



Volunteer InfoPack



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European Voluntary Service

“Volunteer for Diversity & Inclusion”

1st Edition

YOUTH ACTION

LONG-TERM EVS Project – 11 months

Volunteers: 8 (1 French, 2 Lithuanian, 1 Polish, 1 Croatian, 1 Estonian, 2 Spanish)

September 2018 – June 2019

(precise dates still to be confirmed)

BLACKBURN, LANCASHIRE –UK

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1. ABOUT YOUTH ACTION (VISION, VALUES AND VENUE)

Youth Action, an award winning registered charity, was founded in 2003 to provide a range of services for young people aged 8 to 24 years old from across the North West. The organisation now has over 5,000 youth members – and this list is growing all the time!

Our strategic mission is *“Inclusive, Engaged & Empowering”* We are committed to delivering this mission by ensuring: -

- The young people who access and sign up to Youth Action’s services are *included* in the shaping, designing and decision-making concerning Youth Action’s provision of tailored opportunities in personal development and skills development
- Young people *engage* with the projects they take part in and gain recognition and accreditation for their achievements and efforts
- That with Youth Action’s support and guidance, young people are *empowered* to forge a positive future for themselves, make a constructive impact on their communities as active citizens and advocate the difference that positive changes can make on the lives of other young people in society today.

Globally
Connected

Locally
Engaged



Our aims are:

- To offer young people activities, which motivate, educate, makes productive use of time and improves the quality of life for young people in the Community.
- To offer activities which promote self-help, empowerment and team work, which strengthens the quality of life for young people and the community as a whole.

- To encourage and assist young people in the area to actively participate in the group activities.
- To enhance multi-cultural understanding and mutual respect
- To promote the views and interests of young people to official agencies and bodies with a view to enabling positive change
- To work with young people to equip them with the skills to be effective leaders in their communities and bring about positive community action

Our specific areas of work are:

- **Action Focused** – through recreational activities designed to bring together all communities in a fun and respectful way which brings about community cohesion and results in healthy living and enjoyment of life.
- **Continued Campaigning** – through representing and developing youth leadership and civic citizenship by engagement in policy formulation and making accessible the jargon that gets in the way of meaningful involvement.
- **Skills Development** – which means that the learning young people do is recognised and allows them to break out of economic disadvantage, achieve more by way of accessing education, employment, training or enterprise or a mixture tailored to individual learning needs to enable everybody to achieve their potential and unique individual talents.

2. THE CORE TEAM –WHO IS WHO

A very warm welcome to our project ☺ Very soon you'll be with us at Youth Action; many people are excited to meet and receive you!

The Youth Action team is as follows:

Amar Abbas – CEO & Project Lead

Riya Prioma – Project Assistant

Andrew Hackett – Site Supervisor

Rachel Clemence – Cleaner

Farzana Sidat – Director, Community Engagement

Ayaz Asghar – Director, Finance

Suhail Ainarkar – Director, Strategy

Volunteers will be supported and supervised by the Youth Action team at most times and everyone plays a special role in the different fields of work and volunteers' mentorship.

3. VOLUNTEER PROFILE AND CODE OF CONDUCT

Young people who have an interest and respect for the environment and aspire to healthy lifestyles. We would also like to see our volunteers to be active and take initiative in the community and within their tasks. They need to have a positive and pro-active attitude at Youth Action, be team workers, have an interest in intercultural community living, be reliable and responsible, flexible, have goodwill as well as openness to learning and participating in tasks and overall activities.

They need to like working both on their own and also in a team. They need to enjoy organising events, projects, hosting workshops, assisting in the delivery of training or helping support Youth Action's projects and events. This could involve creating a display for a Youth Action Open Day, creating a welcome party for a group or generally hosting various diverse types of groups. All volunteers will take part indoors in the household tasks, such as: cleaning, washing up, serving, and setting the gallery with many other responsibilities. They need to be considerate when interacting with people of different faiths and cultures and also different levels of physical and sensitive ability.

We do not require any specific skills but just ask for open minded and enthusiastic individuals who are keen to learn, discover and contribute to Youth Action's work! At Youth Action we seek to encourage an appreciation of the spirit of volunteering as an opportunity for self-development by putting one's self aside in the service of a greater good. It is about finding the joy in selfless service to others.

"You make a living by what you get. You make a life by what you give" - Winston Churchill

The volunteers are highly valued at Youth Action, we respect and are grateful for their dedication and joy at our organisation and we want to keep you motivated and happy. Becoming part of the Youth Action team, taking initiative, meeting everyday challenges, developing own personal projects, being involved in local community events and cultural outings and much more is all part of this EVS placement.

4. VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMME

Youth Action runs a wide variety of activities that, through their nature, demand very different work and timings. Be it the changing weather in the garden or the changing of many groups we support, there needs to be flexibility with our schedules.

Your normal week is from 9.00am to 5.00pm. However, in order to guarantee everybody's rest and personal time (staff and volunteers) we adopt a rotation system, further information will be explained during your induction.

At Youth Action, we make a point in assuring volunteers' time off, two days a week, usually Saturday and Sunday.

The volunteers will work maximum 35 hours per week.

All EVS volunteers are entitled to official 22 holidays over 11 month's placement. This is in addition to Statutory Bank Holidays in the UK. Please note that when our activities allow it Youth Action respects these days and we try recover these wherever possible.

The volunteers will be involved in all aspects of the daily routine at Youth Action, for example cleaning, gardening, hosting and the maintenance of the high standards of Youth Action and Gateway House. They will also have the opportunity to work on specific projects linked to their individual skills and interests depending on their own initiative/needs interlinked with the vision and activities of Youth Action and this particular EVS project.

This introductory information will be explained in detail to the EVS volunteers as part of their induction upon arrival.

Activities you will be involved in during your placement:

COMMUNITY EVENTS: Taking part in/helping to organise local community projects (Open days, festivals etc.) held at Youth Action, or outside of the centre (e.g. festive markets, theatre productions, etc.)

COMMUNITY PROJECTS: Taking part in/helping to organise local projects that Youth Action is involved in for example local community projects (ICT training, community cohesion training, youth group programmes etc) held at Youth Action, or outside of the centre

EVS PERSONAL PROJECTS: Writing up the EVS journal, creating EVS portfolio (photo journalism etc.), individual thematic study in relation to YOUTH ACTION activities; Project planning and development, implementation and management, monitoring and evaluation of individual projects in the frame of Youth Action Activities.

EVS COORDINATION: Receiving induction, training and mentoring related to the EVS work, living situation...etc Updating all EVS administrative issues, Official EVS On-Arrival and Mid-term. Reviewing and evaluating EVS progress and writing up YouthPass and EVS testimonials.

ENGLISH SUPPORT (*OPTIONAL*): Individual support for whoever needs it (1st three months) to accompany the Online Language Support (OLS), to meet the needs of each volunteer and accompany their project (writing up reports, testimonials, conversation etc.) THIS DOES NOT REPLACE A FULL LANGUAGE COURSE OR THE VOLUNTEER'S PERSONAL INITIATIVE TO LEARN ENGLISH.

SUMMARY

In summary, the main role and tasks of the EVS volunteers will be to support Youth Action staff members:

- House Keeping and Estate maintenance
- Hospitality of guests and groups
- Foster local actions in the wider community
- Participate and organise cultural and artistic events/outings at Youth Action
- Develop a sense of initiative through carrying out a personal project
- Keep an updated Youthpass to register all their learning outcomes and achievements
- Contribute as being part of the European Solidarity Corps
- Learn the English Language and new competences

At Youth Action we are interested also in the learning process of the volunteers. The EVS framework gives volunteers an excellent opportunity to have a balanced and healthy lifestyle. We want to honour volunteers' potential and needs and find the best solutions for a successful project for all parties involved.

The overall learning outcomes of this project include an increased understanding of diversity, communities, team building, hospitality skills, being pro-active and leadership skills, and project development. These will provide the volunteer with enhanced confidence and self-esteem, examples of their work which can be used as portfolio, for either further education applications or for employment interviews and both hard and soft life skills.

5. ACCOMODATION AGREEMENT (LIVING AT GATEWAY HOUSE)

The 8 EVS volunteers will be living together, all sharing a house called Gateway House. It is a lovely house, centrally located and accessible to many amenities with a grocery shop, cinema, post office, bowling alley, many eateries all within walking distance. It is also 5 minutes away from Unity House – Youth Action’s main centre (volunteer’s EVS placement).

The house has common living room, laundry room and kitchen, fully equipped with fridges, freezer, oven, microwave and a garden, Wi-Fi internet access will be provided at the Centre and at home.

You may be sharing a room or have an individual room. Washroom facilities are communal. The volunteers are responsible for cleaning and tidying rooms and shared areas on a **daily**, weekly and monthly basis.

Address:

Gateway House
51 James Street
Blackburn
Lancashire
England – UK
BB2 6AE

As Gateway House is very much about life in community, it is important for all its residents to be respectful of others at all levels. Thanks to this awareness, we are hoping to reach harmonious and enjoyable living conditions for all taking into consideration everybody's needs to a reasonable extent. Therefore, for the well-being and comfort of all, each resident of Gateway House is kindly asked to be pro-active and innovative about keeping high standards of living together and to respect the following requests and notifications:

In the common areas and in general:

- Please do not damage the property and contents or make any alterations or additions (**No posters on the walls** please; a cork board will be provided in every room for personal decorations)
- Please keep the interior of the property in a good, clean and tenable state.
- Please be aware that you will be asked to pay for any cleaning that may be required to reinstate the property to the same order that it was provided at the beginning of your stay. (Including for example the washing or cleaning of soiled carpets, curtains, beds, headboards, linen...)
- Please do not cause any nuisance to the neighbours. Most of all please **do not make any noise from 11pm to 8am**, for the respect of your neighbours as well as your house-mates.
- We give priority to non-smokers. However, if needed, we do have an **outdoor restricted smoking area** at your disposal. Please **do not leave cigarette butts on the floor**; they must be placed into the ashtrays. These must be **emptied every day** if you are a smoker.
- **All rubbish** (normal, bin, recycling bins and compost bins) **must be removed every morning** to the outside bins and no rubbish or bags should be left in the entrance of the house.
- All shoes and coats must be kept in the lobby's cupboards and not left out for others to fall over. Please **do not wear shoes in the house**. (You are welcome to bring your slippers!)
- Please keep corridors clean and free from obstacles, as they represent a risk for fire safety if blocked.
- Please do not adjust the heating controls or thermostats; a member of staff is responsible for regulating the whole house.
- Please **avoid leaving lights or TV on for no reason** in the corridors and common areas.
- Please **respect the weekly rhythm of collective cleaning ("Gateway Housing")** whereby once a week, on a working morning from 9:00am to 10:30 am, all residents commit to cleaning thoroughly the whole of the house, **as well as the monthly "Deep Clean"** whereby all volunteers spend one working afternoon doing deep cleaning and maintenance of the house.

In your bedrooms:

- You are responsible for **cleaning and vacuuming your room and bathroom** and for keeping it tidy.
- Please make sure your bedroom is left **tidy and clean every morning** before leaving the house. (Clothes put away, towels hung on the bathroom rails, bed tidy...)
- Please, **do not flush non organic products down the toilet**; bins are provided in all bathrooms.
- After showers, please **remove all hair from the plugholes** as it can lead to flooding. Do not put hair into the toilet. Please use the bins provided.
- Please make sure all **lights and electrical device are switched off** when you are not in your room.

In the kitchen:

- Please keep the kitchen **clean and washed up after all meals**. (Oven and hobs clean, dishes washed up and tidied away in the cupboards, floor swept, leftover food in containers in the fridge)
- Please make sure the kitchen is left **clean and tidy every morning** before leaving the house.
- Please make sure that **ovens and hobs are turned off** after cooking.

In the laundry:

- Please use the washing machines on **economical settings and only with full loads**.
- When dry, please **collect your clothes as soon as possible**, as many people need to use the laundry.
- Make sure you **do not keep laundry baskets in your bedrooms** as other people need them as well. Please bring them back to the laundry after use.

IMPORTANT NOTIFICATIONS:

- As Gateway House is part of the property of Youth Action, it is likely to be visited by guests and occasionally checked by various members of the Youth Action team. It is therefore crucial that all common areas and bedrooms are maintained to a high level of cleanliness and tidiness on a daily basis.
- There is zero-tolerance to any type of violence and anti-social behaviour towards each other and oneself. Youth Action is cultivating a culture of peace; learning how to live together and learning how to be are two core competences we aim for you to gain by participating in this EVS project. Any sort of incident that may occur at Gateway House or at Youth Action projects will be dealt with and depending on the circumstances of the event the Youth Action Team will need to reconsider your full participation in the EVS programme.
- Youth Action staff members are in charge of monitoring the energy at Gateway House. Please be aware that, should the energy bill (electricity, water, heating) go unreasonably high because of excessive use by the residents of Gateway House, the excess will be charged to the residents equally. It is possible to receive calls on the house's Wi-Fi for Skype, Whatsapp, Viber and many alternatives.
- You are not permitted to allow any visitor to sleep over at Gateway House, this home is for EVS volunteers only at Youth Action. Visitors are permitted to visit in the communal areas, but this may be reviewed if other EVS volunteers and/ or Youth Action staff members are not happy with the volume and timings of these visits.
- Please remember you are a member of this community and our beautiful home needs to be looked after. It only takes 10 minutes every morning to keep the house tidy and clean. You are co-responsible for ensuring that you are living in a sustainable environment which is kept lovely for everyone. The Youth Action Team is grateful for your respect and cooperation in upholding these requests which will create the living conditions necessary for everyone's well-being and look forward to welcoming you to your new English home!

Further requests will be collectively decided by the volunteers and facilitated by the EVS Managers at Youth Action on the first days of induction, where the requests of conduct will also be discussed and agreed. Visitors Policy is currently being reviewed as well as internet usage (for example it is prohibited to download in the UK however it is possible to stream videos). For any questions please do not hesitate to ask and clarify.

6. USEFUL INFORMATION AND PRACTICALITIES

If you think you've packed... THINK AGAIN! Check a list of things you will need to bring!

Please bear in mind the following points:

! SHARING ROOMS: You might be sharing room with another person(s) of the same sex in mixed nationalities. **A set of towels and bed linen will be provided** and it is your responsibility to keep them throughout your whole stay.

! STAYING IN THE UK: Please note that Youth Action will not provide any additional accommodation for your stay in the United Kingdom outside of your volunteering dates. For those arriving before and/or staying after the project activity, please let us know as soon as possible.

! WIFI AND COMPUTERS: Wireless internet is available at Youth Action and Gateway House. If you bring your own device/laptop please also bring your own electrical adapter to ensure you are compatible with UK plugs / sockets. UK plugs/sockets differ from continental/European – **please bring your own adapter, as Youth Action does not provide adapters.**

! HOUSE SHOES: Gateway House has carpeted areas where shoes are to be removed. We advise you to bring a comfortable pair of house shoes/slippers if you think you will not be comfortable in socks.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The English weather can be quite unpredictable, please bring some warm clothes with you, to be comfortable at work but also at home. Please bring an extra pair of trainers/boots with you for outdoor walking as the beautiful Lancashire countryside is closeby you will need them!

If you want to know more about the UK here are some useful links:

www.visitbritain.com

www.lonelyplanet.com/england

7. WHAT YOU NEED TO DO NOW

1. Please read the information below very, very, very, very, **very carefully!**
2. Please purchase the cheapest travel option from your city BUT contact us for route and price approval first.
3. Once you have booked your travel please send confirmation email and all tickets to **amar.abbas@youthaction.org.uk**
4. We will arrange your collection and transfer from Blackburn in the North-West of the UK.
5. Reimbursement will be calculated based on the tickets you submit on arrival day. Paper copies of all tickets, invoices, and boarding passes must therefore be ready for collection on arrival day. All on-arrival tickets will be collected and reimbursed within the first month of your stay. **Please note that we are able to buy tickets for you. If you need any assistance contact us!**

TRAVELLING TO THE UK, BLACKBURN AND YOUTH ACTION

Arrival: September 2018 (precise date to be confirmed) at Blackburn by 6pm

Departure: June 2019 (precise date to be confirmed) from Gateway House

UK

Please always consider the most environmentally friendly way (trains, coaches etc.) to reach Blackburn.

However, if you travel to the UK by air, please see the nearest airports listed below in order of distance and convenience of travel to Blackburn:

Non-London Airports

- Manchester Airport (Approx. 1h 58m to Blackburn by train)
- Liverpool Airport (Approx. 2h 49m to Blackburn by train)
- Birmingham International Airport (Approx. 3h to Blackburn by train)

London Airports

- Heathrow Airport (Approx. 5hrs to Blackburn by train)
- Luton Airport (Approx. 4 hrs 30m to Blackburn by train)
- Gatwick Airport (Approx. 4h 30m to Blackburn by train)
- Stansted Airport (Approx. 4h 30m to Blackburn by train)

All train information is available at www.nationalrail.co.uk

All coach information is available at <https://www.nationalexpress.com/en>

BLACKBURN

Youth Action is located in the town of Blackburn.

If you are flying to and / or from any London airport, please travel by coach (the cheapest and most convenient way). **The closest airport to us is Manchester International Airport.** From here you can catch a train to Blackburn.

National Express is the most reliable coach company in the UK and travels between all of the above airports and Blackburn. When departing from an airport, always book your journey to depart 90 – 120 minutes after your flight has landed in order to ensure you do not miss your connection because of delays, luggage etc.

The Youth Action team will arrange pickups from Blackburn Centre to the Gateway House on the arrival day and will also provide transport to the train/ coach station on the departure day.

You can buy the tickets beforehand via internet, but, please, bear in mind that the tickets have fixed times, that's why it might be better to buy the tickets on the spot at the airport or giving yourselves enough time to catch a bus after flight, usually an hour to manage.

Safe travels 😊

9. REIMBURSEMENT OF TRAVEL COSTS

Youth Action reimburses eligible travel costs 100% of the overall expenses (but no higher than the Erasmus+ travel distance band ceilings).

Furthermore, please take note of the following information...

! All travel costs will be converted and subsequently calculated & paid in Euros or Pounds (EUR or GBP) on the basis of the European Commission's website: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/index_en.cfm

! Reimbursement will be given only on the basis of existing tickets which have been presented to the Youth Action project team. Keep all original tickets related to travel costs.

! All flight tickets and invoices must be original and containing the name of passenger(s), dates of flights, inbound and outbound locations, airline, and price. All other tickets must contain the route, date and price of travel.

- If you booked your flight online with EasyJet, Wizzair, Ryanair, we will need the actual email confirming your booking (also containing name, route, price)
- Please remember to keep the original confirmation email of your online booking and itinerary printed with the date and time, the email that was sent to you by the travel company. *Also keep your boarding passes!*

! Travel costs that are incurred outside the project dates will only be reimbursed when booked with the approval of the Youth Action project team.

Both Sending and Receiving organisation are here to assist the volunteer with whatever questions might occur.

If you need Youth Action is willing to pay your flight, buses, trains, please contact amar.abbas@youthaction.org.uk

10. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is my Erasmus + travel distance band ceiling?

The Erasmus+ travel distance band ceiling is the maximum amount of money you can be reimbursed for when participating in an Erasmus+ projects. The distance is a one-way travel from the legal base of your sending organisation to the hosting organisation's venue. You can see the distance band ceiling for your country by looking at the 'Call for Participation', however the following table normally holds true for Youth Action Erasmus+ projects:

Travel distances	Amount
Between 100 and 499 KM	180 EUR per participant
Between 500 and 1999 KM:	275 EUR per participant
Between 2000 and 2999 KM:	360 EUR per participant
Between 3000 and 3999 KM:	530 EUR per participant

2. Isn't it easier to travel by train rather than coach?

No. When buying train tickets online, it is necessary to collect train tickets at the train station using the same card with which the tickets were bought (problematic if someone bought them for you). Furthermore, machines often 'swallow' tickets and don't give you them back (meaning you have no tickets to claim reimbursement with). Honestly, travelling with national express coaches is much easier and simpler 😊

3. Can I be reimbursed for any of the following?

- Oyster Card travel
- Petrol receipts (and associated costs such as tolls)
- Receipts without travel company logos
- Health insurance
- Travel insurance

No, unfortunately none of the above are considered eligible costs by our National Agency.

4. Can I stay in the UK before and / or after the project dates?

Yes, tickets to arrive in and / or depart from the UK are eligible for reimbursement as long as they are within 3 days of the project dates. However, please confirm with the Youth Action team before making any travel bookings to ensure you will still be reimbursed.

For any other queries, please contact us at any time!

Thank you!

CONTACT US

If you need help, have questions or need further information please contact:

amar.abbas@youthaction.org.uk (Email)

00441254695847 (Youth Action office)

