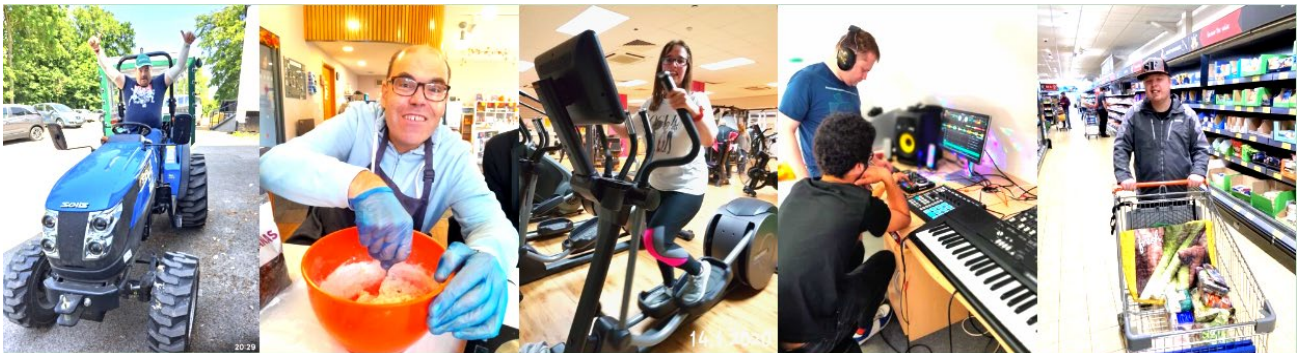




## Autism Together Volunteer Information Pack 2024



**Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Autism Together. This information pack contains everything you need to learn about our charity, the services we offer, and how volunteers contribute to our work. You'll also find instructions on completing the application process and the DBS forms. If you have any questions or need assistance with your application, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, who will be happy to help. We look forward to welcoming you to our team!**

## **About Autism Together**

### **What we do**

For over 50 years, Autism Together has been providing comprehensive support to autistic people. We offer a wide range of services, including residential programs, supported living, day services, and respite support.

Based in Wirral, UK, our journey began in 1968 when a group of parents founded The Wirral Society for Autistic Children, which later evolved into Autism Together. We continue to build on this legacy by offering high-quality support to autistic individuals and their families.

Today, we are one of the UK's largest providers of specialist support to autistic people. From our base in Wirral, we support more than 400 autistic individuals through our staff team of over 800 people. In fact, Autism Together is one of Wirral's largest employers.

Autism Together has a deep understanding of how to support autistic individuals, helping them to maximise their life opportunities. We provide a broad array of specialised support services, including:

- Residential housing – for autistic people needing 24-hours a day support.
- Supported Living – providing support for autistic people within their own tenancies.
- A wide variety of Day Service activities – including IT, Creative Arts, Performing Arts, Animal Husbandry, Horticulture, Gardening, Ceramics, Woodworking and much more.
- Children and Family Services – providing advice, support and activities for families with autistic children.
- Autism Training – delivered by our award-winning training team, they provide comprehensive in-house training to all our staff, and external training to businesses, families and individuals.

Autism Together is passionate about empowering the people it supports to reach their full potential. Because of this, we facilitate a project that sees autistic people undertaking volunteering opportunities, as a first step to gaining employment, should they wish.

Our Social Enterprise projects – Bromborough Pool Café and Shop and the Port Sunlight River Park Café and Kiosk – are public-facing activities run by the people we support, with help from staff. Here they learn skills such as customer service, handling cash, making refreshments, working as a team, and getting a feel and an understanding of a working day.

Our Pathway to Work Officer, connects with local businesses to identify suitable placements with local employers, to support autistic people into employment.

Along with progressing autistic people into new opportunities, this also allows us to educate the community in autism awareness and acceptance.

We have two large facilities, where many of our activities take place. Raby Hall contains several of our residential properties, along with a kitchen garden, vast woodland, swimming pool and sensory areas.

This is also where our farm is located, which is home to alpacas, pigs, ducks, guinea pigs, goats, a sheep, and hens. Here, as well as caring for the animals, growing plants and utilising the woodlands, the people we support also learn how to drive tractors, build animal pens, use power tools and undertake general maintenance.

Our other large area is Bromborough Pool Village. Here we own the main hall, café and shop, the former church and school, plus the allotments and some of the surrounding land.

Many of our Day Services are primarily based here, including performing arts and IT. We have recently taken the first steps to invest heavily in the future of this historic village. Working alongside residential committees and local heritage and conservation organisations, we intend to protect and promote the heritage of the site, while providing essential services for the people we support.

Obviously, to run a charity of this size, we need people to keep the infrastructure working. This means we also have departments who manage IT, Admin, Finance, Fundraising, Communications, Admissions, and an Estates and Facilities Department which oversees the upkeep of all our properties and gardens.

This all means we are able to offer volunteer opportunities for a wide and varied skillset.

## **Our Ethos**

Research has shown that specialist education and structured support can really make a difference to the life of an autistic person.

Autism affects everyone differently, so we work with everyone to help them overcome the difficulties the condition presents them with, helping them to lead a creative and fulfilling life.

As a specialist provider of autism-specific support, our organisation recognises that each person has a right to live their life as they choose. In recognising this right, we create a shared understanding of each person's strengths and needs and ensure each person's preferred way of communicating these is respected and implemented by all our staff.

## **Our philosophy remains firmly rooted in a belief that:**

We begin with what people can do, not with what they can't do, by listening to each individual and acknowledging that they are the expert in their autism.

Our support begins with the person, along with a shared understanding of what is important to them and what their strengths and needs are.

Our support approaches are individualised so that staff can meet each person's communication needs.

As the people we support gain new skills, interests and experiences, so our support approaches focus on developing person-centred, lifelong learning.

Our autism strategies help people develop skills by considering their communication needs, thinking patterns, social understanding, and sensory differences.

## **Volunteering is good for you!**

Our volunteers often tell us how rewarding their time with us is. You'll be part of a compassionate community and feel a real sense of pride in what you do. You'll meet new people, gain valuable experience, and develop your skills too. You will also receive instruction suitable for your role and supervision from a named member of staff.

As well as learning new skills, volunteers can benefit from:

- Increased experience in listening to and helping people.
- Working as part of a passionate team.
- Experience in the voluntary/social care sector.
- Increased confidence, skills, and experience for future employment.
- Motivation.
- Sense of achievement.
- Working with a diverse range of people.
- Sense of fulfilment.

We welcome volunteers from all backgrounds, cultures, and abilities, although we do ask that all our volunteers are over the age of 16, for safeguarding purposes. This is because you may come into contact with vulnerable adults during your time at Autism Together and we want to ensure the safety and security of both you and the people we support.

For those claiming benefits, volunteering will not affect the money you receive, and you can volunteer for as many hours as you like. You should, however, tell your benefits advisor that you are volunteering.

## **Volunteer Roles available**

- Animal Welfare
- Café Work
- Painting
- General Maintenance
- Delivery Driving
- Gardening
- Administration
- Event Organisation and Support
- Horticulture
- Heritage
- This list is endless, with volunteer opportunities in a range of activities.

We have a variety of specific volunteer roles available across different sites and on various days. If you have a unique skill set that is not covered in our current volunteer roles, we would love to hear from you.

## Expenses

Volunteers will receive out of pocket expenses, if requested, including travel and subsistence. This does not include the commute from the volunteer's home to a regular place of volunteering.

## Corporate Volunteers

At Autism Together we regularly work with businesses to offer their employees a chance to volunteer with us. We find that employees really enjoy spending a team building day away from the office, helping support the work of our charity.

Corporate volunteering is facilitated by our Fundraising Department. For more information, please contact Lisa or Chloe at: [Fundraising@autismtogether.co.uk](mailto:Fundraising@autismtogether.co.uk).

**We have a range of specific roles across various sites, on different days, but if you have specific skills and they are not listed within our volunteer roles, please let us know by emailing: [VolunteerEnquiries@autismtogether.co.uk](mailto:VolunteerEnquiries@autismtogether.co.uk).**

## How to apply

So, if you are interested in volunteering with Autism Together, please read on...

The application process is relatively straightforward, and we hope we can have you volunteering within 4 to 6 weeks of your application.

There are five steps to complete to become a volunteer at Autism Together:

- Look through our latest volunteering opportunities and make your choice.
- Send in your application form.
- Attend an informal interview.
- Autism Together will then carry out reference checks, including a DBS check. Different volunteer roles will require different checks and clearances.
- Begin the training and start volunteering with our charity.

We welcome volunteers from all backgrounds, cultures, and abilities. However, for safeguarding purposes, **we require that all volunteers be at least 16 years old**. This is because during your time with Autism Together, you may interact with vulnerable adults, and we want to ensure the safety and security of both our volunteers and the individuals we support.

Volunteers require a DBS check, but all costs would be covered by Autism Together

Any personal documents will be kept securely and will be destroyed 6 years after you finish volunteering with Autism Together.

## **VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM**

*(Please complete in black ink)*

**Position:**

Location:

First Name(s):

Surname:

Address:

Post Code:

Mobile no:

Email:

Driver:

**Please give details of other previous/present voluntary work or other work experiences which you feel are relevant to this post:**

Employer	Brief description of duties

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**Please give times when you can volunteer:**

**Please give details of any relevant professional qualification obtained and / or training:**

**Please give details of qualifications you are currently undertaking:**

Please give details of experience you have which you would consider particularly relevant, and why this volunteer position should be offered to you:

I declare that the information I have provided is correct and complete, and that misleading or untruthful statements will result in disciplinary action if they become known after my appointment.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE NOW SEND APPLICATION FORM TO:**

Volunteer Co-ordinator

6 Tebay Road,

Bromborough,

Wirral,

CH62 3PA

**Or Email – [volunteerenquiries@autismtogether.co.uk](mailto:volunteerenquiries@autismtogether.co.uk) with your application form.**



## **References**

We will require a character reference from all our volunteers. This can be a friend, a work colleague, a tutor or neighbour – but it must not be a relative. Please let your referee know that we will be getting in touch.

Please fill in your referee details:

### **Referee 1:**

**Title:**

**Forename:**

**Surname:**

**Address:**

**Telephone Number:**

**Email:**

**How do they know you?**

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### **Office use only**

Reference 1 Received

## **Data Protection**

Autism Together are committed to respecting and protecting your privacy in line with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations). To see our full policy please contact our office on 0151 334 7510 or email: [volunteerenquiries@autismtogether.co.uk](mailto:volunteerenquiries@autismtogether.co.uk)

We may change this policy from time to time, so please check with the office occasionally to ensure that you're happy with any changes. By volunteering with Autism Together you are agreeing to this policy.

### **Personal Information**

If you choose to provide us with any information by which you can be identified – such as your name, address, etc – you can be assured that it will only be used to support your relationship with Autism Together.

### **Our Promise**

- We never sell your details to any third parties.
- You can choose how you are contacted (we will not contact you if you ask us not to).
- You can choose the information you receive.
- Every year we will check with you that your details and how we are contacting you are correct.

### **Updating your information**

You can update your personal information and how we contact you by emailing us at: [VolunteeringEnquires@autismtogether.co.uk](mailto:VolunteeringEnquires@autismtogether.co.uk) or by calling: 0151 334 7510.

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## **Your Permissions**

Autism Together would like to keep in touch with you, to give volunteering updates and charity news, if you are happy for us to do so, we require your permission in line with GDPR.

**Title:**

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Telephone Number:**

**Email Address:**

I give my permission for Autism Together to contact me about:

**Volunteering Updates (optional) Email  Telephone  Direct Mail**

**Charity News (optional) Email  Telephone  Direct Mail**

## Equal Opportunities

To help us monitor our equal opportunities please answer the following questions. These answers will be kept separately to your application and remain anonymous.

**Please put an X next to the relevant box.**

**Age Group:** How old are you?

<b>16-21</b>		<b>21-30</b>		<b>31-40</b>		<b>41-50</b>		<b>51-60</b>		<b>61+</b>	
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**Gender:** What gender do you identify as?

<b>Male</b>		<b>Female</b>		<b>Inter-sex</b>		<b>Non-Binary</b>		<b>Other</b>	
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**Ethnicity:** What is your ethnic background?

<b>White British</b>		<b>White Irish</b>		<b>White (Other)</b>	
<b>Black British</b>		<b>Black African</b>		<b>Asian British</b>	
<b>Asian Indian</b>		<b>Asian Pakistani</b>		<b>Asian Bangladeshi</b>	
<b>Asian (other)</b>		<b>Chinese</b>		<b>Japanese</b>	
<b>Mixed Heritage</b>		<b>Other Please state</b>			

**Disability:** Do you consider yourself to have a disability or health condition?

<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>		<b>Prefer Not to Say</b>	
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**Medical Conditions:** Do you have any medical conditions that we should be aware of?

<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>		<b>Prefer Not to Say</b>	
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If Yes please state: \_\_\_\_\_

**Sexual Orientation:** What is your sexual orientation?

<b>Heterosexual</b>		<b>Gay</b>		<b>Lesbian</b>	
<b>Bi-Sexual</b>		<b>Pansexual</b>		<b>Prefer not to say</b>	
<b>Other (Please state)</b>					

## **Filling out your DBS**

Please ensure that you read the instructions printed on the front of the application form and follow the guidance given throughout the form. Autism Together will cover all costs associated with completing your DBS.

### **PLEASE:**

**DO** use black ink and write clearly using capital letters.

**DO** complete sections a,b,c,e ONLY.

**DO** complete all the mandatory sections marked in yellow.

**DO** bring in ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS (not photographs).

**DO** provide all of your addresses (and the dates you lived there) during the past 5 years, including any university student address(es) you may have had, and any overseas address(es).

**DO** mark choices with an X.

### **PLEASE:**

**DO NOT** write over the edges of each box.

**DO NOT** staple or affix anything to the form.

**DO NOT** use Tippex or strike out any sections that are not applicable (Leave Blank).

**DO NOT** complete sections d,w,x,y or z.

We will need to see at least three forms of ID which can include:

Passport, Driving License, National Insurance number, proof of address such as utility bill or similar (less than 3 months old).

## **Other Ways to get Involved.**

### **Fundraising**

If you could support our fundraising by raising vital funds or helping at our events. Please get in contact with our Fundraising team directly by emailing: [fundraising@autismtogether.co.uk](mailto:fundraising@autismtogether.co.uk):

### **Leave a Legacy**

Please consider Autism Together when you decide the time is right for you to write a will. By donating a gift in your will to Autism Together you are helping our work continue into the future, leaving behind a legacy that could last for generations to come.

### **Amazon Wishlist**

If you would like to donate a specific item to our charity, then our Wishlist is the place to go! All the items listed were chosen by the people we support and our staff teams. They pick things they know will make a big difference to their area, from small items for crafting or tennis balls and games, through to larger items such as outside bean bags or garden mowers.

When you purchase an item, it is sent directly to us to share with the relevant service. We are constantly updating the list with items for all budgets. We have even had fundraisers ask friends and family to purchase our charity a gift, for their birthday.



Please use the QR code above to view our Amazon Wishlist.

### **Follow and share on social media.**

Follow us on Facebook: AutismTogetherUK, X (formerly Twitter): @autismtogether, and Instagram (@autismtogetheruk)

**Thank you for taking the time to learn about our volunteer program. Your interest and involvement are what make our work possible. We hope this leaflet has inspired you to take the next step and join us in making a meaningful impact. Whether you're able to volunteer a few hours a month or you're looking for a more substantial commitment, we welcome you to our community. If you have any questions or need additional information, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. Together, we can make a difference. We look forward to seeing you soon!**

If you would like an informal chat about volunteering at Autism Together please contact:

[volunteerenquiries@autismtogether.co.uk](mailto:volunteerenquiries@autismtogether.co.uk)