

# Information Sheet

## Volunteer Frequently Asked Questions

### General volunteering

- **Who can volunteer?**  
Potentially anyone aged 18 or above, subject to checks and suitability.
- **Is there a screening process?**  
Yes. All volunteers are subject to mandatory police and working with children checks (paid for by Interchange), as well as reference checks.
- **Do I need to have any experience with children?**  
No. You just need to enjoy spending time with children. Having a positive attitude to life, a good sense of fun, patience, tolerance and acceptance of people for who they are, are much more important than experience.
- **I don't know anything about disability, can I still volunteer?**  
Yes. You will be surprised how quickly you'll learn about different ways of communicating and interacting. Your main job is to assist the children to have as much fun as possible and that is not hard.
- **Do you provide any training?**  
Yes. Once you're signed up as a volunteer, Interchange will provide all the necessary resources and training.
- **Will being a volunteer cost me anything?**  
No. All checks and training are paid for by Interchange.

### Recreation volunteering

- **If I sign up do I have to volunteer every week?**  
No, it's completely up to you to choose the dates and activities that suit you.
- **What kinds of activities will I be helping out with?**  
All our agencies offer slightly different programs, so it will depend on your location. Some examples include school holiday programs, sports days and overnight camps. You can find out what your nearest agency offers by getting in touch with them.
- **Will recreation activities and camps cost me anything?**  
No. All activity costs, camp accommodation, meals etc are paid for by Interchange. Usually you will need to bring your own lunch if you are going on a day activity.
- **Do I have to do personal care? I'm not sure how I will cope.**  
Don't worry. You won't be asked to do anything you are not comfortable with. Staff and other volunteers are always there to help out.
- **What if I have a problem working with a particular person or disability?**  
You can speak to the staff running the activity. They are very approachable and will be happy to sort out problems or if necessary make changes.
- **How do I find more information?**  
Contact your nearest agency.

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## Volunteer Frequently Asked Questions

### Host volunteering

- **Who can be a host?**

Just about anyone who is 18 years old or over. Hosts come from all different lifestyles and cultural and religious backgrounds, and can be single, in a couple or part of a family. The most important attributes to have are a positive and caring attitude to children, life and disability, and an ability to make a commitment.

- **What checks do I have to do before I become a Host?**

All individuals interested in becoming a Host must undergo national police and working with children checks, as well as a home safety check and reference check. All checks are organised and paid for by Interchange.

- **Is there training involved?**

Yes, Interchange will provide all the information and free training you need to become a Host, including medical policies and what to do in an emergency.

- **How do I get matched with a child?**

After the screening and training process is complete, Interchange staff will work with you to find a suitable match. Compatibility is the key to the success of this program; Interchange carefully considers common interests, lifestyle and flexibility to ensure the successful development of the relationship between the young person and volunteer host.

- **How do we entertain our host child?**

The idea of the program is that the host child/young person fits in with whatever you usually do. Whenever possible, we try to match people who share a common interest. Meeting new friends and having different experiences are often entertainment

enough. Of course you can take your hosted person on special outings but remember the building of the relationship is more important than where you go.

- **I'm young and single. Would a parent trust me to look after their child?**

Looking after someone's child is a big responsibility, as is letting your child go to someone else. An important part of a match is the building of trust between all parties. Just because you are young doesn't mean you're not responsible, caring and trustworthy. Young people can bring a fresh new approach to a hosting relationship. It is attitude that is important.

- **I'm retired. Do you think I am too old?**

Older citizens can make excellent hosts. Obviously you need to be in good health and be matched to a child who suits your lifestyle and energy levels! You can share a lifetime of experiences with your host child ... and children keep you young at heart.

- **What happens in an emergency situation?**

You are provided with all emergency contact numbers and an emergency procedure to follow. Agency staff can always be contacted via an emergency number.

- **Do I have to make any commitment?**

Yes. We ask that you consider committing to at least one year from the time your match begins, as it may take quite some time for everyone to feel comfortable and for the match relationships to develop. Of course circumstances may arise where this is not possible.

- **How do I find out more?**

Contact your nearest agency.

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