

Oldham Inspiring Youth Volunteer Handbook

1. Welcome

Welcome to **Oldham Inspiring Youth**! We're thrilled to have you on board. Whether you're volunteering, mentoring, or supporting behind the scenes, your contribution helps us create inclusive, empowering spaces for young people across Oldham.

2. About Us

Oldham Inspiring Youth is a community-led organisation dedicated to creating opportunities for young people, especially those facing barriers due to disability, neurodiversity, or socioeconomic challenges. We work in partnership with schools, families, and local services to deliver accessible, engaging programs that build confidence, skills, and community spirit.

We believe that every young person deserves a safe space to grow, express themselves, and be heard — and we're here to make that happen.

3. Our Mission

Our mission is to **empower young people through inclusive programs that promote personal growth, community connection, and lifelong opportunity**. We do this by:

- Delivering accessible sports, arts, and educational activities
- Supporting schools with career education and mentoring
- Creating safe, welcoming environments for all abilities
- Building bridges between families, professionals, and communities
- Advocating for equity, representation, and youth voice

We're not just running sessions — we're building futures.

4. Our Values

- **Inclusivity** – Everyone is welcome.
- **Empowerment** – We help young people find their voice.
- **Safety** – We prioritise wellbeing in everything we do.
- **Community** – We build strong, supportive networks.
- **Respect** – We treat everyone with dignity and care.

5. What We Do

- Sports sessions for all abilities
- Career education and mentoring
- Community events and outreach
- Support for schools and families
- Inclusive programs for neurodiverse and disabled youth

6. Volunteering With Us

Volunteers are the heartbeat of our work. Whether you're helping at events, mentoring young people, or supporting behind the scenes, your time and energy make a real difference.

Volunteer Roles

Role	Description	Skills/Support Provided
Session Support Volunteer	Help run sports, arts, or educational sessions. Assist with setup, supervision, and engagement.	No experience needed. Training provided. Great for those who enjoy working with young people.
Mentor	Provide guidance and encouragement to young people. Support goal-setting, confidence-building, and personal development.	Empathy, listening skills. Safeguarding and mentoring training included.
Events Volunteer	Help plan and run community events. Roles may include registration, logistics, refreshments, or activity stations.	Organisational skills helpful. Teamwork and flexibility valued.
Admin & Communications Volunteer	Support with emails, social media, newsletters, or data entry. Help keep things running smoothly behind the scenes.	Basic IT skills useful. Training and templates provided.
Accessibility Champion	Help ensure sessions and materials are inclusive. Support neurodiverse participants or those with specific needs.	Empathy and adaptability. Training on inclusive practices available.
Fundraising & Outreach Volunteer	Assist with fundraising campaigns, grant applications, or community outreach. Help us grow our impact.	Writing, networking, or creative ideas welcome. Guidance provided.



Volunteer Journey: From Sign-Up to Impact

Step	What Happens	Your Role
1. Expression of Interest	You fill out a short form or email us to say you're interested.	Share your interests and availability.
2. Welcome & Intro Chat	We arrange a friendly call or meeting to get to know you.	Ask questions, tell us what excites you.
3. Role Matching	We suggest roles that suit your skills and goals.	Choose what feels right — it's flexible.
4. DBS & Safeguarding	If needed, we help you apply for a DBS check and complete safeguarding training.	We guide you through it step by step.
5. Induction & Shadowing	You attend an induction and shadow a session or team member.	Learn the ropes and meet the team.
6. Active Volunteering	You start your role with ongoing support and check-ins.	Make a difference, share feedback, grow with us.

7. Training & Support

We want every volunteer to feel confident, informed, and valued. That's why we offer a structured support system from day one.



Induction

Before you begin, you'll receive a warm welcome and a clear overview of:

- Our mission, values, and approach
- Your role and responsibilities
- Key policies and safeguarding procedures
- Communication channels and who to contact

You'll also have the chance to ask questions and share any access needs or preferences.



Core Training

All volunteers receive essential training tailored to their role. This may include:

- **Safeguarding and child protection**
- **Inclusive communication and accessibility**
- **Health and safety awareness**
- **Working with neurodiverse and disabled young people**
- **Mentoring and youth engagement techniques**

Training is delivered through a mix of online modules, in-person sessions, and shadowing opportunities.

Ongoing Support


We don't just train you once and leave you to it. You'll have:

- A named contact for regular check-ins
- Access to resources and guidance documents
- Opportunities to shadow experienced team members
- A safe space to raise concerns or ask for help
- Invitations to team meetings, socials, and development sessions

Personal Development

We're here to help you grow. Whether you want to build confidence, gain new skills, or explore a career in youth work, we'll support you with:

- Certificates of participation or training
- References for job or education applications
- Opportunities to lead projects or co-design sessions
- Feedback and reflection sessions to help you develop

 ***We believe volunteering should be a two-way street — you give your time, and we invest in your growth.***

8. Safeguarding Contacts

We take safeguarding seriously and ensure all staff and volunteers are trained and supported.

Reporting Incidents or Concerns

If something goes wrong during a session — whether it's an injury, a behaviour issue, or something that doesn't feel right — please speak up.





Here's what to do:

- Let the session lead or safeguarding contact know as soon as possible.
- If it's urgent or serious, contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead directly.
- You don't need to have all the details — just raise the concern and we'll take it from there.

We'll support you through the process and make sure everyone stays safe.

 **Reporting isn't about blame — it's about care, protection, and doing the right thing.**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for responding to safeguarding concerns, supporting volunteers, and ensuring our policies are followed.

- **Shafiqur Rahman** – Designated Safeguarding Lead  oldhaminspiringyouth@gmail.com
 07784 802186
- **Nazma Begum** – Trustee  oldhaminspiringyouth1@gmail.com  07845 112233

9. Policies & Procedures

We follow a clear set of policies to ensure our work is safe, inclusive, and effective. Here's a summary of the key ones — along with why they matter:

Safeguarding Policy

We are committed to protecting children, young people, and vulnerable adults. All staff and volunteers receive safeguarding training and know how to report concerns. We follow national guidance and work closely with local safeguarding boards.

✓ *Why it matters:* It ensures everyone feels safe, respected, and supported. It also protects you as a volunteer by giving you clear guidance and boundaries.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

We celebrate diversity and actively work to remove barriers to participation. Our programs are designed to be inclusive of all backgrounds, abilities, and identities.

✓ *Why it matters:* Everyone deserves equal access to opportunities. This policy helps us challenge discrimination and create spaces where people feel seen and valued.

Health & Safety Policy

We conduct regular risk assessments and ensure all activities are run in safe environments. First aid support is available at all sessions, and emergency procedures are clearly communicated.

✓ *Why it matters:* It protects everyone involved — participants, volunteers, and staff — and ensures we're prepared for unexpected situations.


Data Protection & Confidentiality Policy


We handle personal information with care and in line with GDPR. All data is stored securely and only used for the purposes agreed upon.

✓ *Why it matters:* Trust is built on transparency and respect for privacy. This policy protects sensitive information and ensures we meet legal standards.

DBS Checks & Safer Recruitment

All staff and volunteers working directly with young people must complete a **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)** check.

 **Why do we need DBS checks?** DBS checks help us ensure that individuals working with young people have no history of behaviour that could put others at risk. It's a standard safeguarding measure used across schools, charities, and youth organisations.

 **Why you shouldn't worry about it:** A DBS check is not a test or judgment — it's simply a background check. Many people have one as part of their job or volunteering role. If you've never

had one before, we'll guide you through the process. It's confidential, free for volunteers, and doesn't affect your credit score or employment status.

✅ *What we do:* We support you through the application, explain what it means, and ensure you feel comfortable every step of the way.

10. Code of Conduct

We want everyone to feel safe, respected, and supported — and that starts with how we treat each other.

You'll be introduced to our **full Code of Conduct** during your induction, and you'll be asked to sign it to confirm you understand and agree to it. Don't worry — it's not scary or full of legal jargon! It's simply a clear guide to help you know what's expected and how we keep our spaces safe and inclusive.

Here are the core principles — taken directly from our **Staff & Volunteer Policy**:

Oldham Inspiring Youth

Staff & Volunteer Policy – Code of Conduct Applies To: All paid staff and volunteers **Purpose:** To ensure all individuals working with Oldham Inspiring Youth uphold the highest standards of professionalism, safety, and respect.

Safeguarding

- All staff must complete safeguarding training and adhere to the organisation's Safeguarding Policy
- Any concerns about a child's welfare must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

Conduct & Behaviour

- Treat all children, families, and colleagues with respect and dignity
- Maintain appropriate boundaries with children and young people
- Avoid any behaviour that could be misinterpreted or cause harm

Professionalism


- Arrive on time and prepared for sessions
- Wear appropriate clothing (e.g., branded T-shirt, sportswear)
- Use inclusive language and encourage participation from all backgrounds


Social Media & Communication

- Do not share personal contact details with children
- Avoid posting identifiable images of children without written parental consent
- Represent the organisation positively in all public communications

Confidentiality

- Respect the privacy of children and families
- Do not share sensitive information outside the organisation unless required by law or safeguarding protocols

 *This policy is here to protect you, the young people we work with, and the integrity of our organisation. If anything feels unclear, we'll talk it through together.*


 *You'll receive a copy of this Code of Conduct at induction and sign to confirm your understanding. It's a shared commitment to doing things right.*

Social Media & Online Communication

We love celebrating our work — but protecting young people's privacy comes first.

Here's what you need to know:

- Please don't post photos, names, or stories of children or young people on social media unless you have written parental consent and approval from the team.
- Avoid sharing personal contact details with young people (e.g. phone numbers, social media handles).
- You're welcome to like, share, or comment on our official posts — just keep it respectful and aligned with our values.
- If you're unsure whether something is okay to post or share, ask us first.

 We want to build a positive online presence — and that starts with trust and respect.


11. Communication

We use **email**, **WhatsApp**, and occasional **phone calls** to stay in touch. You'll be added to relevant groups or mailing lists depending on your role.

We'll send updates about:

- Session times and locations
- Training opportunities
- Events and socials
- Any changes or urgent notices

Please check messages regularly and let us know if your contact details change. If you prefer a particular method of communication (e.g. voice notes, large text, etc.), just let us know — we'll adapt to your needs.

 *We aim to keep communication clear, respectful, and accessible for everyone.*


12. Confidentiality

As a volunteer, you may hear or see personal information about young people, families, or other team members. It's important to keep this information private.

That means:

- Don't share names, stories, or details outside the organisation
- Don't post photos or information on social media without permission
- If you're unsure whether something is confidential — ask!

We'll cover this in more detail during induction, and you'll have ongoing support if anything feels unclear.

 *Confidentiality builds trust — and trust builds safe spaces.*


13. Expenses

We never want money to be a barrier to volunteering. If you travel to sessions or events, or incur agreed costs (like printing or supplies), you may be eligible for reimbursement.

Here's how it works:

- Keep your receipts or travel records
- Speak to your coordinator before spending on anything
- Submit your expenses using our simple form (we'll show you how)

We aim to process reimbursements promptly and fairly.

 *If you're unsure whether something is covered, just ask — we're happy to help.*

14. Feedback & Ideas


We believe in co-creation. Your insights, lived experiences, and creative ideas help shape our work. Whether it's a suggestion for a new activity, a way to improve accessibility, or feedback on how we communicate — we want to hear it.


You can share feedback:

- In person during sessions or meetings
- Via email or WhatsApp
- Through anonymous forms (available on request)
- During regular volunteer check-ins
- At team reflection sessions or socials

We especially welcome:

- Ideas for new projects or partnerships
- Suggestions to make sessions more inclusive
- Feedback on training or induction
- Creative ways to engage young people

 *We don't just listen — we act. Many of our best ideas have come from volunteers like you.*

 *Want to lead a new initiative or pilot a session idea? Let's talk — we love innovation.*

15. Stepping Away from Volunteering

Life changes — and we understand that. If you ever need to pause or stop volunteering, just let us know.





Here's what happens:

- We'll arrange a short, friendly chat to hear your feedback and say thank you.
- You'll receive any certificates or references you've earned.
- You're always welcome back if your circumstances change — we'll be here.

 Your time and energy matter, and we're grateful for every moment you've shared with us.

16. Contact & Support

If you have questions, concerns, or need support, please reach out:

- **Shafiqur Rahman** – Operations Manager
 oldhaminspiringyouth@gmail.com  07784 802186
- **Nazma Begum** – Trustee
 oldhaminspiringyouth1@gmail.com  07845 112233

Volunteer Agreement / Sign-Off

I confirm that I have read and understood the Oldham Inspiring Youth Volunteer Handbook and agree to follow the policies and expectations outlined.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Volunteer FAQ

Do I need experience to volunteer?

No! We welcome people from all backgrounds. We'll provide training and match you with roles that suit your strengths.

What if I'm nervous about working with young people?

That's totally normal. We'll support you with training, shadowing opportunities, and clear guidance.

Will volunteering affect my benefits or job search?

Volunteering is usually allowed while claiming benefits, as long as you're still actively seeking work. We can help you navigate this and provide documentation if needed.

What happens if I see something concerning?

Report it immediately to the Safeguarding Lead. You don't need proof — just a concern is enough. We'll take it from there.

Do I need a DBS check?

Yes, if you're working directly with young people. It's free for volunteers and we'll guide you through it.

Can I stop volunteering if my circumstances change?

Of course. Just let us know — we understand that life happens.

Can I volunteer with a friend or family member?

Yes! We love it when people volunteer together. Just let us know and we'll try to place you in the same sessions or roles.

What if I have access needs or a disability?

We're committed to accessibility. Let us know what you need — whether it's large print, quiet spaces, mobility support, or something else — and we'll work with you to make it happen.

Will I get a certificate or reference?

Yes! We're happy to provide certificates of participation, training records, or references for jobs, education, or other opportunities.

Can I suggest a new activity or lead a session?

Absolutely. We love innovation and welcome ideas from volunteers. If you've got a passion project or creative idea, let's explore it together.