

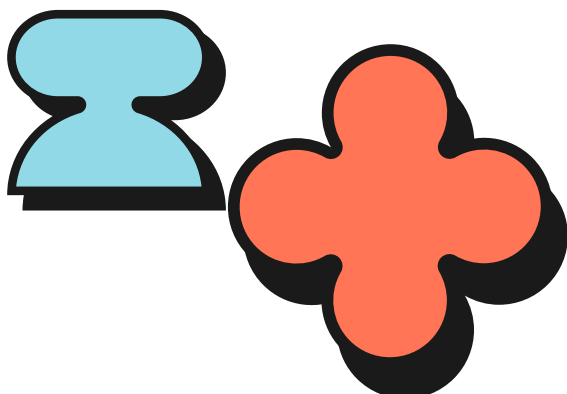


akt

volunteer handbook

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hello

from all of us at akt

Thank you so much for choosing to give your time, skills and enthusiasm to us as a volunteer. This handbook is the first part of your journey here at akt and we want to make sure you have a great experience with us!

about akt

In 1989, akt (formerly known as The Albert Kennedy Trust) was founded in Manchester by an ally Cath Johnson (née Hall). This was at a time when LGBTQ+ people faced persistent and high levels of oppression, physical and verbal abuse, and were denied the basic human rights and equity afforded to others. Cath stood up and galvanised the LGBTQ+ community of Manchester by leading the world's first response by a charity to the many LGBTQ+ young people who faced rejection, abuse and homelessness just for being brave enough to come out to their families.

Volunteers have always been at the heart of the organisation since akt began in 1989 and they continue to play an important role supporting our work with LGBTQ+ young people experiencing homelessness or living in a hostile environment. We have volunteers involved across a wide range of roles, in different locations and giving varying amounts.



what we do

All young people should feel safe to be who they are

We exist because young LGBTQ+ people deserve access to support services and safe housing.

Our **mission** is to **secure safe homes and better futures for LGBTQ+ people aged 16–25.**

We exist to give LGBTQ+ young people at risk of, or experiencing homelessness or a hostile living environment the support they need to thrive. We do what we do because LGBTQ+ young people deserve safety and acceptance. For as long as LGBTQ+ young people are subject to hostility, exclusion and insecurity, our services will be vitally needed.



link to our 2022–23 IMPakt Report

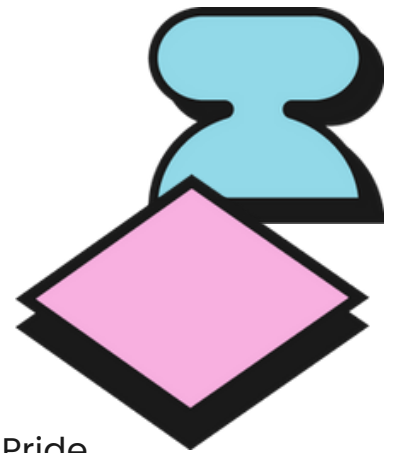
how we'll achieve our mission

We've identified the following areas to focus on in order to keep our services relevant and impactful. Find out more about our strategy in our latest impact report.

- 1. Provide pathways into safe, affordable & inclusive housing**
- 2. Reach young people where and when they need us most**
- 3. Engage with more young people from intersectional identities**
- 4. Inform and influence to create change**



volunteer opportunities



akt has volunteer roles to suit all different types of interests, experience and time commitment levels. We want our volunteering to be as **flexible** and **accessible** as possible – volunteering could mean anything from walking with us at a Pride parade once a year, meeting with a young person for an hour a week as a mentor or delivering a presentation about akt at your local school/university.

In return, we can offer you ongoing training and support, a chance to meet other like-minded volunteers and the opportunity to volunteer for a thriving LGBTQ+ charity.

fundraising event volunteer



As a fundraising event volunteer, you will be an instrumental part of the fundraising team by helping us **raise awareness** and funding for our work supporting young people at events, particularly during Pride season. These events can include performances, special appearances at theatres and galleries. The responsibilities will include interacting with patrons/customers/audience members and explaining how their support can help the charity.

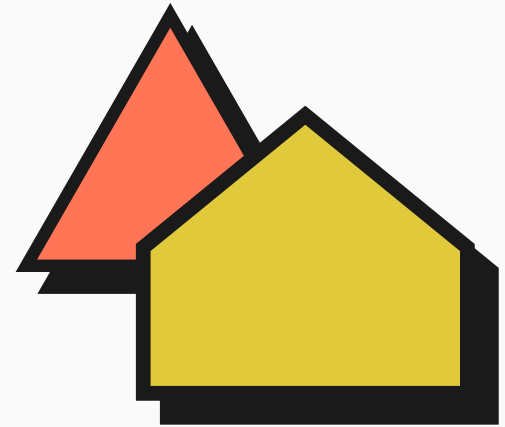
pride volunteer

The responsibility of our pride team is to **have fun!** Pride volunteers are key to akt's presence at Pride events and you will be expected to engage with people in a variety of ways and inform them on the services we provide to young LGBTQ+ people and spread the word about the work that akt does.



volunteer opportunities

continued



digital mentors



The digital team runs live chat on our website where we provide **information, advice** and **guidance** to young people, professionals and allies. The digital volunteer role will play a crucial part in the digital team as we expand our services by operating live chat, digital mentoring for our young LGBTQ+ people living outside of Manchester, Newcastle, London and Bristol and helping to develop the online resource hub.

mentors

akt mentors provide **one-to-one support** to LGBTQ+ young people accessing our services. A mentor will seek to build and maintain a relationship with a young person, plan and encourage them to take their own actions with the aim of helping them to grow and lead a fulfilling and independent life e.g. supporting a young trans person through the coming out process.



youth engagement



The Trans Pathway Project offers targeted housing support, emotional wellbeing support, peer support and youth engagement activities. The role would be supporting the Youth Engagement Programme with assisting the weekly trans youth group sessions. These sessions cover a broad range of activities planned together with the young people who attend.

volunteer opportunities

continued



outreach volunteer

The akt Outreach Programme aims to spread the word about akt far and wide with the goal of letting as many LGBTQ+ young people as possible know we're here to support them if or when they need us. You will be responsible for working with the North East services team and our outreach support volunteers to approach a wide range of organisations across the North East and Yorkshire.

about you

name:

pronouns:

my role:

I'm volunteering because:

your volunteer opportunities



START

1

Application Form

Fill in an application form online via our website

2

Induction

Presentation delivered either online or face-to-face

4

Health Questionnaire

3

Signed Paperwork*

*This depends on the role but you will be asked to sign our safeguarding policies and code of conduct

5

Volunteero App

Whether you're a fundraising event volunteer or a mentor, we will introduce you to Volunteero, our CRM database where you can sign up to missions and chat with other volunteers

6

Explore our Website

We've created a **Volunteers' Hub** for new and ongoing volunteers



what is it like being a volunteer?

volunteer stories

Here is a video from Jodi, one of our mentors talking about her experience as a mentor and what has inspired her:



“

“The young people I’ve volunteered with from akt have been so diverse in their backgrounds and the challenges they have to deal with. The way I’ve seen them deal with those difficulties and find confidence in themselves and their skills is incredible. Being a positive and reliable influence as a mentor can reflect back into your own outlook.” – Tom

”

Here is a video from Emma, one of our mentors talking about her experience as a mentor and what has inspired her:



quotes from 2 of our other mentors:

“

“The young people I have mentored have had some very negative experiences, and I am amazed by their perseverance and drive to succeed even when they face being rejected by the people they love. Volunteering at akt has made me more aware of what is happening to young people within the community and the hardships they are experiencing.” – Leila

”



what is it like being a volunteer?

volunteer stories continued

"akt has inspired me to connect more with the community, be more confident approaching potential donors and it has inspired me to go back to college to study towards working with LGBTQ+ people" - Brian

"akt has inspired me to continue supporting the LGBTQ+ community as much as I can. Especially in the current climate, it's more important than ever." - Kyle

"akt has inspired me to be even more outgoing. It's such a great cause and it makes me passionate about sharing the work that akt does in my personal/professional life." - Greg

The most rewarding part of my time volunteering at akt is knowing that the charity will be offering support to queer youth who are a demographic I previously worked with in my career as a teacher, and who I know face so many challenges and desperately need support." - Isabelle

"The most rewarding part of my time volunteering at akt has been the reactions from our donors." - Rosie

who are we helping?

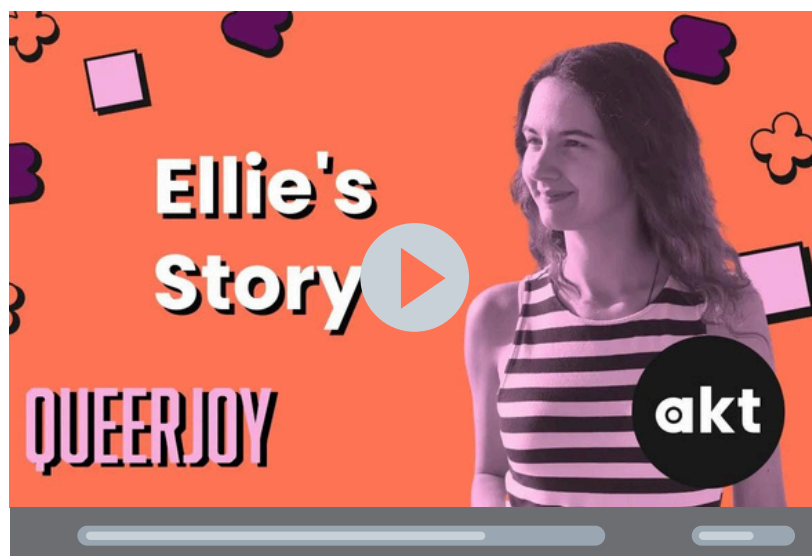
case study

Ellie's Story

Ellie is a young trans woman who first came to akt looking for support with her transition. She had experienced anxiety and depression and had struggled to find work due to the bullying she experienced in her last job.

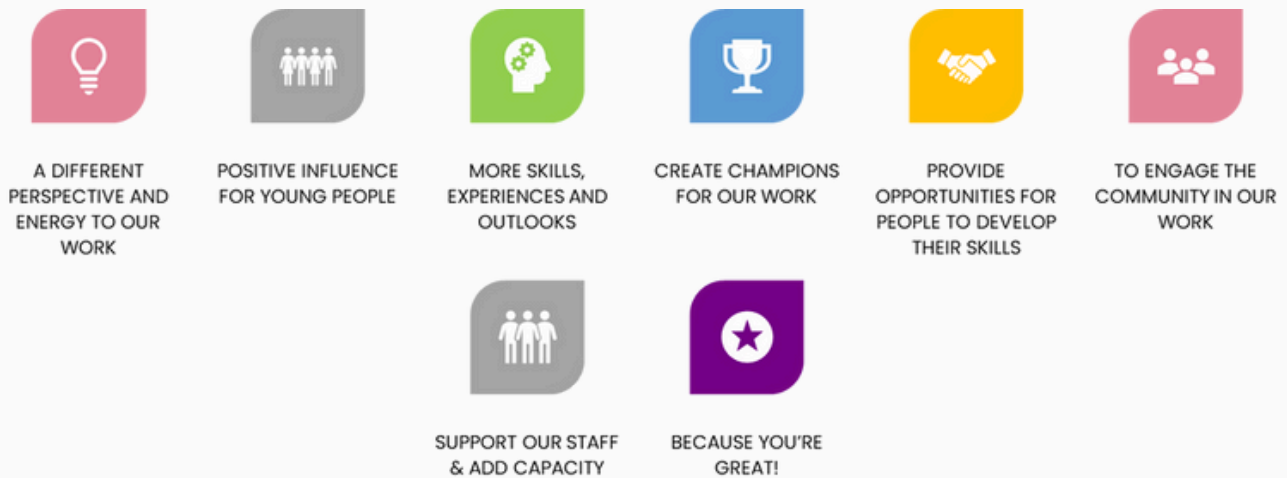
When Ellie started a new job, akt provided her a £100 voucher as she needed new clothes due to her body changing since starting her transition. She is now working full-time at a warehouse and feels more stable. She feels that her path forward is a lot clearer and that she has more of a support network due to attending theatre trips organised with akt's Youth Engagement project.

"akt has really helped me with my confidence. They have helped me with the darkest bits of my life and showed me the way forward."



our volunteer promise

why do we involve volunteers?



what to expect from us:

Provide you with:

- a clear, written role description
- an appropriate induction and relevant training
- regular opportunities for support, reflection and feedback
- opportunities for development
- Ensure your role is meaningful and that you are treated with respect
- Reimburse reasonable out-of-pocket expenses
- Consult you on matters which affect you and your volunteering
- Ensure that you know who your main staff contacts are at akt
- Ensure that recruitment and selection processes are open and fair, and that you are free from discrimination
- Ensure that all information provided by you is stored and used in accordance with data protection legislation
- Deal with any concerns or problems in a fair and consistent manner

our volunteer promise

continued

what we expect from you:

- Abide by relevant policies and the Volunteer Code of Conduct
- Be reliable, honest and punctual
- Communicate any safeguarding concerns with your named contact as soon as possible
- Operate within the boundaries of your role
- Declare any conflicts of interest to the volunteering team (as detailed in the Code of Conduct)
- Treat all staff, service users and volunteers with respect
- Communicate any issues, concerns or feedback with a member of staff
- Represent the organisation in a professional manner and be an ambassador for our work
- Ask for support or information if and when you need it
- Attend agreed support and supervision sessions
- Give us as much notice as possible if you wish to stop volunteering with us

FAQs

What will I gain as a volunteer?

Volunteering with akt means that you will be having a direct impact on the success of the charity and therefore the lives of the young LGBTQ+ people we support. As well as the feeling of making a difference, you may be sharing your existing skills and experience in addition to developing new ones. We will support you every step of the way so that you feel part of the team, knowing that you are valued and having the chance to connect with other volunteers.

Who can volunteer? Do I need to identify as LGBTQ+?

We welcome applications from people of all backgrounds, including those who are part of the LGBTQ+ community and have lived experience of homelessness. Whether you're an ally or can relate to the struggles LGBTQ+ young people face due to not feeling safe enough to express themselves openly in their own household, we would be happy to have you volunteer with us!

You will need to be at least 16+ to apply and for some roles, you may be required to have a DBS check. Also, even if you have a criminal record, this doesn't mean that you won't be able to volunteer with us, but it may have an impact on the ways you can get involved.

For corporate enquiries, we're unable to offer one-off group volunteering opportunities at the moment but we can offer roles for individuals who would like to volunteer. Please drop us an email at

volunteering@akt.org.uk if you would like to attend any training or if you would like to fundraise and raise money, please contact **supporters@akt.org.uk**

FAQs

continued

Can I volunteer while claiming benefits?

Yes, you can volunteer while receiving benefits as long as you continue to meet all the conditions of your benefit, such as:

- Can only be paid out-of-pocket expenses
- Can't volunteer for a close relative
- The volunteer still needs to be available for work if claiming Jobseekers allowance
- Someone doing work as part of a sentence is not considered to be a volunteer
- Choosing not to be paid for work is not considered as volunteering

As stated above, you should not be paid for volunteering, however, there may be cases where you receive money to cover your volunteering expenses, such as travel. We advise you talk about your choice of voluntary work with the office that pays your benefit before you start.

I'm an asylum seeker, can I volunteer with you?

Current government guidance states that asylum seekers can volunteer while their claim is being considered. Home Office guidance states that volunteering by asylum seekers can be undertaken at any stage of the asylum process but it cannot interfere with interviews, reporting events or a re-documentation interview. As an organisation, we will allow some flexibility so that you are able to fit in volunteering around important appointments.

I have a criminal conviction, can I volunteer?

For roles that will be working directly with young people (e.g. supporting our youth groups) you will need an enhanced DBS check (previously CRB) – this is free of charge for you and will be processed by us. All you'll need to do is provide some ID and your address history. A criminal conviction does not necessarily stop you from volunteering with us so don't let this put you off. All decisions regarding convictions will be made on a case-by-case basis and will depend on the type of offence and its relevance to the volunteering role.

How much time do I have to give?

This really depends on each role, and this will be outlined in the role description posted on our website. Whether it is 3 hours for a one-off event or a commitment of an hour a week for mentoring, we offer flexibility so that you can fit volunteering around your schedule.

What support will I receive?

Volunteers' involvement will be managed and guided by the team/manager in charge within that department in akt. Whether it is at the office or at an event, you will always be in contact with a member of staff to answer any questions you may have.

Do you cover travel expenses?

Yes. We want to make volunteering with us as accessible as possible which means we will reimburse your travel expenses to and from your volunteering will be reimbursed as well as a meal if volunteering for more than 3 hrs. Please have a read of our full Volunteer Expenses Policy here in our Volunteer Hub page.

FAQs

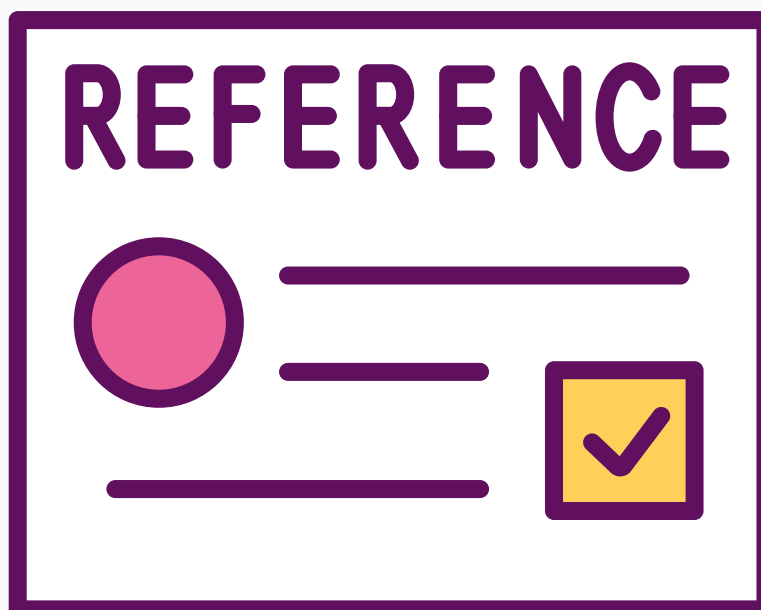
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What training will I receive?

All volunteers will attend an online Welcome to akt induction session which covers an introduction to akt, our services, and what to expect as a volunteer. Depending on the role, you'll then receive some role-specific training. We also offer volunteers ongoing training and development opportunities.

Do you offer references?

Yes, we are happy to provide a reference for you if we feel able to comment fully enough on your time as a volunteer with us.

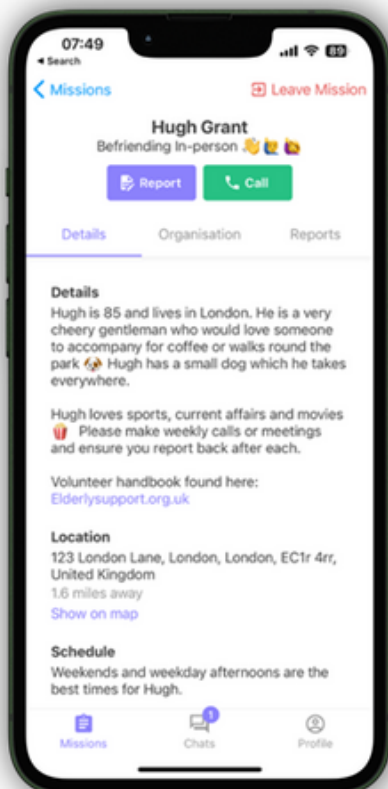


volunteero app

As an akt volunteer, you'll be kept up to date on all volunteering **activities and opportunities**, as well as general **news and information** about akt, via **email** and our CRM database called '**Volunteero**'.

Through the app, you will have control of the **shifts** you sign up to which in turn significantly decreases the number of emails we have to send out. Our team create and publish events and other types of volunteering activities called '**missions**' which include everything you need to decide if you want to participate.

Once you sign up, we will enable you to have app access where you'll be able to receive notifications via the app.

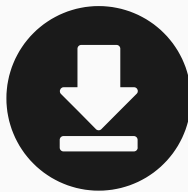


volunteero app








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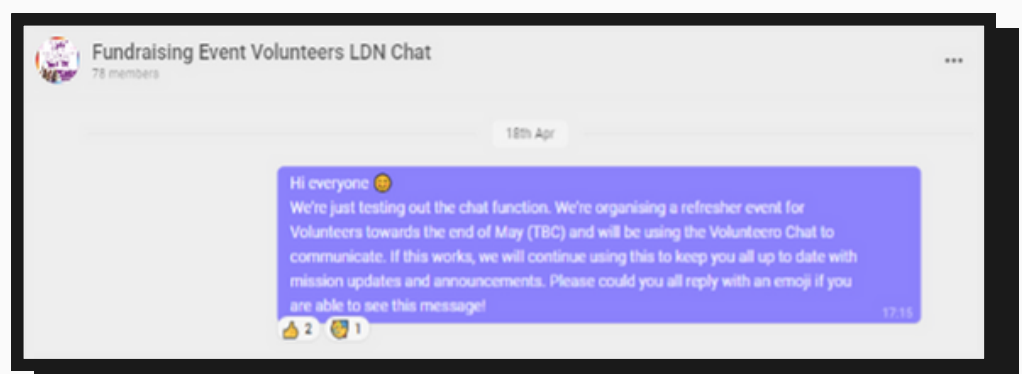
There is also a chat feature included in the app, which we use regularly to update you on new features in addition to social and fundraising events. This digital community enables you to 'chat' with other volunteers as well as being able to react and reply to messages with emojis.

There is also a new feature that has been released called 'Badges' which provides an amazing insight for us, the Volunteering team and for you, the volunteers. It enables us to recognise and give praise to all your contributions and other accomplishments.



Download the app today to find out more
Volunteero – Volunteer App

Badge	Details	Awarded
 7 YRS @ AKT		1
 #INFLUENCER	posting/creating content for akt to post on socials and our bi-monthly newsletter	3
 4 YRS @ AKT		6
 8 YRS @ AKT		1
 10 YRS @ AKT		1
 PRIDE 2023		15
 LEAD VOLUNTEER		2



expenses

our expenses policy outlines what expenses you can claim back when volunteering and how to put in a claim. Here at akt, we do not expect you to be out of pocket because of your volunteering activities. You can claim back expenses for:

- Travel
- Food (if volunteering 4+ hours and it falls over a meal time)

Expenses are claimed back by completing an expenses form and attaching the relevant receipts. This form is sent to you after completing the induction and included in our Volunteer comms.

Please read the expenses policy

Useful Links:

Our socials:



@aktcharity - Twitter/X



@aktcharity - Instagram



@aktcharity - TikTok



AKT - Facebook



akt - LinkedIn



akt - YouTube

Keep up to date on all our latest campaigns, case studies and news here:

akt.org.uk

We also have a Volunteers' Hub, where you can find all our policies and safeguarding report forms:

akt - Volunteer's Hub



Thank you for taking the time to read through this handbook. We hope you're feeling prepared and are ready to start your volunteering role.

If you have any further questions, feel free to send us an email at volunteering@akt.org.uk

We hope you're as excited to start your role as we are to have you!