



Naz Volunteer Policy

1. Introduction

Thank you for your interest in dedicating your time to the Naz Project London. Volunteers bring a myriad of skills, interests, life experiences and cultural backgrounds that contribute and strengthen the success and image of NPL within the wider queer community.

This handbook contains information that will help to support you in your role as a volunteer with NPL. We hope that you will enjoy working with the NPL team and will benefit from your experiences, as we will from your generous assistance.

We always look forward to receiving your input – so please do not hesitate to let us know how we can improve our service and further support our volunteers.

The Naz Project London is a sexual health and HIV/AIDS agency working with black and minority ethnic communities.

As a volunteer and a part of our team your invaluable contribution will help the Naz Project London reach these primary goals and objectives that define the essential purpose and role of our organisation in the greater HIV/AIDS and Sexual Health sector in London.

- ✓ To **enhance the quality of life** for people from our target communities, affected by HIV and AIDS, by promoting self help and empowerment
- ✓ To pioneer the development of **culturally sensitive, linguistically appropriate**, needs-led, high quality sexual health and HIV/AIDS services
- ✓ To challenge racism, homophobia, sexism and religious intolerance in order to **promote an understanding and awareness** of the negative impact of these issues on our communities
- ✓ To promote **greater acceptance of the diverse sexualities and sexual behaviours** that exists within our communities
- ✓ To foster the development of a **non-judgemental approach** to those affected by HIV and AIDS.
- ✓ To **educate the public and our target communities** about sexual health and HIV/AIDS transmission, treatment and impact
- ✓ To respond quickly, imaginatively and effectively to the ever-changing local and international epidemiology, causes and consequences of the HIV and AIDS pandemic
- ✓ To work to **address the needs of those communities** comparable to our own which are **marginalised by other mainstream sexual health and HIV/AIDS agencies**

2. What volunteers mean to NPL...

Volunteers are the essential key to NPL's success! Volunteers bring special skills, experiences and community perspectives to NPL and work to strengthen ties to our target communities and provide invaluable support to the staff at NPL. Volunteers and staff work together as a team to achieve goals towards improving service provision for our target communities.

Volunteer roles

- ✓ **Befriender** – to befriend those individuals of our target communities who have been affected personally by HIV and AIDS.
- ✓ **Administration Support** – assisting NPL staff in public relations, advertising, fundraising, event organising, reception duties and other administrative projects.
- ✓ **IT Support** – using your skills to help with new programme package set-ups, IT audits and any other general IT support that you can offer.
- ✓ **Community Out-reach** - Staff information stalls, condom stalls, public speaking and driving duties.
- ✓ **Social Support Groups** – assisting in the running of a number of NPL sponsored support groups:
 - **KISS**, for South Asian, Middle Eastern, North African lesbian/bisexual/questioning women
 - **DOST**, for South Asian gay/bisexual/questioning men and men who have sex with other men and are over 26 years
 - **Masala**, for South Asian gay/bisexual/questioning men under 26 years
 - **Monsoon**, for South Asian HIV+ women
 - **Grupos Amigos**, for HIV+ gay/bisexual/questioning Spanish speaking men
 - **Pau Brasil**, for HIV+ gay/bisexual/questioning Portuguese speaking men
 - **Grupo Vida**, for HIV+ heterosexual Portuguese speaking men and women

3. What can you expect from NPL?

As a volunteer working with the NPL team, you will have certain rights and responsibilities that come with your role as a volunteer while you are volunteering with NPL.

Volunteers have the right to:

- the opportunity to **develop skills and gain experience** while volunteering
- receive **support and training** on an ongoing basis
- **receive regular constructive feedback**
- say “no” without feeling guilty
- **be treated fairly** with respect as detailed in the Equal Opportunity Statement
- a **clear description of NPL volunteer tasks** and an opportunity to discuss which roles might be best for you
- be treated as an **important part of our team** whose work is valued by all sections of NPL
- **request a reference**
- **reimbursement of agreed, out-of-pocket expenses**
- **personal information respected** as confidential
- be given a clear understanding on the lines of accountability
- adequate health and safety information and limited insurance coverage

Volunteers responsibilities are to:

- **respect confidentiality** in all personal and private matters as in NPL’s confidentiality policy
- **be reliable and punctual**, especially in the role of a befriender
- **notify NPL** if you unable to meet an appointment (illness, holiday, etc.)
- be **non-judgmental** and **demonstrate respect** for the rights of all individuals involved with NPL
- give a **time commitment that is manageable** to the task
- **observe NPL’s policies and procedures** including equal opportunities, health and safety
- **be honest & trustworthy**
- participate in volunteering training sessions as relevant
- **effectively communicate** with the NPL team leader
- contact emergency services or medical support if the need arises
- sort out any benefit issues before volunteering (e.g., Job Seekers Allowance)
- if relevant, inform your car insurance company of your volunteering role

4. Code of Good Practice

Do's

- ✓ **Do know exactly what is expected of you.** You shouldn't accept responsibility for tasks that are not part of your role.
- ✓ **Do be reliable.** Contact NPL and/or the service user as soon as possible if you cannot make an agreed time of volunteering.
- ✓ **Do negotiate time keeping** with the designated NPL team leader and stick to the time decided on. Don't be late for meetings, stay longer than negotiated or drop in at ad hoc times while volunteering.
- ✓ **Do respect confidentiality** – this means you should not repeat anything that is said to you by anyone you work with. The exception is if you are worried that someone is at risk of harm.
- ✓ **Do walk away from potentially violent situations** and avoid getting into any kind of aggressive exchange. Your personal safety is a priority.
- ✓ **Do be professional** when carrying out all volunteer tasks and duties. Remember that you represent the messages, policies and procedures of NPL to the public.
- ✓ **Do let NPL know of any conflicts of interest** that may affect your volunteering as they may arise.
- ✓ **Do claim agreed expenses regularly.** You give your time freely and should not be 'out of pocket.'
- ✓ **Do clear any expenditure** with the NPL team leader prior to undertaking activities to ensure reimbursement.
- ✓ **Do discuss any difficulties** you may have that affect your volunteering with the designated NPL team leader.

Don'ts

- **Don't give out your personal details** to service users initially. You can always be contacted through NPL.
- **Don't accept any gifts or money** from service users as this can lead to misunderstandings.
- **Don't give/lend/borrow money to/from** the service user as this can lead to awkward situations.
- **Don't sign any document(s)** on behalf of NPL or service users. This is not a volunteer's responsibility and must be adhered to at all times.
- **Don't have sex with the service user** or any other family member or friend. If there is an attraction of any kind, then inform the designated NPL team leader immediately.
- **Don't use any illegal drugs or alcohol** immediately prior to or whilst volunteering.
- Don't use language or actions that could be seen as aggressive or abusive.
- Don't speak or negotiate with another agency on behalf of NPL.
- **Don't keep worries or problems to yourself.** Talk with the designated NPL team leader. We do want your voluntary work to be rewarding.

5. Our Recruitment Process ...

It is the Naz Project London's policy to recruit volunteers aged 18 and older within our target communities. NPL particularly encourages applications from those who are Living with HIV/AIDS. NPL will also consider applications from volunteers whose backgrounds fall outside of these target communities. NPL recruits its volunteers in accordance with our Equal Opportunity Policy.

Potential volunteers will be sent information about NPL and an application form. The application enclosed is designed to help us get a better sense of your background and skills. If requested, the designated NPL team leader can be available to help fill in the form which can also be filled out during the interview.

While references are welcomed and help us greatly in determining whether you will be a good fit with NPL's aims and objectives, they are not necessary and the lack of them should not discourage volunteers from applying.

Soon after interest is expressed and/or the application is received, an interview will be held with the designated NPL team leader. The interview should not seem like a scary prospect as the aims of an interview are to:

- Provide further information and answer any questions you may have about NPL's work, aims, clients, staff and volunteers
- Help you gain a clear picture of the tasks they will be involved in and for NPL to develop an understanding of the your strengths and limitations
- Determine whether NPL is right for the goals you want to achieve and time you want to dedicate as a volunteer.
- Establish whether the you have or will have the skills after appropriate training that would be useful to NPL
- Agree with the designated NPL team leader on suitable volunteer tasks and the corresponding time commitment necessary

Please phone 020 87411879 to speak with the NPL Volunteer Co-ordinator for any questions about the recruiting process.

6. Preparing for your role with NPL...

TIME COMMITMENTS

At the beginning of your role as a volunteer with NPL, there will be an opportunity to go over, with the designated NPL team leader, the number of hours you would like to commit to working with the NPL team as it suits your current lifestyle. Naz Project London requires a time commitment of half a day per week from volunteers. While volunteers are free to leave NPL at any time, volunteers who continue their role for at least three months see more clearly the positive benefits their volunteering has had on the community and NPL.

TRAINING

NPL will run a volunteer training programme every 6 months. As a volunteer, you will be expected to participate in the next programme that runs once you have become a volunteer with NPL. It will not be necessary for you to complete the training programme before you begin your volunteer role. However, you will be required to attend the programme within 6 months of working with NPL. In addition to your initial training, there may be further training sessions during the course of your volunteering.

REVIEWS

After a set period of dedicating your time as a volunteer (usually three months), you will have a review session with the designated NPL team leader to go over how your role as a volunteer is going. At this point, decreases or increases in the level of time you committed may be revised if necessary. Further, on-going reviews will be held every further 3 months throughout your time as a volunteer in order to ensure that you are completely satisfying and gaining the experience you expected. These reviews will be in addition to the ongoing support and supervision that volunteers will have.

SUPPORT

Throughout your volunteering, we at NPL want to make sure you are getting the on-going support you need to fully benefit from your volunteer role. In addition to the entire NPL staff, dedicated help and support will be available from the designated NPL team leader. In their absence, you will be notified of who you can contact for support and advice.

7. Money Matters

EXPENSES

Your help is invaluable and we do not want you to be put out of pocket because of the work you do for NPL.

All reasonable travel expenses as well as subsistence costs (if you work over a meal time, for example) incurred as a result of your volunteering role with NPL will be gladly reimbursed, providing they have been cleared beforehand. Please try to use the cheapest transport option available (usually public!) and make sure you keep all receipts to submit.

If you drive, please make sure that you obtain a receipt for car parking. It is NPL's policy to reimburse £0.35 per mile driven while carrying out volunteer responsibilities.

If you are not sure how to claim your expenses, or what is covered, please ask us!

INSURANCE

Volunteers at NPL are provided with the same insurance coverage as NPL staff. It is your responsibility as a volunteer to understand insurance details prior to undertaking your volunteering role.

8. INCIDENT PROCEDURE for Befrienders

Here are some guidelines in case there is an incident that occurs during your volunteering time:

1. If, it is as custom, a client does not answer when calling to confirm that you are on their way to meet them, then you should visit the client to ensure they are alright
2. If the client does not respond to the doorbell when you know the client is expecting you, the volunteer should contact NPL immediately. If this is after hours, and the NPL emergency contact is not available, call the police. Please be cautious of entering into a client's home on your own in this situation in case there is an intruder.
3. If you discover that an accident has occurred the emergency services should be contacted first and foremost, then the next of kin informed. Stay with the client until emergency services has arrived. Please notify NPL when possible.
4. Please ensure that you always have an up-to-date next of kin contact number. This should be provided from the beginning of the befriending and you should check from time to time to ensure that the number is still correct.
5. If wanted, the designated NPL team leader will be available to offer support and talk through the incident with you.

9. Confidentiality

Earning the trust and respect of service users is an essential part of our work at NPL. For this reason, confidentiality is one of the most important things to keep in tact when dealing with service users. Likewise, we at NPL will treat your personal information with the same strict confidence.

During your course of work for NPL, you may have access to information about individuals which is of a highly personal and confidential nature. Such information may include details about HIV, AIDS, medical treatments, finances, living arrangements, drug use, employment, sexuality, nationality and other details about families and friends. It is your duty to understand information of this person nature may not be disclosed to any person or organisation not connected with Naz Project London. Only when consent of the individual concerned is obtained can you share information with NPL.

Please make sure that you have read NPL's full confidentiality policy before you begin volunteering.

10. Equal Opportunities

Naz Project London is fully committed to Equal Opportunities and Positive Action for everyone involved with NPL – the volunteers, staff, and service users. Everyone has the right to be treated fairly and with respect. NPL's Equal Opportunities policy details these rights and as a volunteer, it is your responsibility to read and comply with it.

“Naz Project London fully recognizes the elements in society which operate against women, the South Asian, Middle Eastern and North African communities, black and other ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and those of differing sexualities, from our communities, to become actively involved in the organisation...It will seek to encourage such members to become part of the management structure and will ensure that access is fully available to all without regard to their HIV/AIDS status, gender, physical ability, race, sexuality, religion, caste, age, marital status, nationality or religious and political affiliations.”

If you feel that you are not being treated equally, at anytime, by anyone else involved with NPL, or want to speak on behalf of someone else, please notify designated NPL team leader.

11. Health and Safety

Your safety is a priority at NPL. It is our policy to provide a safe and healthy work place and working environment for all staff and volunteers. Our formal Health & Safety policy outlines procedures in the case of an accident and presents general rules and duties aimed to safeguard your health and safety. Please ensure that you thoroughly read through the NPL Health & Safety policy prior to starting your position as a volunteer.

12. A Change for the Better

SUGGESTIONS/FEEDBACK

If you have any suggestions on how we can improve NPL – either through the services we provide or through our volunteer development procedures – please do not hesitate to let us know. The more feedback we get from you, the better we can work to ensure that your experience with NPL is as rewarding as expected. You can write them down, send us an email, or call us.

COMPLAINTS

While we are always happy to hear positive feedback about our work at NPL, we recognise that change is always necessary. If you have a complaint or concern, please inform the designated NPL team leader who will then try to immediately solve the problem or put you in contact with someone who can help. In the case that a complaint is had with the designated NPL team leader, you are then advised to speak with the NPL Volunteer Co-ordinator who will deal with your complaint as appropriate.

13. Leaving NPL

NPL recognises that volunteers may choose to leave for personal reasons at any point in time. We appreciate the time that you have dedicated to being a volunteer at NPL and understand that other commitments arise. NPL provides references to volunteers as appropriate to the amount of time and hard work they have dedicated to NPL.

We hope that all volunteers will let us know in advance when they plan to leave and also their reasons. In certain circumstances, particularly when the NPL Code of Good Practice has not been complied with, NPL has the right to terminate a volunteer contract at any point necessary. NPL is open to receiving any further opinions and/or suggestions that volunteers wish to express about their time at NPL.

14. A big thanks!

We hope you found this handbook informative for your role as a volunteer. Thank you for taking the time to read it!

Thank you again for dedicating your time to Naz Project London. We can not stress how important volunteers like you are to our organisation and what a difference you will be making in the lives of many. We really hope that your experience with us will be extremely rewarding and you will be with us for a long time! Welcome to our team!