this handbook as a guide, but don't hesitate to contact our volunteer coordinator on 07464 853290 if you have any questions



Helen Anderson, Director

*There's no such thing as a typical BST volunteer.*

*Volunteers come from all walks of life*



# ABOUT BLUE SKY TRUST

Blue Sky Trust was established in 1992, in response to HIV in North East England.

**Our Vision** is a society where people living with HIV experience happy, healthy and prosperous lives, free from stigma and discrimination. To achieve this, we support and connect people in the North East and Cumbria at every step of their HIV journey. We have earned a reputation for being a safe and confidential organisation which pioneers innovative services in response to local need.

**Our Mission** is to improve the health and wellbeing of people affected by HIV, challenge HIV stigma, raise awareness of HIV and empower young people to make healthy relationship choices.

**Our Ethos and Values**, Blue Sky Trust is a Christian Charity. The Christian faith acknowledges the value and uniqueness of every human being regardless of gender, age, ethnic origin, creed or sexual orientation. It teaches the importance of love and respect. We value:



## **The Individual**

We respect the diversity of the people we work with and recognise the unique value of every individual, by being welcoming, accepting and attentive to their thoughts, values and opinions.



## **Compassion**

We care about our work and the people we work with. We are passionate about nurturing wellbeing, raising aspirations, bringing hope and challenging stigma and injustice.



## **Collaboration**

We value the cooperation and input of other partner organisations, institutions and individuals. We collaborate in order to improve health and bring purpose and hope.



## **Integrity**

We are open and transparent about the way we work as well as acknowledging our limitations. We are trustworthy and honest while maintaining confidentiality.



## **Excellence**

We seek to facilitate workshops which are safe and of the highest possible quality, underpinned by the latest evidence. We aim to constantly improve through listening, reflection, learning and responding.

# WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR IN A VOLUNTEER?

**Time Commitment:** The time commitment for volunteering depends on your availability and your role. A few hours a week for a minimum of 12 months ensures that you get the most out of your time with us but even if you can only help on ad hoc basis, we would still love to hear from you.

**Qualities:** We are looking for volunteers with the following qualities...

Confident with good communication skills

Excellent listening skills and open to views and opinions that are different from one's own

Be open about HIV status (if applicable) to members, professionals, supporters and stakeholders

...willing to do personal research into HIV and related issues...

Have up to date knowledge or...

... Have the ability to work at a professional level and within Blue Sky Trust's policies, procedures and boundaries

Able to work well on one's own and as part of a team

Reliable, trustworthy and flexible

Emotionally resilient

Enjoy working with people from diverse backgrounds

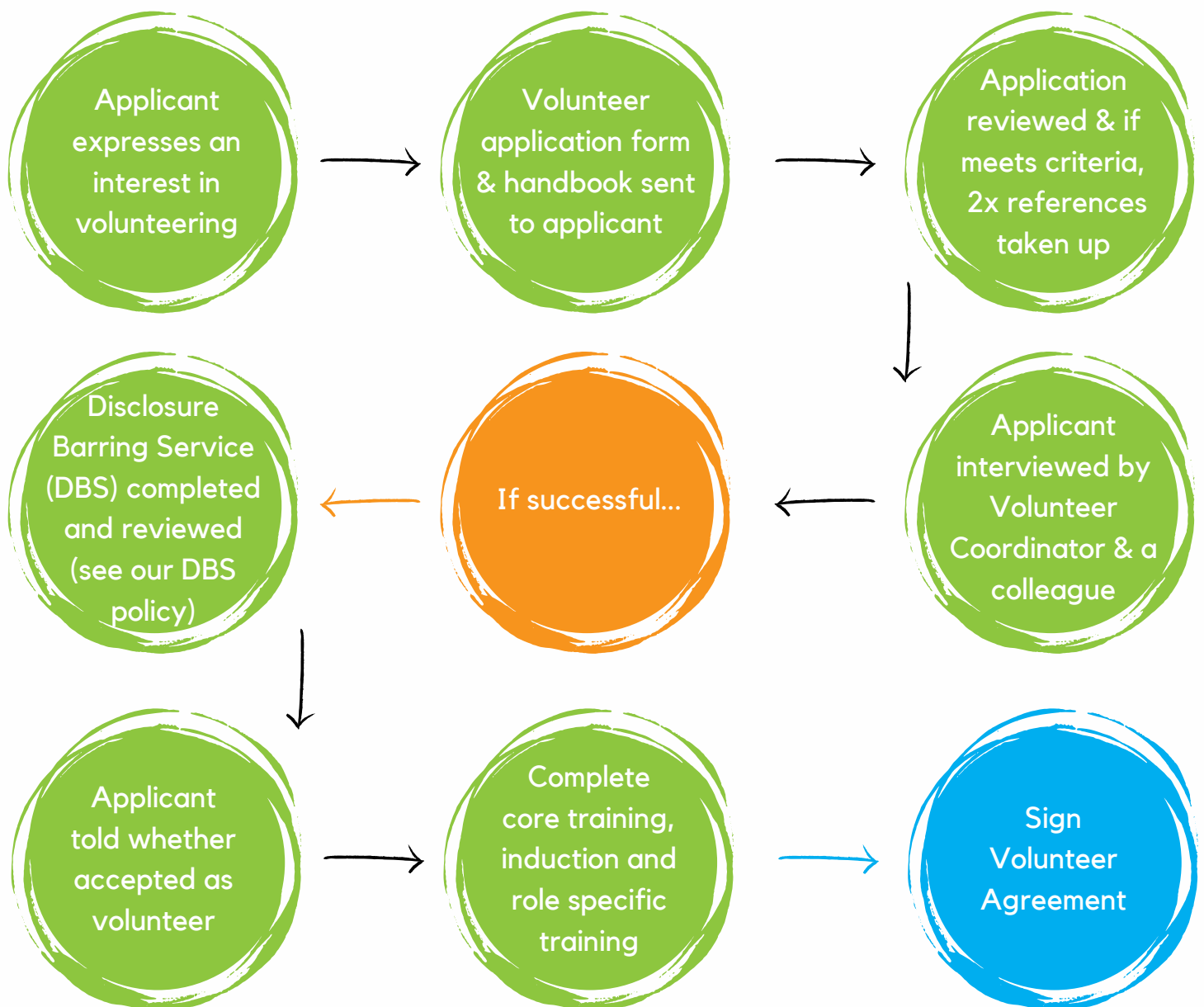
Committed to developing oneself skills and level of knowledge

Could it be me?



# BECOMING A VOLUNTEER

**Applying to be a Volunteer:** - As we work with vulnerable people, our recruitment, vetting and training process is robust and can take up to 3 months to complete. The following steps set out what happens once you express an interest in joining Blue Sky Trust as a volunteer:



# BECOMING A VOLUNTEER

**Volunteer Policy:** The volunteer policy sets out the responsibilities, boundaries and expected standards for volunteers. Before you start on your volunteer journey with us and after your training, you will be asked to read, understand and sign the volunteer agreement. The agreement will cover the following:

Equality & Diversity  
Data Protection & Confidentiality  
Health & Safety  
Safeguarding  
Boundaries, Gifts & Expenses  
Lone working policy  
Volunteer complaints procedure  
Content Copyright

**Support & Supervision:** You will receive regular 1-2-1 support from your assigned supervisor. You may also take part in group supervision with other volunteers. Supervisions allow you the opportunity to reflect on your volunteering and receive feedback and support. You will also discuss any further training needs. You will be able to call or email your supervisor at any time.

**Expenses:** You will be reimbursed for any out of pocket expenses you incur as part of your role, including travel expenses



# TRAINING

It's important that you feel confident and well prepared when carrying out your volunteering. All volunteers will attend our core training. Additional training is provided and will be appropriate to your role.

## Core Training Modules

All volunteers will complete the core training modules which will give you the foundation you need to start volunteering at Blue Sky Trust. These comprise of both in-house (provided either in person or via Zoom) and trusted online training resources



### In-house

**Module 1:** Introduction to volunteering at Blue Sky Trust including volunteer roles & expectations & HIV awareness

**Module 2:** Keeping everyone safe including safeguarding, confidentiality & boundaries

**Module 3:** Core Skills including communication and taking care of your wellbeing



### Online

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults  
Safeguarding Children  
Suicide Prevention

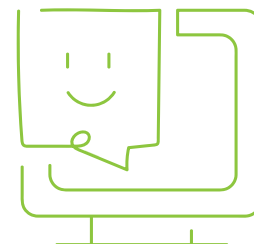
## Role Specific Training Modules

This is a list of the specific training for the different roles through a combination of in-house, online and external avenues. There may be other training needs or opportunities that will be offered to you once you are part of the BST family.



### In-house

Peer Mentor Module  
Sharing your HIV story Module  
Moderator Module  
Train the Trainers Module



### Online

Mental Health First Aid  
Chat Room Moderator  
Peer Mentor Certificate -  
through *Positively UK*  
Mindfulness



# EXPECTATIONS



## AS A BLUE SKY TRUST VOLUNTEER YOU CAN EXPECT...

Induction and ongoing training  
relevant to your role

Supervision and support,  
including a named supervisor

To be listened to and have your  
views taken into account

To be reimbursed for out of  
pocket expenses

To be treated fairly and with  
respect, in line with our equal  
opportunities and other  
policies.



## WE EXPECT ALL BLUE SKY TRUST VOLUNTEERS TO...

Support our vision and mission  
and perform your volunteering  
to the best of your ability

Commit to 1 year, where  
possible, to make the best use  
of the resources we invest in  
you

Seek support from BST when  
you need it and engage with  
regular supervisions

Follow all relevant policies and  
procedures at all times  
including health and safety,  
safeguarding and  
confidentiality

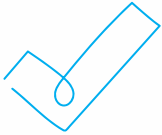
Treat staff, volunteers,  
members and members of the  
public with respect and  
understanding

# **VOLUNTEER ROLES**

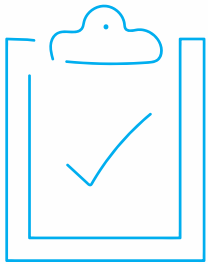




# PEER MENTOR



**2 hours per week**  
**Peer mentors must be living with HIV**



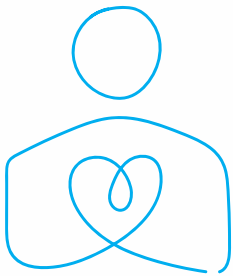
## THE PROJECT

Our Peer Mentor Project aims to give everyone living with HIV in the North East & Cumbria the opportunity to speak to someone with lived experience of HIV – at the point of diagnosis or any time after.



## THE AIM

- Build mentees confidence, knowledge, skills and hope so they can cope, live and thrive with HIV
- Support mentees to draw on their own strengths and coping strategies, to encourage independence and self help



## THE ROLE

- To speak with a person living with HIV for 6-12 sessions, helping them come to terms with HIV and/or cope with the changes HIV brings.
- Share resources and personal insights.

## SPECIFIC SKILL SET

In addition to the skills required of every volunteer you must also:

### Be Willing

to work on your own as well as offer support to other peer mentors as part of a team

### Be Able

and prepared to keep up to date with current information

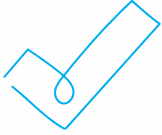
### Be Confident

in talking about HIV and your story

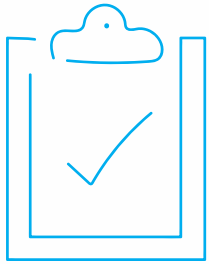
Using mobile phones, Zoom, Telegram, and searching for information on the internet



# 1-2-1 SUPPORTER

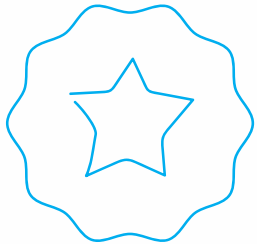


**2 hours per week**



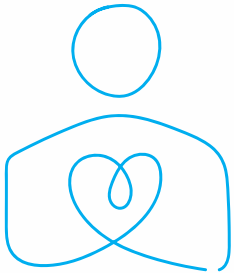
## THE PROJECT

1-2-1 supporters work across our 1-2-1 service where members receive individualised support



## THE AIM

- To reduce isolation and improve wellbeing by providing support, reassurance, company and encouragement.
- To increase the social connections of the member by supporting them to access the HIV community/courses/events.



## THE ROLES

- **Peer supporter (HIV+)/befriender (HIV-):** to speak/meet with a member (usually weekly) and where possible support the person to access peer support groups and activities at Blue Sky Trust.
- **Ambassador (HIV+):** To speak to/meet with a member to support them to attend an event/course such as our trauma group.

## SPECIFIC SKILL SET

In addition to the skills required of every volunteer you must also:

**Be Willing to be**

a good listener, clear communicator and able to maintain confidentiality.

**Patient, flexible and reliable**

**Be Able to**

work independently with guidance and support

**Recognise when to ask for support**

**Be Confident in**

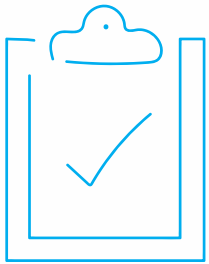
supporting others who have an HIV diagnosis

**Holding a conversation with others over the phone**

# PEER SUPPORT GROUP TEAM MEMBER



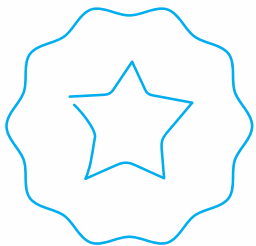
**Minimum 3 hours a fortnight**



## THE PROJECT

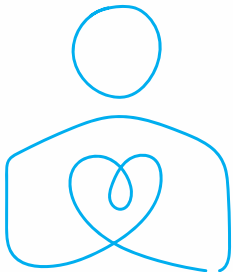
Blue Sky Trust run a variety of peer support groups for people living with HIV.

The community come together for friendship, learning, fun and support



## THE AIM

- To help create an inclusive, safe and welcoming environment for all members attending groups.
- To ensure the smooth running of groups and events.
- To help the ideas, wishes and feedback of members are communicated to the team.



## THE ROLE

To work as part of a team; planning, preparing and running meetings and events for groups of people living with HIV.

## SPECIFIC SKILL SET

In addition to the skills required of every volunteer you must also:

Be Willing to

maintain  
confidentiality

represent BST in a  
positive and  
constructive way

Be Able to

use Initiative

communicate messages  
effectively to people  
from a variety of  
different backgrounds

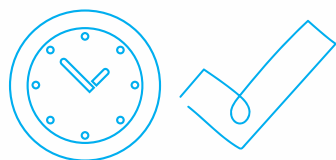
Be Confident in

organisational skills

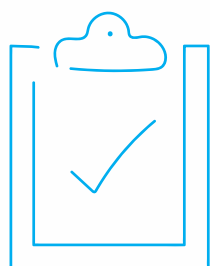
effective  
communication



# TECH SUPPORT

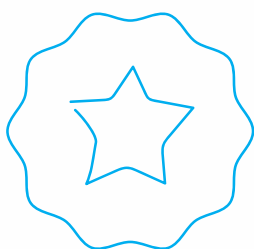


**Tech support is an open negotiation between volunteer and member; location availability may also be a factor**



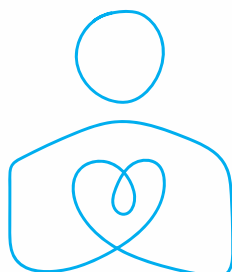
## THE PROJECT

Digital literacy is an important part of modern life and is also crucial for taking full advantage of Blue Sky Trust's Services



## THE AIM

- To support people to overcome the barriers that might prevent them from using or carrying out tasks on their own digital devices. To put people at ease and teach digital skills
- To create a safe and inclusive environment online for members



## THE ROLES

**1-2-1 tech supporter:** To speak to/meet members 1-2-1 to teach digital skills such as shopping online, using zoom, word processing, using What's App etc.

**Group tech supporter:** To teach small groups how to, for example, use zoom.

**BST tech supporter:** To support Blue Sky Trust in their digital developments.

## SPECIFIC SKILL SET

In addition to the skills required of every volunteer you must also:

Be Willing to

Patiently  
guide members using  
clear, practical steps.

Give  
repeated support and  
instruction.

Be Able to

Access  
the internet

Communicate  
with people from a  
variety of different  
backgrounds

Be Confident in

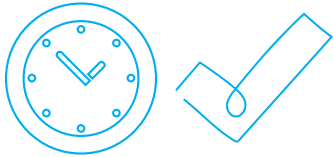
Organisational skills

Effective  
communication

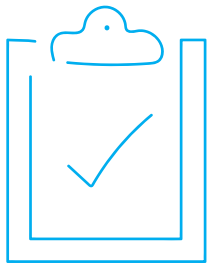
Using a range of  
software and  
platforms



# MODERATOR

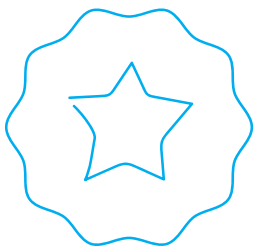


**BST Chat Rooms are usually open during working hours. Time commitment is open to negotiation as this is a home based volunteering opportunity**



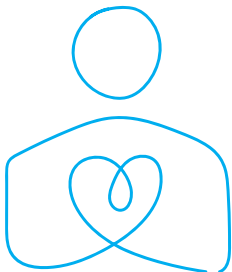
## THE PROJECT

To oversee and moderate BST chat rooms/forums, ensuring they adhere to set guidelines



## THE AIM

- To help create an inclusive, safe and welcoming environment for all members participating in online BST Chat Rooms on Telegram
- To be sensitive and empathic in managing and diffusing conflict/concerns



## THE ROLE

- Opening and closing the Chat Room you have Moderator responsibility for on a rota basis
- Overseeing and contribute to live chat session
- Monitoring content and dealing with inappropriate conversations
- Diffusing any conflicts in the room
- Sharing members ideas, concerns or queries with the team leaders

## SPECIFIC SKILL SET

In addition to the skills required of every volunteer you must also:

Have

A strong interest in online communication

A good grasp of the English language

Have

A good sense of humour, be non-judgemental and diplomatic

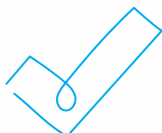
The ability to defuse conflict

Have

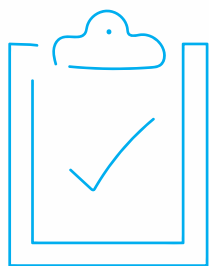
Basic Telegram skills

The ability to access the internet on a regular basis

# RAISING AWARENESS / CHALLENGING STIGMA

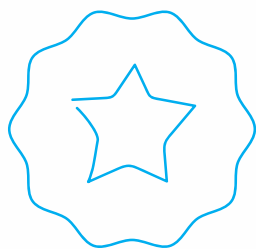


**Flexible** – Roles can vary and entirely depend on the duration of a persons' participation. Advocacy roles we would prefer a minimum of 12 months (or 1 project)



## THE PROJECT

Blue Sky Trust is committed to raising awareness of HIV and challenging stigma. We do this through formal training, sharing the stories and experiences of people living with HIV and speaking at events



## THE AIM

To raise awareness of HIV through educating the public

## THE ROLE

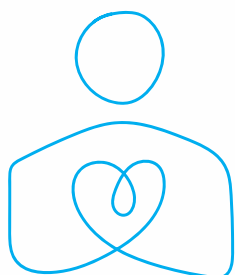
**Speaker:** If you are living with HIV, you can share your story at training workshops, events, through social media etc.

**Trainer:** if you are an experienced teacher/trainer, you could deliver our HIV training packages in the community.

**Event speaker/supporter:** you may like to help at awareness raising events by speaking about HIV to people 1-2-1 or in a group.

**Activist/HIV Champion:** A HIV champion commits to taking a few small actions, over a 12 month period, to improve someone else's life, such as wearing a red ribbon, spending 1 hour learning about HIV, and educating others about HIV

**Fundraiser:** you can raise funds for BST to continue its work



## SPECIFIC SKILL SET

In addition to the skills required of every volunteer you must also:

Be Willing to

Prepare content, collect feedback and have a debrief session

Champion the work of BST

Be Able to

Inform, inspire and encourage people to be informed about HIV

Use your passion

Be Confident in

The content you are delivering

Speaking to small and large groups



# RECOGNITION

All of our volunteers are important to us. Blue Sky Trust wouldn't be able to do what we do without you and we hope you will feel valued by everyone in the organisation.

## Volunteers' Forum

An opportunity for all volunteers to come together and have their voice heard; to say thank you, and to keep you updated on latest developments and training opportunities. These are a fun and relaxed way to meet other volunteers..

## References

We are happy to provide a reference to acknowledge your contribution to Blue Sky Trust. This can be requested at any time and/or will be provided when you leave.

## Volunteers Week

Volunteers Week is a national event that takes place from 1-7 June every year. We use this event to celebrate our wonderful volunteers and to say thank you, giving members of staff the opportunity to show our thanks and appreciation.

Volunteers are not paid – not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless



# KEEPING IN TOUCH



## KEEPING YOU INFORMED

As a volunteer, it is important for regular contact to be maintained. There are various ways in which we do this.

### Newsletter

Our monthly newsletter is issued to keep you and our members updated on what's going on. It's where we recognise achievements and celebrate successes amongst our community.

### Email and Phone

There will be occasions where we may want to communicate directly with you. As a key element of our monitoring and evaluation process, event invitations, and regular updates through emails, Zoom and Telegram.

### Website

Our website You can go online at [www.blueskytrust.org](http://www.blueskytrust.org) and click on 'Get Involved' tab for information about current events



## KEEPING US INFORMED

We encourage feedback from our volunteers on the work of BST. If you have any feedback, ideas or suggestions on how we can develop things, please get in touch.

**Talk to us** If you have ideas or concerns about a particular event or activity, keep us apprised of any changes to scheduled meetings.

**Keeping us updated** It is your responsibility to keep us updated with any changes to your contact details, address or if you have a new emergency contact.

**If you need a break...** If your personal circumstances change, or your other commitments mean you are finding it difficult to meet the requirements of your volunteering role, then it may be appropriate for you to take a break.

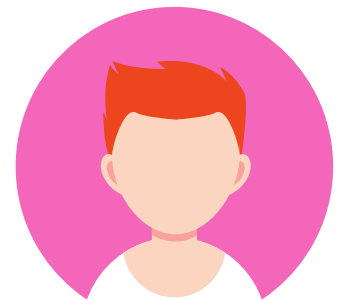
We aim to support you where we can. We would be happy to welcome you back when you are ready. If you would like further information please contact us.

# WHAT THE VOLUNTEERS SAY ABOUT BST



*It's helping to keep me occupied in a meaningful way during Covid*

*I have learnt a great deal about my own time management and established a structure to my daily life of quarantine that I otherwise would not have achieved.*



*One of the most rewarding aspects of being a Volunteer is being a part of the work that is both deepening and strengthening our community.*

*I love being able to give something back. People have helped me on my journey and now I am helping others.*



**blue sky**  
TRUST



**Newcastle & Regional Office:**

The Castlegate,  
Melbourne Street,  
Newcastle upon Tyne,  
NE1 2JQ

info@blueskytrust.org  
0798 9155175

**Cumbria:**

info@blueskytrust.org  
0789 678 3361

If you would like this information in a different format please let us know

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