

**The Simon Community, St Joseph's House,
129 Malden Road, London NW5 4HS**

Email: info@simoncommunity.org.uk

Community office telephone: 0207 485 6639

Website: www.simoncommunity.org.uk

Pre-application information about the Simon Community and the role of full time volunteers.

The Simon Community is a charity which works with people who are homeless.

Founded in 1963 by Anton Wallich Clifford, a probation officer, the Simon Community today runs residential therapeutic communities and a variety of outreach to people who find themselves sleeping on the streets of London.

The charity has always been run by volunteers, more recently with the assistance of paid staff.

The purpose of the residential projects is to support the residents in developing their confidence and skills after what can be the deeply traumatic experience of living on the streets. Residents and former residents are supported by regular visits whether they are in their own accommodation, hospital or prison.

Our outreach is intended to build and sustain relationships with people sleeping out, to offer them assistance and where appropriate to offer them a place in a residential project. There are regular tea and soup runs and street cafes, and volunteers also go to where people are sleeping out, to chat, offer tea and sandwiches and friendship. At certain times of the week, 129 Malden Road offers hospitality to those without a home, by providing food, and facilities such as access to the internet, showers and use of a washing machine. Volunteers are likely to be involved with all or any of the projects, residential and outreach. Other activities include giving talks to schools about the work of the Community and fundraising and campaigning.

The role of full-time volunteers.

The residential projects are home to the people who live in them; accommodation and facilities such as bathrooms and the kitchen are shared by residents and volunteers. All live together co-equally, although the role of the volunteers is to encourage, and support the residents. This is a mutual process and volunteers will find they in turn receive support and help from residents and part-time volunteers. As in any shared accommodation there is housework and cooking to be done. Residents who have been living out on the streets are likely to need to be encouraged and possibly shown how to take on their share of responsibility for running the houses.

The residential projects are run as therapeutic communities. This means that everyone who is involved in any way with the regular routine of the Community is expected to be as fully involved in all aspects of decision making and organisation as possible. There are daily Breakfast Meetings and regular House, Team and Community Meetings where all aspects of the life and work of living together are discussed.

A minimum commitment of six months is asked of full time volunteers. In practice many will

stay longer. A volunteer will gain an exceptional experience of living in community alongside some of the most vulnerable people there are.

Following their time in the Simon Community, many volunteers go on to work with other organisations in the homeless sector or in social work. They have also gone into a wide variety of other professions, such as broadcasting, academic work, political activity, campaigning, and work in churches. Five of the current Trustees were full time volunteers in the past at different times and information about them may be seen on the Trustees page of the Simon Community web site. Please see the Full-time volunteer Role Description for further information.

Rules

There are some important rules for full-time volunteers to observe whilst living in the Community. They are:

- 1) Volunteers live in the Community with residents; volunteers share bedrooms
- 2) Sexual relationships between volunteers and residents and other vulnerable homeless people are totally inappropriate and are forbidden.
- 3) Volunteers must not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol whilst in the Community.
- 4) Volunteers must deal with the Community's funds in an appropriate and trustworthy manner.
- 5) Volunteers must uphold the policies and practices of the Simon Community, including the Health and Safety, Confidentiality and Equalities policies

Think carefully about these rules: If you do not think you can live by them for six months or more then this volunteering opportunity is not for you.

If Simon Community volunteers do not comply with these rules, they are likely to be asked to leave the Community. The final decision lies with the Management Committee.

What you can expect from the Simon Community

1. Induction and training

- To provide a thorough induction on the work of the Simon Community, our staff, your volunteering role and the information and/or training you need to meet the responsibilities of this role. The Volunteer Handbook provides full details of the organisation, including the ethos.

2. Supervision and support

- To explain the standards we expect for our services and to encourage and support you to achieve and maintain them;
- To provide a named person who will meet with you regularly to discuss your volunteering and any successes and problems;
- To do our best to help you develop your volunteering role with us.

3. Expenses

- All volunteer's travel expenses will be reimbursed by the Simon Community upon

proof of receipts.

4. Health and safety

- To provide adequate training and feedback in support of our health and safety policy, a copy of which is in the Volunteer Handbook.

5. Insurance

- To provide adequate insurance cover for volunteers whilst carrying out their volunteering roles which have been approved and authorised by us.

6. Equal opportunities

- To ensure that all volunteers are dealt with in accordance with our equal opportunities policy, a copy of which is set out in the Volunteer Handbook.

7. Problems

- To try to resolve fairly any problems, complaints and difficulties you may have while you volunteer with us.
- In the event of an unresolved problem, to offer an opportunity to discuss the issues in accordance with the process set out in the Volunteer Handbook.

Selection Process

Once we have received your completed application form an initial decision will be taken as to your possible suitability for the role. If it is decided that you offer relevant skills, knowledge and experience to the Community we will take up references and you will be invited to attend for a 48 hour period, to experience living in the Community and working with the Team to deliver services; during this time you will be interviewed.

Following this 48 hour visit a decision will be taken as to the extent to which you offer the skills, experience and knowledge outlined in the Role Description; if you offer satisfactory skills, knowledge and experience, you will be invited to join the Community.

Your continued stay with the Community will be conditional upon satisfactory completion of a one month trial period – for this reason it is not advisable to give up your current accommodation until your stay with the Community is confirmed.

How to apply.

Please download the relevant application form and either send it by post to:

The Simon Community, 129 Malden Road, London, NW5 4HS or

Email: info@simoncommunity.org.uk

If you have any questions, please call the Community office telephone: 0207 485 6639