

Volunteer Handbook

Welcome to EnFold





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Welcome to EnFold

EnFold is a growing charity providing an important range of support services to help improve the lives of those living with Autism Spectrum Condition and their families, whether diagnosed or undiagnosed, adult or child.

We provide help and advice, give Autistic people a voice and educate the wider community to break down barriers.

We champion understanding, support and inclusion for the 10,000 Autistic people in Northamptonshire.





Vision & Mission

Our Vision

EnFold's vision is a society that values and celebrates neurodiversity by challenging the views of 'normal' and supporting the integration and inclusion of neurodivergence.

We recognise that society is a spectrum of individuals, all with different capabilities and contributions.

We see a World where discrimination and stigma for neurodivergent individuals, their families and friends is replaced by empowerment.

We support the Autistic community so they can reach their full potential, with confidence, enjoyment and unique perspectives to make society a richer place.

We believe everyone deserves an equal chance to flourish, whatever their diagnosis and whatever challenges they face.

Our Mission

We use our own personal lived experiences and professional knowledge to raise awareness of how society needs to change to become more inclusive, whether in public spaces, the classroom or at work or play. We do this through our training programmes and consultancy to support making environmental changes so they are welcoming, informed and inclusive.

We offer a range of free Autism support services providing bespoke support to individuals, parents and families and connect them with the right organisations and resources.

Our Values

- Supportive - Offering practical and emotional support services to those on the Autistic spectrum and their families
- Informative - Creating a hub of information on Autism with training, help and advice.
- Educational - Training our community to understand and accommodate Autistic members
- Positive - Remaining confident that we can create change

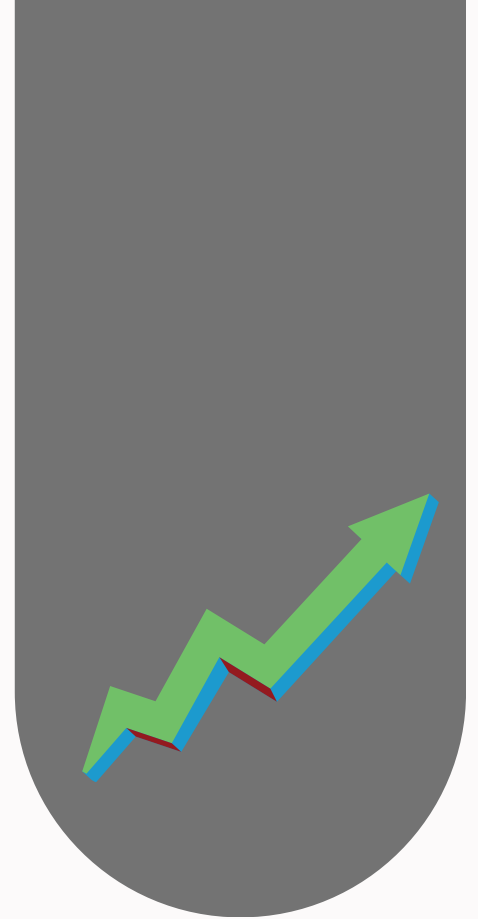


Autism in Northamptonshire

In 2024, it was estimated that there were between 8,500 and 11,000 people with Autism, diagnosed and undiagnosed, in Northamptonshire*.

These figures assume that between 1.5 and 1.76% of children and young people and between 1 and 1.3% of adults are Autistic, but the figure is being revised upwards regularly as waiting lists and diagnoses increase.

EnFold aims to reach as many people with Autism in Northamptonshire as possible, providing support services to help make lives easier through understanding, acceptance and celebration.



Key Facts

that help frame the scale of the challenge in the UK:



Children and Autism

- 34% of children with Autism say that the worst thing about being at school is being picked on.
- 63% of children with Autism are not in the kind of school their parents believe would best support them.
- 17% of Autistic children have been suspended from school, 48% three or more times and 4% have been expelled from one or more schools.

Adults and Autism

- 70% of Autistic adults say that they are not getting the help they need from social services
- 70% of Autistic adults said with more support, they would feel less isolated.
- At least one in three Autistic adults is experiencing severe mental health difficulties due to a lack of support.
- Only 16% of Autistic adults in the UK are in full-time paid employment, and only 32% are in some paid work.
- Only 10% of Autistic adults receive employment support, but 53% say they want it.
- Five times as many males as females are diagnosed with Autism – there is increasing evidence that there is a significant underdiagnosis of Autism in females

Autism and other Conditions

- Around a third of people with a learning disability may also be Autistic.
- Between 44% and 52% of Autistic people may have a learning disability.
- General learning disabilities affect between 15% and 30% of Autistic people.
- Research suggests that 70% of Autistic people have a mental health condition and that 40% have two or more.
- Autistic people are up to four times more likely to have anxiety disorder and twice as likely to have depression

A Message From **Diane**

Our Founder and CEO



“We look forward to you joining EnFold as a Volunteer and welcome the contribution you will undoubtedly make. Your time, passion and commitment is really appreciated as we look to expand our range of services and reach across Northamptonshire. We need help in many areas across the charity, and your support is vital to helping us move forward.”

To become an EnFold Volunteer, you don't need to have any experience of neurodiversity, although if you are working with our Service Users, it is always welcomed. All you need is enthusiasm and some useful skills to add value to the charity. We offer a range of roles to suit different backgrounds and skills, including mentoring, social group supervision, marketing and fundraising roles – please check our website for the latest roles, requirements and vacancies at enfold.org.uk. We will give you training, support and supervision in exchange for your time and commitment. Our Volunteer Charter gives a clear overview of what we are looking for and what we will give back to our Volunteers too. Your work experience at EnFold can also be very valuable in gaining and developing new skills and we are happy to provide references to validate your time with us.

The impact of our volunteers is overwhelmingly positive for EnFold and our service users. The dedication and passion of those who have been able to continue their involvement has ensured that our core services were maintained and that the sense of community and mutual support remained strong. Volunteers have reported a deep sense of fulfilment and belonging, highlighting how volunteering provides a valuable opportunity to give back and feel connected. Volunteer feedback includes:

“EnFold have helped me so much and I want to be able to give something back – volunteering allows me to do that.”

“I love being able to support at YAAP, I feel really at home here”

Volunteer's individual contributions have been vital in sustaining our activities and maintaining a welcoming environment within EnFold and associated projects such as our Young persons autism advisory project (YAAP). The positive experiences shared by our volunteers underline the continued importance of their roles, not only in delivering services but also in fostering a supportive, inclusive atmosphere where everyone feels at home. The commitment shown has had a meaningful effect on both the organisation and the wider community, demonstrating the enduring value of volunteering at EnFold.



Volunteer Strategy

As we look ahead, our focus will be on strengthening and expanding our approach to volunteering, recognising that our volunteers are not only a vital resource but also at the heart of our ability to support the community. While we have made meaningful progress, there is a clear need for a more robust and inclusive strategy to engage, support, and empower both current and future volunteers, particularly those from neurodivergent backgrounds.

We will prioritise:

- **Expanding Volunteer Recruitment and Engagement:** We will actively seek to increase the number of volunteers, with a focus on attracting individuals from the autistic and carer communities. Our aim is to remove barriers to participation and ensure volunteering opportunities are accessible, valued, and tailored to diverse needs.
- **Developing Corporate Partnerships:** In addition to individual recruitment, we are keen to explore opportunities to collaborate with businesses and organisations, inviting them to partner with EnFold through their corporate volunteer days. By working with corporate partners, we can offer meaningful, structured volunteering experiences for their staff, while also benefitting from diverse skills and fresh perspectives. We believe that such partnerships not only enhance our capacity to deliver impactful projects but also foster a greater sense of community engagement and social responsibility within participating companies.
- **Creating Meaningful Roles and Pathways:** New volunteer-led groups will be developed, such as a website content creation team and the EnFold Energisers fundraising team. These initiatives will harness the unique skills and interests of our neurodivergent volunteers, allowing them to contribute in ways that are both rewarding and impactful.
- **Enhancing Support Structures:** We will pilot regular volunteer support groups, introduce consistent check-ins, and launch a WhatsApp community to foster a sense of belonging and peer support. By providing comprehensive training, induction, and ongoing peer support, we aim to ensure volunteers feel equipped, confident, and valued.
- **Promoting Wellbeing and Professional Development:** Our volunteering programme will continue to offer opportunities for skill development, boosting employability, and improving mental health. By engaging in purposeful activities, volunteers will gain experience, build their CVs, and develop a sense of achievement and wellbeing.
- **Ensuring Inclusivity and Sustainability:** We will document learning and best practice in supporting neurodivergent volunteers, create accessible resources, and share these insights across the wider community. Our long-term vision is to embed volunteering as a sustainable pillar within EnFold, ensuring that those with lived experience shape and lead our future.

In the coming years, we are committed to doing more to engage and support our volunteers, recognising their invaluable contributions. By placing their voices and needs at the centre, we will create a volunteer programme that is inclusive, empowering, and sustainable, ensuring that the benefits of volunteering are shared across our organisation and the communities we serve



Our Volunteer Charter

We have developed our Volunteer Charter to summarise what we can expect from each other as we work together to serve the autistic community.

What you can expect from EnFold

- We will provide a thorough induction on our work, what Autism is, our policies and safeguarding
- Training is provided on your chosen volunteering activity by your supervisor
- Your supervisor will offer you regular support throughout your volunteering experience with us
- Our Volunteer Handbook sets out the standards and expectations we have of volunteers, but also what you should expect from us
- We will reimburse you for your travel and other authorised expenses carried out in relation to your voluntary work. All expenses must be claimed on the appropriate forms and submitted monthly in line with our Expenses Policy
- We welcome feedback on your volunteering experience as we continue to develop our services
- If you have any difficulties while volunteering with us, the EnFold team is here to help where we can
- We will keep you informed of any changes in our volunteer requirements, policies or procedures

What we expect from our Volunteers

- We expect volunteers to commit to our charitable objectives and to champion EnFold's values
- We trust you to perform your volunteering role to the best of your ability and to attend on-going training
- We expect you to keep up to date with any changes to policies and procedures affecting your role
- We require you to always consider the best interests of our service users and their priorities
- We need you to meet reporting requirements and to keep in regular contact with your supervisor, informing them if your contact details change.
- Should your personal circumstances change and affect you volunteering with us, you need to let us know as soon as possible so that we can make alternative arrangements
- You must ensure that confidential information relating to the charity and our service users is not shared or discussed
- We aim to provide support and supervision on a 6-8 weekly basis with your supervisor, with an annual review
- There is no time limit to how long you can volunteer with EnFold
- You can have more than one volunteering role with us, or change roles following a discussion with your supervisor



Policies and Procedures


Like any organisation, we have a range of policies and procedures to ensure our charity runs well and both our team and service users are protected. Hard copies of these policies will be shared with you as part of your induction, please ensure you read through them and let your supervisor know if you have any questions.


thank
★ you ★


for your support

**We're delighted to have you as part of
the EnFold team**

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