

## Role Description

# Youth Group Volunteer

We are always looking for volunteers who want to help us to *nurture, enable and inspire* young people on the autism spectrum.

### Volunteering at our youth groups

Our youth groups are for autistic young people who do not have a Learning Disability. We currently run 3 youth groups:

Age range of members	When & where	Volunteer criteria
8 – 12 year olds	Saturdays 9:30am – 12:30pm Wolvercote, Oxford	Volunteers must be aged 17 and over
13 – 17 year olds	Friday evenings 6pm – 9pm Wolvercote, Oxford	Volunteers must be aged 17 and over
18 – 25 year olds	Wednesdays, 6pm – 9:30pm St Clements/Cowley, Oxford.	Volunteers must be aged 21 and over

**Duration of placement:** We request a minimum commitment of 1 year (or one academic year) volunteering.

**Based at:** You will be based at the youth group venue (either Wolvercote or St Clements, Oxford).

**Reporting to:** The Youth Group Coordinator.

**Working closely with:** Youth group staff and volunteers.

I always look forward to Saturday's youth club because **I love coming here** and spending time with everyone.  
- youth group member

### MAIN PURPOSE(S) OF THE ROLE

Your role as a volunteer is to:

- encourage and support the young people to participate in activities,
- assist the staff as necessary, and
- help provide a friendly, playful, enjoyable and safe environment.

The support from volunteers enables the Youth Group Coordinator to oversee the group, plan activities, support some children more intensely, and do essential admin work.

Staff have overall responsibility of the group.

There is usually at least one volunteer, ideally two, at each session.

### MAIN DUTIES

Young people on the autism spectrum generally have difficulties in social situations and require support to participate in social activities, conversation, and group work.

### **We request that our volunteers:**

- Encourage the young people to socialise by facilitating socialising, conversations, and friendships between young people. This may involve you starting an activity with a young person then encouraging other young people to join in.
- Identify young people who struggle to participate, and help them to participate or do another activity.
- Support the young people to understand games and rules. This may include supporting others to be patient.
- Encourage and support play between 2 or more members, rather than solo play.
- Chat with the young people.
- Suggest ideas for activities and trips.
- Assist staff to run activities.
- Occasional 1:1 work, if suitable and agreed between the volunteer and the Youth Group Coordinator.
- Follow our policies and procedures.

**I can socialise and interact with people - it's fun.** If there was no group I would probably spend more time at home. I'm not motivated to **get out and meet other people, but this allows me to do that**  
— youth group member

### **Volunteers should have the following skills and ability:**

- A minimum commitment of one year (or one academic year if relevant).
- Understanding of autism or a willing 'on the job'.
- Able to initiate, encourage, and support socialising and play.
- Able to work with a small group of young people.
- Able to use initiative, and work without close support / direction.
- Have a responsible and mature manner.
- Reliably attend when expected. You can choose how often you attend - most volunteers commit to weekly attendance but on occasions when they can't attend they let us know in advance; others attend on set times e.g. alternate weeks or the first session in the month.
- Patience.
- A sense of fun!

He says he really enjoyed it and **it was so nice to see him happier than we have in a while!**  
— Parent of youth group member

All volunteer placements are subject to 2 satisfactory references, a satisfactory DBS check, and a three-month probation period.

**Volunteers are valued members of 'Team AFSSO' and we could not run our youth groups without their support!**

**To join our volunteer team please complete a Volunteer Registration Form. Visit [www.afso.org.uk/volunteering](http://www.afso.org.uk/volunteering)**