



Lifeshare Limited

Christmas Project Volunteer Handbook

This document provides basic information for Christmas Project volunteers, especially those new to the Project.

08 December 2014

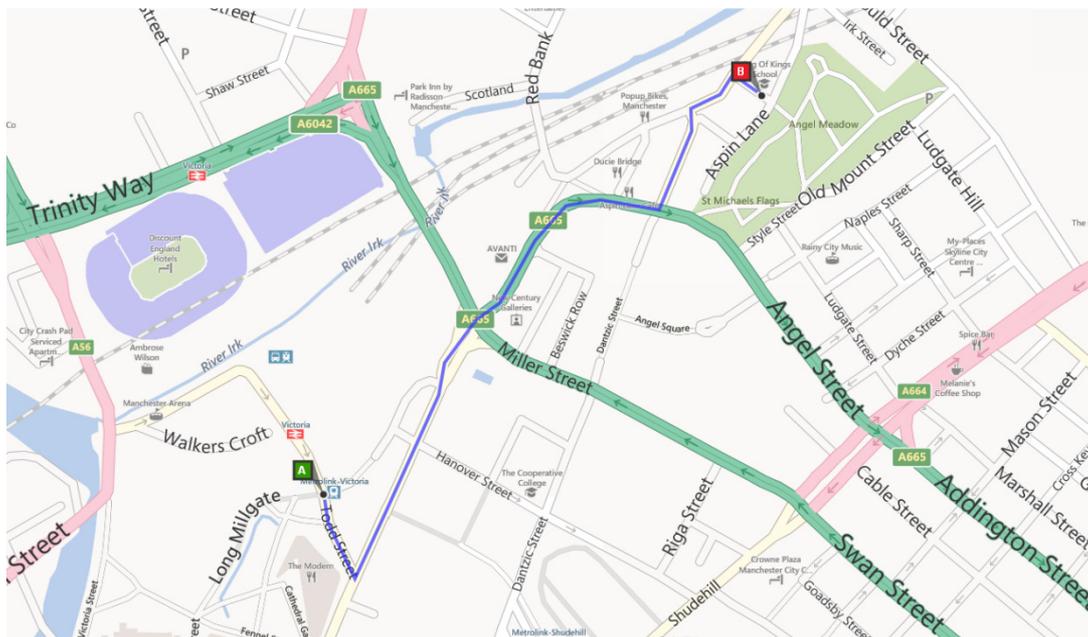


Getting here

The Christmas Project operates from what was the Charter Street Ragged School at 142 Dantzic Street, Manchester, M4 4DN. It is located between Dantzic Street and Aspin Lane, behind the site of the new Co-operative headquarters (currently under construction).

On foot or by public transport:

To walk here from Manchester Victoria Railway Station (see the map below), exit left onto Corporation Street and follow the road, heading away from Urbis and the city centre. Cross the ring road (Miller St) past the Ducie Bridge pub, and follow the road as it bends to the right. Turn left onto Dantzic St at the set of lights after the bend and you will find the building approximately 100m ahead.



By car:

Turn onto Corporation St, heading away from the city centre, at the junction with the ring road (Miller St). Turn left onto Dantzic St at the traffic lights immediately after the bend to the right and you will find the building approximately 100m ahead.

Parking

Parking bays are marked on both Dantzic St and Aspin Lane that run along the sides of the Charter St Ragged School. Normally, there is a two hour limit but we will provide parking permits that allow you to remain parked **in a bay** for the duration of your shift without penalty. Please return parking permits at the end of every shift so that other volunteers may use them.

You could receive a penalty for parking on the single yellow line instead of a marked bay.

Venue



Charter Street Ragged School is a very old building with lots of stairs and no lifts. As a result, disabled access for both volunteers and clients (i.e. our service users) are limited. If you do require disabled access or consider yourself to be impaired in any way, please let us know and we will do our best to ensure this does not affect your volunteering experience with us.

Clients are only allowed in certain areas on the ground floor; all floors above are for volunteers only (see the floorplan in Appendix 1).

Coordinators

The Christmas Project is overseen by experienced coordinators. They will be wearing green jumpers with Lifeshare's logo on the back to make them easily recognizable.

Several of the coordinators are also trustees (directors) of the charity, and are responsible for Lifeshare's overall activities. If you have any concerns or suggestions regarding the Project, please feel free to approach them for a chat.

Induction

For health and safety reasons, we do insist that all new volunteers attend one of the mandatory induction sessions, held at our premises on Dantzig St (finishing times are approximate). These sessions take place on the first two Wednesdays in December (from 6.30pm-9.30pm) and on the first two Saturdays in December (from 11am-2pm).

As well as being necessary for us to ensure your safety during the project, this is also a good opportunity to meet the coordinators and other volunteers with whom you may be working over Christmas. Volunteers from previous years are welcome to attend for a 'top-up' – please let us know on your application form if you would like to do so.

Preparation days

Before the project begins, we spend a few days preparing the building (hanging decorations, arranging furniture, taking deliveries of food, etc). If you are available (10am-4pm) on 19-23 Dec, we would be very grateful for any help you can offer.

Opening days

We need volunteers to staff the Christmas Project for 12 shifts over seven days:

- 23 December (2pm-8pm)
- 24 - 28 December (8am-2.30pm and 2pm-8pm)
- 29 December (8am-2pm)

Shifts

Morning shifts run from 8am-2.30pm and the afternoon shifts from 2pm-8pm, with a short briefing at the start of each shift (at 8am and 2pm) where we will allocate jobs and make any announcements related to previous days. We ask all volunteers to be prompt to avoid missing something important.

The afternoon shift ends only once all clients have left the building, the clients' entrance has been locked, and the building has been tidied. If you must leave early, please tell a coordinator and sign out when you leave in the interest of safety should there be a fire.

You will be allocated all of the shifts you select from the online application form, and we will treat your application as a commitment from you to volunteer on those days.

Once all places on a shift have been filled, we will accept no more applications for that shift. (Popular shifts such as Christmas Day fill up quickly.) Should you need to change any dates given in your application, please let us know as soon as possible.

If you are unable to attend any shift, please let us know as soon as possible on 0161 839 9631 or 0161 235 0744. If we are unexpectedly short staffed, we will be unable to offer some services such as clothing parcels.

Job allocation

Depending on how many clients (and volunteers) we have on a given day, it may seem busy or quiet. On quiet days, it can leave you feeling a little like a 'spare part' if you are not allocated a specific job (e.g. working in the kitchen). We aim to avoid this by rotating volunteers during the shift so that everyone who wants a specific task has one for at least part of the day. If at any point you are unhappy with the job you have been allocated, please let a coordinator know and we will do our best to find someone that will swap.

Please note that we need to limit numbers for some of the more popular jobs (e.g. in the kitchen) due to restricted space.

If you have a specific skill or trade that you think might benefit our clients (e.g. hairdressing), please let us know in advance so that we can make arrangements.

Medical care

A doctor, dentist and podiatrist (foot specialist) will be present at certain times over the Christmas period to offer basic medical care (though we are not able to prescribe tranquillisers or provide sick notes). If you have any medical experience or expertise and would like to assist our medical team, please let a coordinator know when you arrive. All information discussed in the surgery should be considered strictly confidential.

Food

A lunch of soup and sandwiches is served at approximately 12.30pm and a hot dinner at 5pm, where a vegetarian option is always available. Snacks are also available throughout the day. We provide enough food for both clients and volunteers so you therefore do not need to bring your own food (though you are, of course, free to do so if you prefer).

Distributing goods

At the Christmas Project, we have a selection of goods to be distributed among our clients (how we do so will be explained during briefings). In particular, we provide:

- Clothing: jeans, jumpers, t-shirts, gloves, socks, underwear.
- Toiletries: shampoo, facecloths, razors, shaving foam, deodorant.

If you are able to spare goods such as these, we are always very grateful for any donations. You may also be asked by clients for small items such as tissues or plastic carrier bags. These items will be readily available and we encourage you to supply them whenever needed. If you would like to bring any surplus carrier bags from home to keep us stocked up, we would be very grateful for them.

Entertainment

We try to arrange live entertainment (usually music) for an hour or so, on occasions over the course of the Project. If you know anybody who may be interested in performing (or if you yourself would like to perform), please let us know in advance so that we can make arrangements.

Transport and travel expenses

Though we are unable to provide transport for volunteers, we can reimburse small travel expenses (up to £4.50 per day) for public transport as long as a receipt or ticket is provided as proof of purchase. Please see a coordinator if you would like to be reimbursed for travel expenses and remember that public transport will be limited (or not available at all) on certain days of the holiday period.

Immunisation

We recommend that volunteers are up to date with their routine immunisations such as Diphtheria and Tetanus. We also recommend vaccination against Meningitis C (for young people up to the age of 25 years) and Hepatitis B.

Fire Safety

To comply with the law and ensure the safety of clients and volunteers, smoking is not permitted anywhere inside the premises at Dantzic St. You are, however, free to smoke outside the volunteers' entrance should you wish to do so.

If you should see a client smoking indoors and feel comfortable doing so, you may politely ask them to stop. If you do not feel comfortable doing so, please approach a coordinator who will deal with the situation.

Alcohol

We do not permit drinking alcohol on the premises. Again, if you feel comfortable doing so, you may ask a client who is drinking alcohol to stop, or notify a coordinator if you prefer.

Drugs

Though, inevitably, some of our clients are drug users it is very unlikely that you will encounter any drug taking on the premises. If you do spot any evidence of drug use (such as burnt tin foil or a hypodermic needle), please let a coordinator know immediately. In the unlikely event that you do find a hypodermic syringe or needle, please do not remove it yourself – let a coordinator know and we will dispose of it. We are currently not able to offer a needle exchange service to clients.

To discourage drug preparation, we do not use metal spoons or provide tin foil, and we remove foil wrappers from food products (e.g. mince pies).

Left belongings

Clients occasionally leave belongings (e.g. clothing) behind, either deliberately or by accident. Because there is a risk that there may be items in the pockets that may be dangerous (e.g. injection needles), we ask volunteers not to touch these belongings. A coordinator will collect items at the end of the day and store them safely for disposal once the Project has finished for the year.

Valuables

We cannot accept responsibility for valuables that are lost or stolen on the premises. For this reason, you should not look after a client's belongings – they may ask you to watch their bag for “5 minutes,” only to return 2 hours later.

Please do not bring valuables with you to the Project. We do not have any secure storage, and we cannot take responsibility if anything gets lost or stolen. You will not need any money with you while at the Project.

Fighting

It is unlikely that you will witness any violence at the Christmas Project. There is, however, a small risk that an argument between clients may develop into a physical confrontation. Usually, a coordinator will be on hand quickly to deal with these

situations. For your own safety, you should not intervene in any way, and we ask that you move to a safe distance from any altercation.

Safety

When leaving the building in an evening, we encourage you to leave in groups – the area around Dantzig Street can be intimidating when travelling alone at night. We also encourage you to be careful with the personal details you mention in conversation.

You must not give clients a lift in your car, give them your contact details (e.g. phone number, address) or invite them to stay at your home. Doing so puts you in a potentially dangerous situation and can also jeopardize Lifeshare's reputation.

Languages

In recent years, we have seen an increase in the number of clients from overseas. If you are proficient in a foreign language (especially Eastern European languages such as Polish), please let us know – our foreign clients very much appreciate being able to communicate in their native tongue.

Dogs

Clients occasionally bring a dog with them to the Project. Though we do allow dogs on the premises, they are kept at the far end of the dining hall, well away from the area where food is served.

We do ask volunteers not to bring pets to the Project.

Religion

Lifeshare does not promote any faith or religious beliefs, and we kindly ask all volunteers to respect this policy when dealing with clients and other volunteers.

Feedback

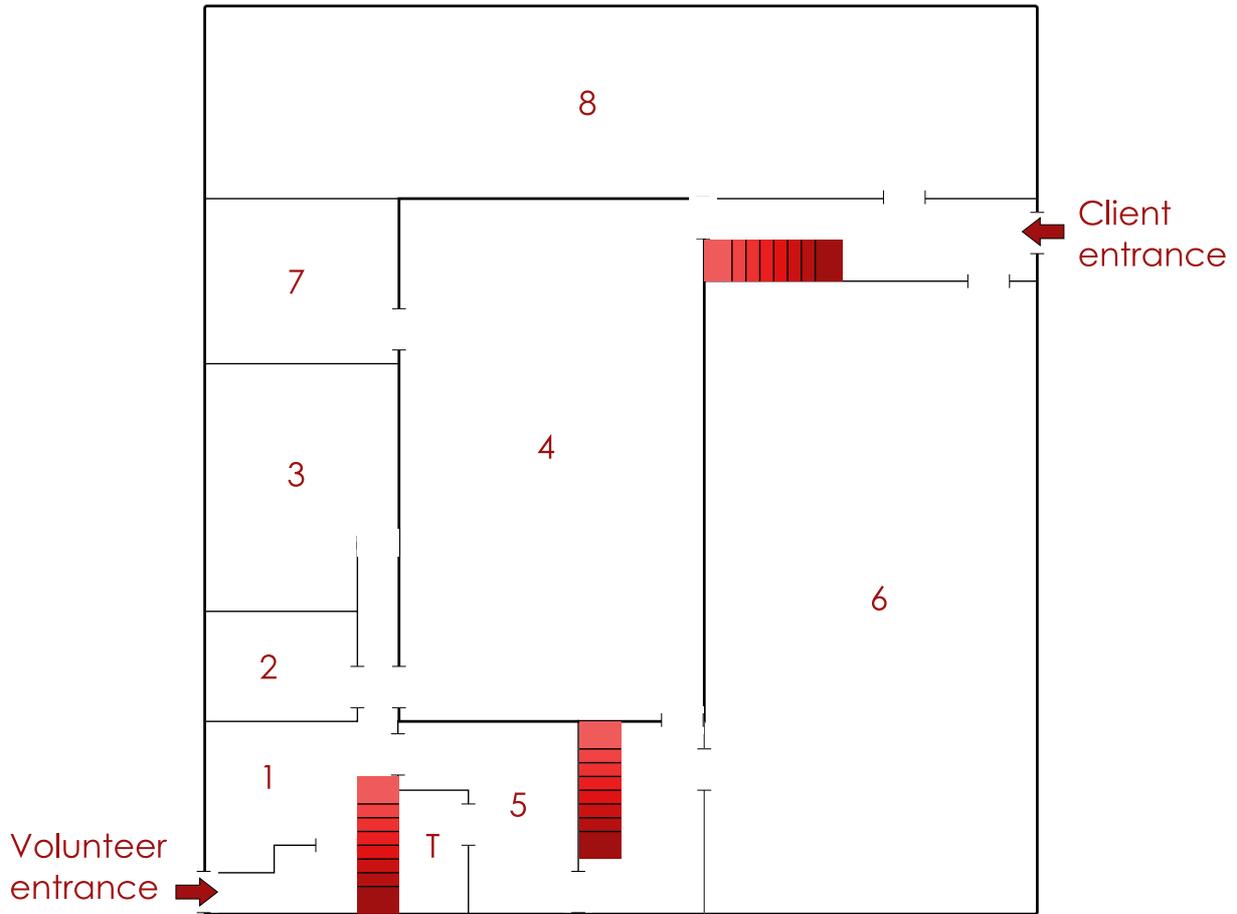
We are very grateful for any feedback you have about the running of the Project, and particularly welcome suggestions for ways in which we can improve our services. You can contact us – before, during or after the Project – either via email to office@lifeshare.org.uk or via the attached Feedback Form (also available in electronic form on our website www.lifeshare.org.uk/feedback). Unless otherwise stated, we will assume that feedback is for the attention of all coordinators.

Complaints

In the unlikely event that you would like to make a complaint about your experience at the Christmas Project, we encourage you to approach a coordinator who will do their best to resolve the problem. If you do not feel that this appropriate (e.g. if the complaint is about a coordinator), you can contact the Board of Trustees directly via email at lifesharetrustees@gmail.com.

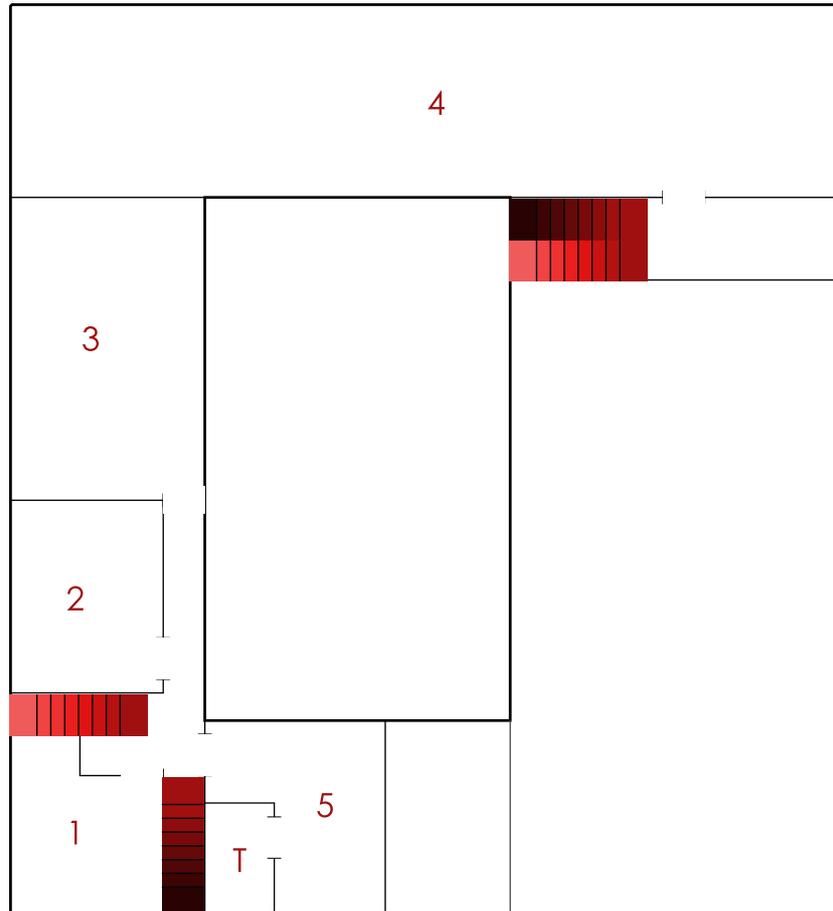
APPENDIX 1 FLOORPLAN

Ground Floor



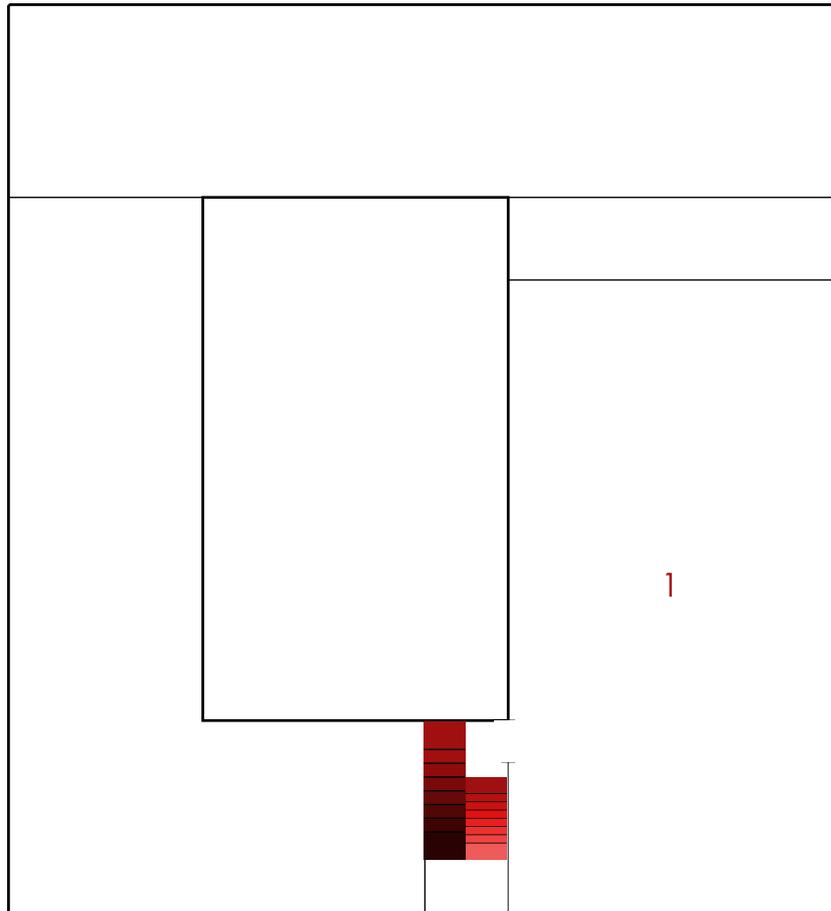
T	Toilet
1	Office / Reception (volunteers only)
2	Food store (volunteers only)
3	Kitchen (volunteers only)
4	Dining Hall
5	Surgery
6	Activity Hall (the 'Big' Room)
7	Clients' toilets
8	Storage (volunteers only)

First Floor (volunteers only)



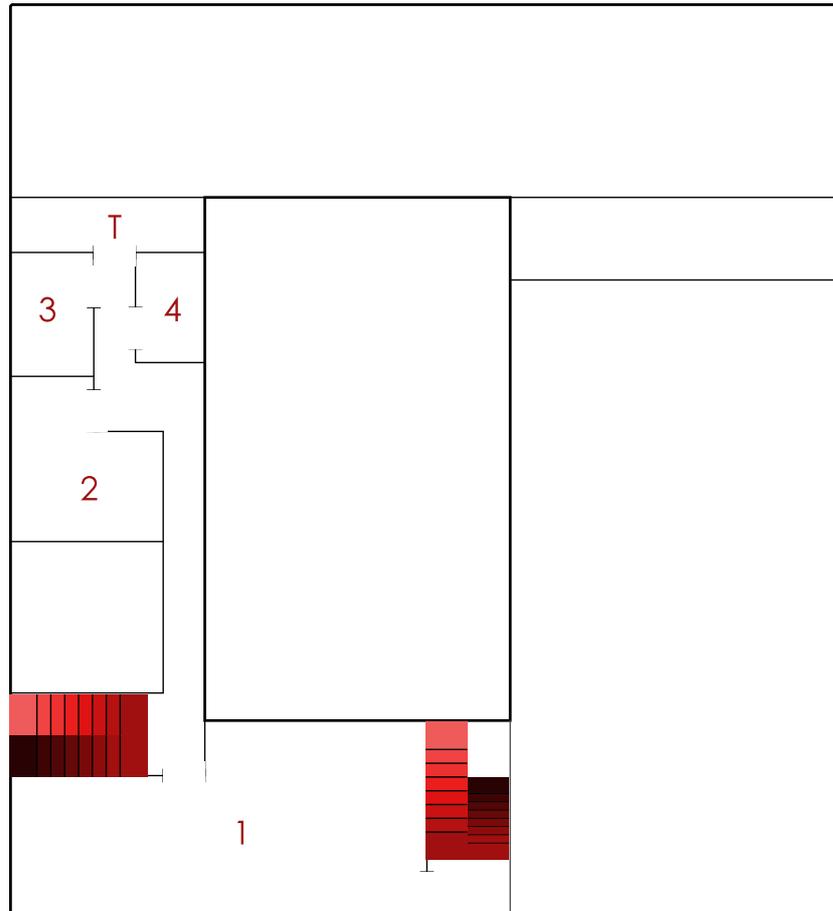
T	Toilet
1	Overspill cloakroom
2	Freezer room
3	Food Store
4	Overspill store room
5	Tea Room / cloakroom

First / Second Floor (volunteers only)



1	The 'Museum' store room
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Second Floor (volunteers only)



T	Toilet (out of service)
1	Clothing Store
2	Toiletries and Medical Supplies
3	Bedding / Sleeping Bags
4	Overspill storage

APPENDIX 2 FEEDBACK FORM



Feedback Form

Christmas Project

General Comments (for the attention of all coordinators)

Private Comments (for the attention of the Board of Trustees only)

Name (optional)