



Volunteer HANDBOOK

YOUR GUIDE TO
VOLUNTEERING
AT **BLGC**



hello

EMMA HUTCHINSON
CEO BLGC



THE VOLUNTEER IMPACT: BEING A BEACON OF HOPE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

First of all, a big welcome to Bolton Lads & Girls Club and thank you for becoming a volunteer. I myself was the beneficiary of the amazing BLGC volunteers when I attended the club as a young person over 30 years ago!

Volunteering to work with children and young people is a big decision and a significant commitment. I hope you enjoy your time with the BLGC and, like thousands before you, gain satisfaction from the impactful work you will be doing.

BLGC has operated in the centre of Bolton since 1889. Our mission is to help young people progress towards a brighter future. This is important work, and volunteers have a major role to play in our success.

I look forward to meeting you soon, but in the meantime, good luck with your work and training. Once again, thank you for becoming a volunteer. Your contribution is making a huge difference to BLGC and helping to change and improve the lives of the young people of Bolton.

Emma

A BIT ABOUT

US

+ BLGC IS A NATIONALLY RECOGNISED INNOVATIVE, DYNAMIC AND PROGRESSIVE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHARITY BASED IN BOLTON.

1889 – a time of great industrial and social change. There was nowhere decent and affordable for the young people to hang out after a hard day at the mill. Five elders – church leaders and industrialists – came to the rescue, buying an old warehouse in Bark Street and opening a hostel where the young workers could wash, eat and sleep safely. Bolton Lads & Girls Club (BLGC) was born.

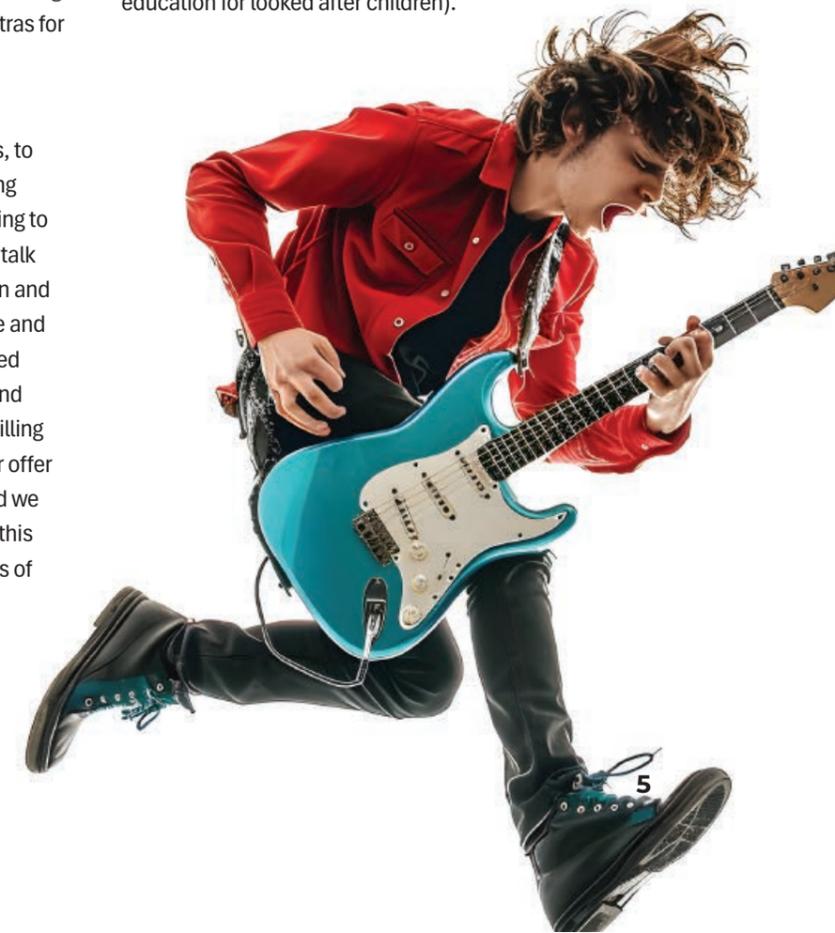
The mills are long gone, but BLGC is still going strong welcoming over 4,000 young people through our doors every year.

Now we are one of the largest youth clubs in the UK and at our out-of-this-world new home Infinity, we have something for everyone including sports, arts, mentoring and community outreach work as well as some extras for those who need it most.

Our aim is to enable children and young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to live happier, healthier and positive lives by providing somewhere to go that's safe and modern, something to do that is inspiring and engaging, and someone to talk to when they need it the most. We provide children and young people with a safe, active, welcoming space and have done so since 1889. Whilst much has changed over the years, our mission to empower children and young people, to help them to live happy, safe, fulfilling lives continues to drive us forward. In doing so, our offer has been growing rapidly over the last 10 years and we have hugely exciting, ambitious plans to continue this growth based on the changing and emerging needs of the children and young people of Bolton.

We work in local and national partnerships and are very much an integral part of the fabric of the Metropolitan Borough of Bolton, with our roots planted firmly in the community. We would consider ourselves to be an anchor institution within the town.

Our core operating model has been the blueprint for the national youth charity, OnSide, now rolling out 'Youth Zones' across England and we are a member of the OnSide Network, working as a strategic partner. We work in close partnership with The University of Bolton Group with a shared goal of providing opportunities for young people in Bolton (with whom we have been involved in a ground-breaking project of pathways into further education for looked after children).



DRIVEN

WE ARE FOCUSED, WE
DON'T GIVE UP AND WE
DO WHATEVER IT TAKES

CARING

GENUINE PEOPLE MAKE
THE DIFFERENCE, YOU
CAN'T PAY PEOPLE TO
CARE

EXCELLENCE

WE AIM TO DELIVER THE HIGHEST
STANDARDS OF SERVICE AND CONTINUOUSLY
IMPROVE THROUGH ROBUST QUALITY
ASSURANCE AND INNOVATION

#WALUERS

EMPOWERING

WE ENABLE PEOPLE TO BE THE BEST THEY
CAN BE AND GO ABOVE AND BEYOND
CONVENTIONAL LIMITS

FUN

IF YOU ENJOY WHAT YOU
DO, YOU DO IT BETTER!
WORK IS SERIOUS AND
WE DO IT WITH A SMILE
ON OUR FACE



WATCH ME



TARGETED Volunteer SERVICES



WE OFFER A RANGE OF SERVICES TO FAMILIES AND YOUNG PEOPLE THAT FOCUS ON DELIVERING THE RIGHT SUPPORT AT THE RIGHT TIME

The Targeted Youth Services at BLGC provide specialised support for young people facing various challenges, including those experiencing mental health issues, or involved in anti-social behaviour. These services aim to offer tailored interventions and one-on-one support to help young people overcome difficulties. The programmes include mentoring, young carers support, independent visitor service for looked after children and bereavement support.

The Targeted Youth Service is crucial for young people's mental health as it offers essential support during critical stages of their lives. By providing a safe space and professional guidance, the service helps young people navigate their emotions, build coping strategies, and develop a positive self-image.



Early intervention through these targeted services can prevent the escalation of mental health issues, reduce the risk of long-term psychological problems, and promote overall mental well-being.

At BLGC, mental health and wellbeing are top priorities. We're witnessing a growing number of young people struggling with their mental health. Through our dedicated services, we support children and young people before they reach a critical state.

In the past year, we've seen a 20% increase in children as young as 8 self-harming, with over 80% of our referrals related to self-harm. As the demand for our services continues to rise, we need your help to maintain and expand the support we offer.

Your support is crucial in helping us provide these essential services. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of young people.



FIND OUT MORE





PLAY ALWAYS SPORT

WIN

OUR UNIVERSAL PLAY, YOUTH AND SPORTS OFFER



OUR UNIVERSAL YOUTH AND PLAY SERVICE IS OUR CORE OFFER FOR ALL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

Our Universal Youth and Play Service is our core offer for all children and young people. It is open access and delivered through one of our centres or a detached setting (Outreach). Infinity is open 5 days a week, year round, providing a vast array of opportunities to improve the lives and opportunities of our 4,000 active members. We currently run three clubs: Juniors for ages 8-13, Seniors for ages 13-18 and CONNECT a special club for those with a diagnosed SEND

Our sports facility in Darcy Lever has an adult sized 3G pitch and one grass pitch. This serves over 30 boy and girl football teams with over 800 players a week.

Relationships are what we are all about - these we build with young people on an entirely voluntary basis as it is their choice to work with our youth team when and how they choose. Through music, media, dance,

the arts and issue-based youth work, we allow young people to explore themselves, their community, and to discover opportunities, improve their wellbeing and build aspirations for the future.

Through play in our junior and holiday clubs, we empower children to develop interpersonal and social skills through social mixing improving their overall wellbeing in a safe environment with trusted adults.





OUR REQUIRED
BUDGET FUNDING
IS **£3 MILLION.**

HOW

ARE WE FUNDED?,

We have, and need, a diverse income funding stream to ensure sustainability. We have invaluable philanthropic support from around 170 local businesses and individuals through our patronage programme. Without such support we simply could not sustain our core offer facility for children and young people. We organise a range of regular fundraising events including an annual Beer Festival, Golf event and community days. We have services commissioned through a range of contracts and receive funds from grants and trusts, such as

Children in Need and the Lottery.

We generate some funds through income generation initiatives and are the beneficiary of fundraising events that others run to raise funds for us.

It is the intention of the board to seek sustainable income generation from commercial 'not for profit' activities which align with our vision.

Our required annual budget funding is £3 million.



+ HERE TO
SUPPORT
YOU

welcome

WE'RE SO GLAD YOU'RE HERE!

You are joining a team of over 100 incredible volunteers who currently make up Team BLGC. From volunteer football coaches, youth workers, mentors, independent visitors, drivers and sports development, all our volunteers come from a wide range of backgrounds, supporting BLGC in so many different ways.

One thing all our volunteers have in common is the difference they make to the lives of young people across Bolton. We literally could not provide the invaluable services that we offer our young people without you, our amazing volunteers.

There are so many ways that you can get involved:

- Sports from Badminton, rock climbing, football, tennis, hockey, cricket, and many more.
- Arts and Crafts, play work and games
- Special projects such as working with refugees or employability skills
- Sports coaches
- Independent Visitors & Mentoring
- Fundraising
- Young Carers Activity Volunteers

We want you to have a fun and rewarding volunteering experience with us, so let us know what your interests are and we will support you in getting involved in that area!

Please note that some volunteer roles require additional training, commitment, or experience.



YOU ARE JOINING A TEAM OF INCREDIBLE VOLUNTEERS WHO CURRENTLY MAKE UP TEAM BLGC

Training

You should by now have completed your training (this varies per role). These training sessions have been designed to help you feel prepared for the situations you may encounter whilst volunteering.

However, working with young people, whilst fun and rewarding, can also be unpredictable and challenging. There will always be support for you whether that is a Session Lead in the Youth Club, Mentor/ IV Coordinator, Football Development Officer, or the Volunteering Team.

If you feel you would benefit from some additional training, please speak to either your Line Manager or the Volunteering Team and we will work with you to ensure you have the best volunteering experience possible.

Please note that if you are volunteering as part of a student placement, training does not count towards your required placement hours.

Ongoing Support

We will continue to support you through regular catch ups with your Line Manager, the frequency of which and channel will vary depending on your role. This will be explained to you during your induction.

If you have any queries or concerns in-between or after this time, please ensure you contact either your Line Manager or the Volunteering Team

Volunteer Facebook Group

You will be invited to join our private Facebook group. This group is for you to share ideas, it may be a place you have recently visited with a young person or an activity you have carried out in the youth club.

Volunteer Socials

We hold regular Volunteer drop-ins and socials at the Club. This provides you an opportunity to get together, share your experiences and have your voice heard. Let us know what we are doing well, what we need to improve and help shape the future of BLGC volunteering!

Leaving BLGC

For lots of different reasons volunteers may have to stop volunteering at some point, life can be very hectic and we just appreciate the time you have given us.

What we do ask is that once you have reached that decision, please let us know. We would like to have the opportunity to say goodbye to you and thank you for all the time you have given BLGC, as well as hear your valuable feedback.

We also ask that you return both your BLGC uniform and ID badge, this is much appreciated as we do not have a large supply of uniform, and to comply with our safeguarding procedures.

References

Volunteering is a great way to gain experience in an area of work you are interested in having a career in in the future. As a standard policy across all BLGC volunteers, we will not be able to provide references for volunteers who were with us for less than 3 months as we feel like this won't have given us enough time to get to know you well enough to provide a quality reference.

For volunteers who stayed with us for between 3 months and year, we can provide start and end dates, and overall voluntary hours. For volunteers who have committed to over a year, we are happy to provide a full character reference



A BIT ABOUT PRACTICALITIES AND KEEPING EVERYONE SAFE

FAQ

Do I need to sign in and out?

It is really important that any Volunteers sign in and out when at Spa Road, Westthoughton and Hacken Lane. The signing in sheets will be located at reception. This is for safeguarding purposes and to log all volunteering hours.

If you are volunteering as part of a placement, please note we can only sign off recorded hours.

What should I wear?

This depends on your role. For Youth Club Volunteers, you will be given a BLGC t-shirt to wear in the Club on your induction. You need to wear your t-shirt at all times when volunteering. Football volunteers will receive a t-shirt and a hoody as you will be primarily outside.

Please do not wear these outside the club as they are intended to be worn only when you are volunteering.

Please also ensure you wear old clothing and footwear as many of our activities for young people may involve some wear and tear. It is also advisable to remove any expensive jewellery and watches. Mentors and IV's may wear their own clothes, and we recommend dressing appropriately for the activity at the time.

Please ensure you return any t-shirts or hoodies when you leave volunteering with BLGC.

What if I can't volunteer at my agreed time?

Please phone or email your Line Manger or the Volunteering Team and let them know. Please do let us know so we are not worried about you and can change any plans accordingly.

What if any of my contact details change?

If you move house, change your mobile number/email or have any other change in circumstances that you think we should know about please contact us on 01204 540 119 or email volunteering@blgc.co.uk so we can update our records in case we need to get in touch with you.



I have a complaint, who do I talk to?

For complaints about the service you have received from us please try and resolve informally with your contact person/line manager in the first instance.

If this does not resolve the issue to your satisfaction or the complaint is about them, then please make a formal written complaint to the Service

You will then receive a formal response within line with the guidance given on timescales as outlined in our complaints policy.

Who are the First Aiders?

If you are volunteering in the main club or any of our satellite clubs, there will always be a first aider on session. These people will be identified by their green lanyards, and on the Whiteboard by the entrance.

What do I do if the fire alarm goes off?

If you are in any of our youth settings, you will be shown where the fire exit doors are during your induction. It is important you familiarise yourself with the Fire Procedure. In the event of a fire drill or fire calmly remove yourself from the building using the nearest fire exit.



AMAZING!

you ARE

Recognition of Volunteers

Throughout the year we nominate volunteers to our partners who provide awards and recognition.

100 hours

Those dedicated volunteers who reach 100 hours of volunteering will receive a certificate and a place on our notice board. What an achievement!

Volunteer Week

Running from 1st –7th June every year, this national week gives us the opportunity to put on a special series of events and recognition to you. Look out for what we have planned this year!

Annual Volunteers Party

Our annual volunteers party is our opportunity to celebrate you, our amazing volunteers, and thank you for all your time and effort over the year. The date of this changes each year but is usually in December.

Look out for more information in the Monthly Volunteer Updates!

This handbook is supported by the following policies:

- BLGC Safeguarding Policy
- BLGC Volunteer Expenses Policy
- BLGC Volunteering Policy.

These policies remain current and are updated on a regular basis. They will be made available to all volunteers.

THANK *you*

BLGC

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