

Volunteer Handbook



Hello & Welcome to Rainbows

Whatever inspired you to volunteer at Rainbows, we hope you enjoy your volunteering experience as much as we enjoy having you as part of the team. Our volunteers come from all walks of life, bringing a variety of experiences, backgrounds, and skills which is what makes our team of volunteers truly extraordinary. No matter your role, we all share a common goal: together, we can make a difference for babies, children, young people, and their families across the East Midlands.

Thank you!

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About Rainbows

Our story starts in 1994, when Harry and Gail Moore set up Rainbows in memory of their five-year-old daughter Laura who sadly died after a battle with Leukaemia. Laura's favourite thing in the world was a Rainbow and that is how Rainbows was born.

Since then, Rainbows has grown and our facilities, staff and services are second-to-none. This means we can give the best care, not just when it's needed, but wherever it's needed across the East Midlands, be that in our Hospice, in hospital or at home.

We support every child and young person to fulfil their potential, and help families make the most of every precious moment, while capturing memories and keepsakes to treasure.

We're here for the whole family, offering comfort and compassion during tough times, providing the highest-level of professional care until the end, and support after.

Simply put, we're here to brighten short lives, and support families, wherever they are.

Our Mission

Our mission is that across the East Midlands we will:

- transform care for those babies, children and young people who have a life-limiting or life-threatening condition
- relieve the pain and symptoms associated with life-limiting or life-threatening conditions
- support every baby, child and young person to achieve their full potential
- create memories for families to treasure
- provide comfort and compassion at the time of and following the death of a baby, child or young person

Our Vision

Our vision is to create the "Rainbows Experience" wherever you are.



Our Values

At Rainbows, our values are evident in everything we say and do; they are what makes Rainbows so special. All volunteers should be aware of our values and strive to always uphold these values and behaviours:



One Team

We are more than a Hospice. We are a team that helps families and communities to thrive. Although we do this in different ways and through different roles, everyone's contribution to the Rainbows experience is valuable and celebrated.



People Centred

People are at the heart of what we do. We exist to support families experiencing one of the toughest challenges that life has to offer. We must be resilient, kind and compassionate, remembering that we are not alone.



Aim High

We are a diverse team, made up of experts from many fields. We use this diversity and knowledge to strive for excellence in everything that we do; from the experience we provide to the communities that we support, to the way we run our charity.



Own It

We make a big impact for our community and beyond. Everyday we ensure a consistent, quality experience for each other and those that we support. To achieve this, we align expectations with reality and respond appropriately to different situations.

Volunteering with Rainbows

Volunteers support everything we do at Rainbows. By volunteering with us, you'll become part of our amazing team. With over 250 dedicated individuals contributing their time, skills and enthusiasm across a range of volunteer roles, there are a variety of ways you can make a difference. Whether you are interested in gardening, Hospice support, retail or reception and can spare an hour a week or a full day, **we will have something that suits you.**



Community Fundraisers



Event Volunteers



Kitchen Volunteers



Garden Volunteers



Hospice Support Volunteers



Bow Bear Mascot



Volunteer Drivers



Retail Volunteers



Family Support Volunteers

Other Volunteer roles available: Reception Volunteers, Keep in Touch Volunteers, Housekeeping Volunteers, Help at Home Volunteers and E-Commerce Volunteers.

The difference our Volunteers make

Volunteers get involved for a variety of reasons. Some want to make a positive difference to the babies, children, young people and families that we support, others want to develop new skills and some simply want to meet new people and have fun.

Everyone who volunteers for us does have one thing in common, they're vital to our work. In whatever volunteer role you do, you make a huge difference to the lives of babies, children, young people and their families. To demonstrate this, last year our volunteers had the following impact:

Over
7,200



The number of visitors and families our reception volunteers have met with a friendly and caring smile.

Over
18,700
miles



How far our volunteer van drivers have driven to collect and deliver donations to our retail team.

6-8
Families
a day



The number of families our Keep in Touch Volunteers speak with each day, providing the family with a vital connection to Rainbows, wherever they may be.

Outstanding
Level 5



The award our hospice gardens won at the RHS East Midlands in Bloom Awards 2023, where we scored an impressive 93/100 marks during the official assessment, which also made special mention of our volunteer gardener team.

2,776



The number of items our E-commerce volunteers helped to research, photograph, and list on our online eBay store.

Over
92



The number of different events our fundraising volunteers helped to organise and run; that's almost two events every week!

£795,000



The amount in sales volunteers in our retail stores helped to raise to help fund our vital work.

Over
26,750
hours



The amount of time all our volunteers so generously gave over the last year!

Hear from our Volunteers

At Rainbows, we not only value the incredible impact you make but we also want your volunteer experience to be enjoyable and meaningful for you. Hear from Rebecca, Shetal, and Rachel—three dedicated volunteers—who share their experiences of volunteering with Rainbows.

‘If you have some free time, are passionate and enthusiastic about supporting babies, children, young people and their families, you will definitely enjoy being part of the Rainbows team. Volunteering works well for me because it works around my home life, meaning I can look after my family and do something I enjoy!’

Shetal - Rainbows Volunteer

‘Volunteering at Rainbows is a truly rewarding experience. From my first day, it was clear what a welcoming and supportive place it is and what amazing work goes on here. My role means I see every week how much the Hospice helps the babies, children, young people and their families. Many people have said to me that it must be a sad place but on the whole it is the most uplifting place to be as it makes such a difference.’

Rachel - Rainbows Volunteer

‘Volunteering at Rainbows has given me new experiences and insights and is incredibly manageable to fit in alongside my other job and other commitments, thanks to the flexibility of the role. There are voluntary roles within Rainbows to suit so many different people, and having the opportunity to get involved in such a brilliant organisation is certainly worth an investment of your time!’

Rebecca - Rainbows Volunteer



Your steps to becoming a Volunteer with Rainbows

Welcome!

Complete an application form



Chat with the team



Onboarding



First day



Training



You're ready to go!

Your Volunteer journey

Your volunteer journey with Rainbows can begin with a simple enquiry by email, phone, in person at the Hospice, or in one of our retail shops. We welcome applications from across the community, but we do have a **minimum age requirement: over 16 years old for retail, events, and fundraising volunteer roles. To volunteer at the Hospice, you need to be over 18 years old.**

After returning a completed application form, you will be invited to speak with our Volunteering Team or another Rainbows Team. This informal interview or chat helps both you and Rainbows learn more about each other and discuss the role in greater detail.

To ensure the safeguarding and wellbeing of those we work with, you will need to provide two satisfactory character references. In some roles, we will also process a DBS check for you. We are committed to creating a safe and supportive environment for everyone involved.

Onboarding

Once we have received your references and any necessary DBS checks (if required for your role), your staff contact will be in touch to confirm your start date and time. For our retail volunteers, you may start volunteering on a trial basis whilst the onboarding process is ongoing.

First Day

There's no need to worry, as your first day can also serve as a trial shift to determine if the role is a good fit for both you and the team. There's no obligation to continue if you feel it's not right for you.

Your first day will mainly focus on getting used to your new environment, understanding your surroundings, and meeting your new team members. We understand there can be a lot of information to take in, so please don't hesitate to ask if you need something repeated or demonstrated multiple times. We recognise that everyone learns in their own way and we are here to support you.

We'll follow up with you after the first day to see how things went. If everyone is happy, you will officially be signed up as a Rainbows Volunteer. This will be confirmed in a letter or email welcoming you, and your ID badge will be made.



Training

Training is essential at Rainbows to ensure you feel confident and prepared in your role. You will receive relevant training through a mix of online e-learning and hands-on experience. Details on completing the required training will be included in your welcome email/letter. The Volunteering Team are also on hand to support you throughout your training, if you do encounter any difficulties.

We acknowledge that some volunteers may be eager to gain new skills, further their development, or enhance their CV. If there is any additional training you wish to look at beyond the basic requirements, please discuss this with the Volunteering Team, who will be happy to explore these opportunities with you.

Support

We want you to have the best experience with us, so you will receive ongoing support from your staff contact and the dedicated Volunteering Team who are eager to discuss any questions or concerns you may have. We also want to make sure you are not out of pocket or financially worse off because of your volunteer activities. Therefore we will reimburse for any reasonable expenses incurred while volunteering.

For further details and a copy of our expenses policy you can contact the Volunteering Team by email at volunteer@rainbows.co.uk or by telephone on 01509 283 956.

Did you know?

For anyone who has been volunteering with us for longer than six months, we would be happy to provide a professional reference for you. Simply contact the Volunteering Team and they can arrange this.

Leaving

We understand that despite everyone's best intentions, the volunteer experience may not always meet your expectations. Additionally, we recognise that personal circumstances can change unexpectedly. If you are considering leaving us, please speak with your staff contact or the Volunteering Team. So that we can always improve, we will send you an exit survey upon leaving so that we can gain insights and identify opportunities for positive change.

Keeping You Connected

Bi-Monthly Volunteer Newsletter:

Every two months, you will receive a dedicated volunteer newsletter via email, keeping you updated on all the happenings across Rainbows and informing you of any important updates or news. Our newsletters also include links to exciting fundraising and event opportunities, where you can lend a hand if you want to. Printed copies of the newsletters are also provided at all Rainbows shops and across the Hospice, but if you would prefer your own copy sent to you directly, just let the Volunteering Team know.

Socials

We host social events that provide a wonderful opportunity to meet other volunteers from across Rainbows and meet new people. These gatherings are also an opportunity for us to show our appreciation for the amazing work you do and to celebrate your incredible contributions.

Feedback

To ensure you enjoy your volunteering experience, we really do value your feedback, whether positive or constructive. We encourage you to speak with the Volunteering Team about any comments or concerns you may have. Additionally, we conduct an annual volunteer survey to gather your insights so we can continually improve your experience as a volunteer.

Volunteers Week

Every June, we celebrate Volunteers Week and thank you for your invaluable contributions. Each year's celebration varies, but it is always a special time for us to express our gratitude.

Social Media & Supporter Newsletters

Stay connected with Rainbows beyond your volunteer role by following us on social media. Rainbows Hospice is active on all major platforms, providing regular updates and insights. If you find our newsletters interesting, you can also sign up for our supporter newsletter to stay informed about everything happening at Rainbows.

Rainbows Top 15 Essentials



1. Appearance & Dress Code

You are expected to dress appropriately for the role you are undertaking and present yourself in a professional manner with respect to clothing, personal hygiene and appearance. Clothing must be clean, tidy and respectful and must not have offensive slogans. Uniform can also be provided if required.



2. Change of Details

If you have a change in circumstance or need to change your details, please keep the Volunteering Team or your staff contact updated with these changes so that we can keep our volunteer records up to date.



3. Absence & Sickness

As a volunteer you don't need to request time off, however, out of courtesy we ask that you notify your staff contact or the Volunteering Team if you have anything planned so we know not to expect you. In the instance of sickness or unplanned absence, you should inform your staff contact or the Volunteering Team when you can, to let them know of your absence.



4. Phone Usage

For our retail volunteers, we kindly request that phones not be used on the shop floor. For volunteers on-site at the Hospice, we have a no-phone policy in place for staff, volunteers and visitors. Should you require an exception to this policy, we encourage you to discuss your circumstances with your staff contact or the Volunteering Team.



5. Smoking & Vaping

There are designated smoking/vaping shelters provided on site at our Hospice, whilst for our retail shops a suitable designated smoking area will be allocated outside, away from the shop entrance. Smoking and vaping are prohibited in all Rainbows vehicles.



6. Drink & Drugs

Volunteering under the influence of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs is strictly prohibited. Should it come to our attention that a volunteer is under the influence, they will be respectfully asked to leave the premises. Additionally, we strongly advise against volunteering in certain roles while under the influence of strong prescribed drugs, as they can impair judgement and pose a risk to safety. It's important not to volunteer when your ability to function is compromised due to ill-health. If you are taking short or long-term medication that may affect your performance, we encourage you to discuss this with your staff contact or the Volunteering Team. Together, we can create a plan that ensures your well-being and the safety of those around you.



7. Gifts

Volunteers are not to give/receive personal gifts to/from the babies, children, young people and families that Rainbows supports. Receiving gifts may raise the families expectations of the level of support you can provide and blurs professional boundaries.



8. Lending & Borrowing

Volunteers are not to lend to or borrow from staff, families or other volunteers, especially money.



9. Photographs & Videos

Rainbows may occasionally ask for your consent to film or take pictures of you for use in publications or on social media. Similarly, we might request to include quotes from you. When that happens, we will inform you of the purposes for which these are being used and will honour your requests if you would prefer that they not be used for specific publications, etc. It is essential to respect the privacy and trust of all individuals involved with Rainbows. Therefore, volunteers are prohibited from photographing or recording other volunteers, babies, children, young people, or their families (audio or video). Any violation of this policy may result in ending your volunteering with us.



10. Bullying & Harassment

At Rainbows, we have a strict policy against harassment or bullying of any kind towards our volunteers, stakeholders, staff members and members of the public. Any instances of harassment or bullying reported will be promptly investigated by the Volunteering Team. We foster a culture of mutual respect and collaboration among all staff and volunteers which makes us 'One Team'. This ensures consistency in our actions, supports each other effectively, and prevents conflicting messages or unrealistic expectations. Our aim is to provide a supportive and harmonious environment where everyone knows what to expect from each other. Any volunteer found to be engaging in bullying or harassment within the organisation will be required to cease their volunteering activities immediately, as set out in our volunteering policy.



11. Resolving Problems

The relationship between Rainbows and our volunteers is entirely voluntary and does not imply any contractual obligations. However, it is crucial for the organisation to maintain its agreed standards of service, while ensuring that volunteers feel their contributions are meaningful. Should your volunteer role not meet your expectations or Rainbows' standards, the matter will be addressed as follows:

1. Initially, you will have a meeting with your staff contact to discuss any concerns, which may be mutual.
2. If the concern persists, a meeting will be arranged involving your staff contact and the Volunteering Team.
3. If the issue remains unresolved, it may be escalated to the Director of People. Similarly, if your volunteering continues to fall short of our standards, we may ask you to stop volunteering with Rainbows.

Our goal is to ensure that both volunteers and Rainbows uphold our shared standards of service excellence, fostering a positive and rewarding experience for all involved, as set out in our Volunteering Policy and in line with our values.



12. Maintaining Boundaries

Due to the sensitive nature of volunteering with Rainbows it is important for all volunteers to remain aware that we expect you to be caring, kind, professional and to maintain appropriate boundaries.

Therefore, we expect all volunteers to:

- Not share your personal information with our families.
- Maintain a professional relationship at all times.
- Do not accept gifts from our families.
- Not to have a personal relationship with our families.
- Not to withhold information from other members of the team.
- “Helping” the child and/or family in areas outside of your role description.



13. Confidentiality

Volunteers must maintain confidentiality during their time with Rainbows. This means that confidential information about supporters, staff, children, families, volunteers and our work is kept private, unless sharing this information is required by law.



14. Volunteer Agreement

Our volunteer agreement makes it clear what you can expect from us and what, in turn, Rainbows expects from you. Although it isn't a legally binding agreement, we nonetheless ask and expect all volunteers to follow it. When you start volunteering with Rainbows, you will receive the volunteer agreement with your welcome pack.



15. Data Protection

Rainbows is always mindful of using individual's personal data in an appropriate and sensitive way. Further information about how we collect, store and use a volunteer's personal information is detailed in our Privacy Policy, which is available on our website or upon request. Your contact details will be kept on a database and accessed only by appropriate staff. Your application form, references, emergency contact details will be kept securely and confidentiality. You have the right to access your personal record.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a process of protecting children, young people and adults from abuse, neglect or harm. Rainbows has a strong culture and awareness of safeguarding which is key to all work undertaken at both the Hospice and within all associated areas and environments with babies; children; young people; families; visitors; staff and volunteers.

All volunteers who come into contact with vulnerable groups have a responsibility to safeguard, protect and promote welfare of individuals in line with our safeguarding policy.

During your time as a Rainbows volunteer, whatever your role, should you become aware of any safeguarding issues, **you must disclose them to your staff contact immediately or contact 01509 638 000 and speak to our Safeguarding Lead, Jacqui Brown.**

Rainbows Terminology

We know that some people might not have come across the terms we use at Rainbows before. Therefore, we have provided a helpful glossary of some of our key terms to help.

Life-limiting: The baby, child or young person has a medical condition that cannot be cured and this will eventually lead to them dying either in childhood or early adulthood.

Life-threatening: A medical condition that is able to cause death, but may not go on to be life-limiting, e.g. cancer.

Young person: Age 16 to 25. Over the age of 18, a young person may begin to transition into receiving support from an adult Hospice or services.

Neonatal: Babies less than one month old.

Hospice: A place that can provide palliative and end of life care.

Palliative: A baby, child or young person can have palliative care needs at any time of their life. It does not always mean they will pass away soon. Palliative care includes offering treatments that can relieve physical symptoms such as pain and also offering emotional, spiritual, psychological and social support.



Thank you!

Every minute, hour or day you give, helps make a difference for babies, children, young people and their families across the East Midlands.

Volunteering Team Contact Details

Sam Squire
(Head of Volunteering)

Georgia Randall
(Volunteer Engagement Coordinator)

 01509 283 956

 volunteer@rainbows.co.uk