

Being a Hope UK Volunteer

Hope UK is a national Christian drug education and prevention charity. We aim to equip young people to make drug-free choices.

What is a Hope UK Volunteer?

A Volunteer is someone who represents Hope UK in their local community. There are four main ways they may be involved:

- 1) As an **Educator (sessions)** - taking informal and formal drug prevention activities, either with children, young people or adults.
- 2) As an **Educator (detached)** – working in very informal environments (for example, a shopping centre, church fun day) doing drug prevention activities with passers-by.
- 3) As a **Generation Hope Volunteer** – developing opportunities for local young people to get involved with Generation Hope (our youth branch) – this might involve helping at or running a club, setting up detached work for young people to be involved with, helping run residential weekends, etc.
- 4) As a **Church Speaker** – representing Hope UK to local churches, speaking at services, midweek meetings, home groups, etc., talking about our work and encouraging people to support us.

(N.B You can do more than one of these.)

What is a drug prevention activity?

A drug prevention activity is something that helps an individual or group consider their attitude towards, and knowledge about, drugs. It may also help people develop relevant skills to help them manage issues relating to drugs. So, for example, an Educator may spend an evening at a parents' group helping them learn to recognise drugs, understand what they do and think about ways they can help their children manage the 'drug issue' as they grow up. Or they may be at a community day for young people playing relevant games with them to help them develop peer pressure resistance and decision making skills.

What kinds of environments might I work in?

This can vary greatly – depending on the kind of volunteer opportunity you choose, and the kinds of groups you might prefer to work with.

What help will I get to do this?

Initially, you will go through a comprehensive training programme, which will include learning about drugs, communication skills, child protection, learning styles, health and safety, formal and informal activities, using training aids, and many other areas. This training is delivered at four training weekends with activities and worksheets to complete between the weekends. All the training is accredited by the Open College Network (OCN), and Hope UK is a recognised training centre with OCN. This means that, as well as training to be an Educator, you will gain learning credits. The weekends will also include practical opportunities to try out what you are learning.

Once you have finished your initial training, you will get support from the office and/or other local Educators. You will have the chance to attend a training conference once a year where you will get to meet with volunteers and Generation Hope members from all over the UK and update your training. You will also be given suitable training tools to use, and be regularly updated on drug and other issues.

Who can be a volunteer?

Essential criteria include:

- **Christian** – Hope UK is a Christian charity and you will become a local representative for the charity. You will also participate in prayer and worship at training weekends, so you will have to have a personal, active Christian faith.
- **Drug free** – As we are working to enable young people make drug-free choices, we think it only fair that we stand alongside people who may choose to stop using drugs or not start in the first place. We also don't want to give mixed messages or complicate things, so we ask all volunteers and staff to be drug free – this includes alcohol and tobacco (including vaping).
- **Suitable to work with children and young people** – As part of the application process, we will ask you to complete a self-disclosure form where you tell us about issues relating to previous convictions and issues relating to children. We also take two references, interview you and do an enhanced (full) criminal record check – all to make sure that you are suitable to work with children. (Mostly, this will not be relevant for Church Speakers.)
- **Committed** – You would need to have time available to volunteer with Hope UK. For each type of volunteer, minimum requirements are:
 - **Educator (sessions)** – One session a month, averaging 10 sessions a year.
 - **Educator (detached)** – One detached activity a month (this tends to be fairly regular work once you get started).
 - **Generation Hope Volunteer** – will vary, usually about 6 events a year.
 - **Church Speaker** – One talk a month, but like the Educator (sessions) this will vary depending on demand.
- For all volunteers, this will include networking, planning, preparation, delivering and evaluating drug prevention activities. It could also include other activities supporting Hope UK – for example, catering at training weekends, helping at exhibitions, acting as a trustee. If you are a non-UK citizen you will need to have a status which means you will be in the UK for at least 2 years after finishing training.
- **Good time management skills**
- **Willingness to both learn and use new ideas**
- **Over 18 years old**

Desirable criteria include:

- Experience of working with relevant age groups, especially young people.
- Experience in formal and informal communication.
- Part of a good local network, or having good local knowledge.
- Support from your church – especially the leadership.

How much does it cost?

Training is free, but it costs Hope UK nearly £1,250 to train you fully, and then another £450 a year to support you and keep you updated. However, if you fail to use the training, we will invoice you for the full cost and any support/resources you have received.

You can download an application form at www.hopeuk.org/volunteering/ or contact enquiries@hopeuk.org for more information.