

JULY 2026

Sufra



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN VOLUNTEERING FOR SUFRA



FIGHT
POVERTY
LOVE
COMMUNITY

WELCOME

"Hello and welcome to Sufra,



Firstly, thank you for offering your time to volunteer with us. As Director of Sufra, I'm always inspired and proud of our amazing volunteering teams. We couldn't offer guests our advice, gardening, community meals, shop, and food bank services without the support of our volunteers. Whichever role you choose, you'll be making a massive difference to people's lives.

We hope that you'll find volunteering a rewarding and enjoyable experience. We'll provide an induction, training, and support to set you up in the role, as well as a range of development opportunities.

We're in an exciting phase of growing our volunteering team and developing our programmes. Together we can work towards our aim, to build communities and fight poverty."

*Rajesh Makwana BEM
Executive Director*

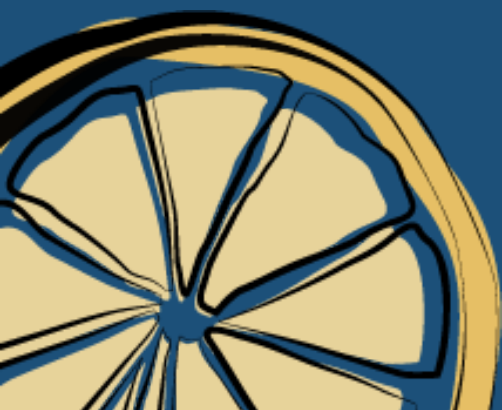


TABLE OF CONTENTS

01	Front Cover
02	Welcome
03	Contents
04	What We Do
05	Our Services
06	A Guest's Story (Mr. T)
07	A Volunteer's Story (Shahab)
08	Volunteer Agreement
09	Code of Conduct
11	What to Expect on Your First Shift
12	Being Supported as a Volunteer
13	Development Opportunities
14	Travel Expense Policy
15	Excess Food Process
17	Using the services as a guest
18	Health and Safety
19	Food Safety
20	Volunteer whilst receiving benefits
21	Feedback and Complaints
22	Safeguarding
23	Finishing a volunteer placement

WHAT WE DO

Sufra is a charity in North West London that prevents hunger, fights poverty, and builds community.

With the help of our volunteers and partners, we coordinate a network of food banks, kitchens, a community shop, and café. These act as a gateway for guests to access more holistic support – including welfare advice, asylum support and our award-winning community garden.

We aim to work with our guests to find solutions to their challenges together, whilst campaigning against the causes of hunger and poverty.

We couldn't have achieved 13 years of support and engagement without our wonderful volunteers, helping to serve, harvest, pack, cook, and grow our community.

Where to find us:

Foodbank

160 Pitfield Way, NW10 0PW

Garden

162 Pitfield Way, NW10 0PW

Community Wellbeing Service

New Horizons Centre,
1 Robson Avenue, NW10 3SG

2025–2026

Stats:

16,000

guests who received emergency food aid

25,000

nutritious meals served at Community Kitchens

1,032

school backpacks and winter coats distributed

408

guests supported through advice casework

200

guests who received a full Christmas Dinner on Christmas Day

OUR SERVICES

Advice



- Sufra NW London
- New Horizons

Our team of advisors work with each guest to create a personal support plan together, offering signposting, referrals, advice, and guidance on issues like benefits, employment and housing. We also support our local refugee and asylum seeker community.

Food Bank



- Sufra NW London
- Pakistan Community Centre (NW2 4PU)

On Tuesdays and Thursdays from our Sufra NW London Office and on Tuesdays from The Pakistan Community Centre, guests can access registered food parcels and emergency parcels with fresh and non-perishable food.

Community Garden



**St. Raphael's
Edible Garden**

Our award-winning, sustainable garden was set up by Sufra and local residents. We run learning programmes for local residents and children, and in the spring, summer, and autumn we give away our organic produce on a pay as you feel basis.

Community Wellbeing Service



New Horizons

On Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays guests can access our community shop, advice services, wellbeing activities and sit-down community lunch and dinner, prepared by our professional chef with surplus ingredients.

A GUEST'S STORY

pg 6.



MR T



Mr T has accessed the Sufra Food Bank since 2019, on and off. With a precarious work contract and a new baby in the family, he came back to Sufra for support at the end of 2022. While working with our Advice Team on income maximisation, he learnt of the Ark Elvin Community Kitchen. His daughter is a student at the school, and he lives close by.



From the first sessions in 2023, he attended the service each week with his entire family, often bringing extended family members who were staying with him, and his daughter signed up to volunteer in the kitchen, coming straight down from her final lesson.

The kitchen provides a lifeline for him and his family – saving money and time, whilst providing a warm space where he can spend quality time with those he cares about in a welcoming, community setting.



A VOLUNTEER'S STORY pg 7.



SHAHAB



"I was lucky to have found Sufra through a Google search because I lived in Brent. I found that Sufra inspired me. I always had an interest in volunteering, having been a data input volunteer for another charity for a year, but wanted something more to help my community. I met the good-hearted Programmes Manager at the time, who showed me the volunteering opportunities at Sufra. She tested my volunteering skills to see how I could help out and what accommodations I might need, as I was born deaf.



I have been volunteering at Sufra since April 2018, mainly in Sufra's storage room. I support with food bank stock replenishing, food parcel packing, and with our weekly Community Kitchens - but also with data inputting, and occasional international sign language translation support with one of our deaf volunteers and guests.

I think it is important to encourage older people to volunteer at a charity as it helps to prevent loneliness, fulfils your need for communication and allows you to find emotional support within a community. By volunteering at Sufra, I play an important role for the community, which makes me feel like an equal. To me, an ideal version of community would be wealthy people and poor people sharing meals and spaces and blessings."

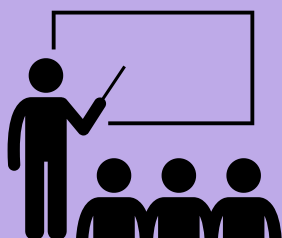
VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

Volunteers are an important and valued part of Sufra NW London. We hope that you enjoy volunteering with us and feel a part of our community. This agreement tells you what you can expect from us, and what we ask from you in return.

If you are ever unclear about these expectations, then please seek clarification from a staff member at the earliest opportunity. If you have a specific concern about the behaviour of another volunteer, guest, or member of staff, then please raise that with a member of our team as soon as possible.

We value our volunteers and could not deliver the work that we do without you. We will provide you with:

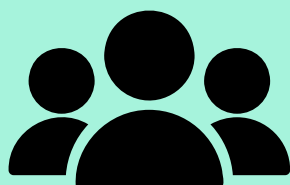
A full induction and training



Insurance to cover you for your volunteer duties



A staff member who will be your key contact for any feedback, questions, and concerns



Access to our complaints procedure



A safe workplace environment



Respect for your privacy, keeping your information confidential



Access to travel expenses for volunteering (Please refer to the travel expense policy).



Volunteer Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to outline the standards that volunteers are expected to maintain during volunteering with Sufra NW London. It ensures volunteers understand their responsibilities and the expectations placed upon them.

As a volunteer, you represent Sufra NW London. Your behaviour, conduct and communication should reflect the organisation's values and always uphold its reputation.

All volunteers should abide by the following:

Conduct and values

- Work in a way which represents Sufra's values, including treating all guests with dignity and respect.
- Always use respectful and inclusive language.
- Treat everyone fairly, regardless of age, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, religion or background.
- Do not engage in any form of harassment or discrimination, including verbal, physical, sexual or online behaviour.
- Raise any concerns about harassment promptly with a member of staff.

Professional Responsibility

- Follow reasonable instructions from staff and work within agreed role boundaries.
- Do not act outside the scope of your role or represent Sufra without authorisation.
- Always abide by the law.
- Raise any concerns about your role, tasks or expectations with a member of staff.

Safeguarding Conduct

- Take all safeguarding concerns seriously and report them immediately.
- Do not attempt to manage safeguarding matters independently.
- If a concern cannot be raised with a service lead, escalate it to another member of staff or safeguarding lead immediately.

Health and Safety

- Do not act in a way that puts your own health and safety, or that of others, at risk.
- Report any health and safety concerns promptly to a member of staff.

Volunteer Code of Conduct - Continued

Professional Boundaries

- Always maintain appropriate boundaries with guests, including outside volunteering hours.
- Do not provide advice, support or representation outside official Sufra settings.
- Do not share personal contact details with guests unless authorised.
- Volunteers must not accept or give money, gifts or favours to guests.

Use of Property and Resources

- Use Sufra property, donations and resources responsibly.
- Do not remove stock, food or equipment without permission.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

- Only access, use or share personal data for legitimate reasons.
- Ensure all personal and sensitive data accessed at Sufra remains strictly confidential.

Reputation and public conduct

- Do not speak publicly on behalf of Sufra unless authorised. Avoid online commentary or disputes that reference Sufra or could affect its reputation, and do not share photos or stories of guests, staff or other volunteers without appropriate consent.

Volunteering Expectations

- Complete Core Volunteer Training within three months of starting your role.
- Be punctual and inform the service lead if you cannot attend.
- Do not volunteer under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Cooperation

- Read and abide by Sufra's policies at all times, including data protection, safeguarding and health and safety.
- Follow WhatsApp guidelines when using volunteer communication channels.
- Cooperate fully with any review or investigation into concerns about conduct.

By volunteering with Sufra, you agree to follow this Code of Conduct and represent the organisation in a responsible way, helping maintain a safe and respectful environment for everyone. Failure to adhere to the Code of Conduct may result in a formal warning or the termination of your volunteer role.

WHAT TO EXPECT ON YOUR FIRST SHIFT

pg 11.

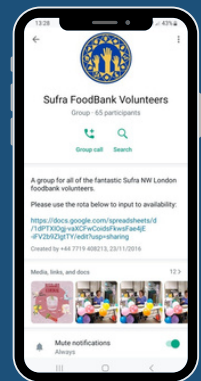
When you arrive for your first shift, the project leader will greet you and introduce you to other staff members and volunteers and show you where you'll be working and your main tasks. We'll try and give you a range of tasks on the day so you have a full experience of what volunteering with us will look like.



For most of our roles you won't need prior training or knowledge, but please read through anything we send you before your first shift including this handbook. Many of our roles are manual so please wear suitable clothing, sturdy shoes, and things that you don't mind getting dirty, especially for our gardening role where you may need a waterproof jacket.



If the role feels right after your trial shift, then we'll invite you to join our WhatsApp group where you can sign up to future shifts, be kept up to date with relevant information and inform us if you cannot make your shift. Please follow our WhatsApp Guidelines at all times, including not contacting other individuals using their information in the WhatsApp group without their permission and ensuring that all messages remain relevant to volunteering.



Volunteer wellbeing is important to us, and we'll encourage you to take breaks throughout the day and change tasks if that suits you. Help yourself to tea and coffee, and lunch if available (*see our expenses and excess food process below*). If you do want to take a break or leave the premises, or are finishing your volunteering shift, then please let a member of staff know as we need to be aware of where you are for health and safety reasons.



BEING SUPPORTED AS A VOLUNTEER

We want every volunteer to feel supported throughout their time with us. We will aim to understand and work around your needs, creating an inclusive environment that supports your wellbeing. On our application form, initial chat, and induction there is a space to let us understand any support needs that you have and what you are hoping to get out of the role. We'll work with you to see how we can facilitate any support needs and areas you want to develop.



HEALTH & WELLBEING

Volunteers can access professional support and guidance at any time. Our Employee Assistance Programme provided by Health Assured provides support via a 24/7 Helpline. Your call will be handled by an experienced therapist or advisor, who will offer support in a friendly, non-judgmental manner.

Additionally, there are a number of wellbeing resources available from Health Assured to support good mental health. If you require access to this free support service, please contact admin@sufnanwondon.org.uk and we will provide you with the contact details for Health Assured. This service is free and confidential.

SUPPORT FROM STAFF

During your induction we'll discuss health, safety, and wellbeing. We'll also organise regular check-ins with your key contact throughout the year so you can feel supported. This time can also be used to give and receive feedback between yourself and your key contact.

And if there's something we can do to make you feel supported at any time during your volunteering then please discuss this with your key contact or any other member of staff.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

pg. 13



As well as our inductions and core training, from time to time we also offer specific training that might help develop your skills, which we'll post on WhatsApp groups. This has included first aid, intermediate safeguarding, cooking courses, campaigning, and communication. If there's a specific area you'd like to develop in or if you're trying to gain experience towards a job, then please let your project leader know and we'll try and support you with opportunities to gain knowledge and experience to help you.

If you're looking to try a different role, then please talk to the Volunteer Officer. There's lots of opportunities and roles available at Sufra and we can look to see what might interest you.

TRAVEL EXPENSES

Sufra would like to ensure that no volunteer is out of pocket for volunteering. Therefore, we will reimburse reasonable travel costs for agreed shifts following the below process.

Our policy for travel expenses

Sufra will provide travel expenses up to a maximum of £10. Where the travel expense per shift exceeds £3.50, there will be a limit on the number of shifts which can be reimbursed per week as follows:

£3.51-£7 = maximum of 2 shifts per week covered.

£7.01-£10 = maximum of 1 shift per week covered

Calculating your journey

During your induction shift yourself and your service lead will look at your journey together using Google Maps and identify the cheapest journey to be reimbursed.

Where the cheapest journey is not suitable due to factors such as safety, excessive travel time or impracticality, a more suitable alternative will be reimbursed.

Changes to your journey

If your journey changes (i.e., you change address), please inform a staff member

LUNCH AND DINNER

pg. 15



Although we don't offer lunch or dinner expenses as our shifts are less than 6 hours, if you are volunteering at one of our Community Kitchens, you are welcome to take a break and sit and eat with our guests during the lunch or dinner service.

We may also have Ready Meals in our Food Bank fridge which you can warm up. These are subject to availability.

Please **check with your shift leader** (such as Zehn) before taking Ready Meals as they may have been reserved for guests.

Please also ensure you follow the procedure for excess food at all times (see page 16)



EXCESS FRESH PRODUCE



One of our missions at Sufra is to reduce food waste, and therefore there may, from time to time, be leftover fresh food which we can offer to volunteers. You will be informed of the excess food procedure for your service during induction but if you are unsure, please ask your service lead. We need to make sure there is enough fresh produce to offer our guests before offering food to volunteers.



USING THE SERVICES AS A GUEST

If you are both a volunteer and a guest, then please access the service as a guest before or after you start your volunteering shift. This helps us with recording and means that there's no confusion around what produce you are collecting from the Food Bank or Community Wellbeing Service.

If you are a volunteer but would like to access our services as a guest, then please contact your project leader who will support you to do so.



HEALTH AND SAFETY



Your health and safety is important to us. During your induction we'll talk you through how to volunteer with us in a safe way.

If you spot any health and safety issues or potentially hazardous situations then please report these to a member of staff immediately, as well as any accidents or incidents. We have first aid kits and accident reports available.

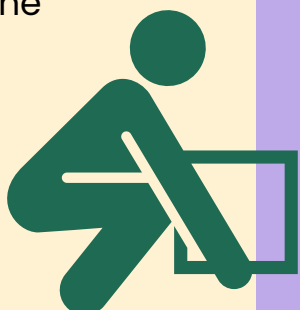
During your initial chat or induction please also let us know if you have any medical conditions so we can support you.

MANUAL HANDLING

Your role may involve manual handling. Please see the tips below to make sure you are keeping yourself safe whilst moving objects and contact a member of staff if you have any concerns.

Planning:

- Can I handle the load?
- Can a lifting aid be used?
- Do I need help?
- What are the hazards?

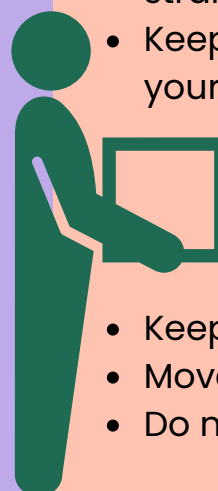


Posture:

- Keep your feet apart
- Slightly bend your back, hips and knees
- Keep shoulders level and facing forwards
- Keep the load close to your body
- Don't overstretch your back

The Lift:

- Raise the load whilst straightening your legs
- Keep the load close to your waist



- Keep your head up
- Move smoothly
- Do not twist or turn

FOOD SAFETY

If you are working with food then we'll encourage you to take an online level 2 food hygiene course which takes 2-3 hours to complete. Please also remember:

USE-BY vs. BEST BEFORE DATES

Check Use-By dates and the quality of fresh food. Food is not safe to be consumed after midnight on its use-by date, even if it looks and smells okay, as this could make a guest ill.

Best Before dates relate to quality of food, not safety, so food can be consumed after a Best Before date. After a best before date food is safe to eat but may not be at its best (change in flavour or texture).

WHEN TO THROW AWAY FOOD?

- Do not give away food which could be unsafe to consume.
- Wash hands before and after touching food.
- Throw away any food that has been on the floor and notify a staff member of any areas where there is a risk of slips, trips, or falls as soon as possible.

HOW TO STORE FOOD?

- Don't cross contaminate food – store raw meat and fish on the bottom shelf of the fridge in their packaging or in clean sealed containers so that they can't touch or drip onto other food.
- Separate cooked and uncooked meat and fish so that bacteria does not spread from uncooked meat or fish to cooked meat or fish.
- Refrigerate or consume meat, fish, and dairy within 2 hours as bacteria will multiply.

VOLUNTEERING WHILST RECEIVING BENEFITS

As a general rule, your volunteering should not have any impact on your benefits. However, you should inform the benefits office about your volunteering and if they raise any concerns you should discuss them with a member of staff at Sufra.

In particular, if you are on **Universal Credit**, you should make sure that:

- you are able to attend a job interview within 48 hours
- you can start working within a week of being offered a job
- you have informed the Job Centre that your role is a volunteer position and that Sufra is a registered charity
- you have informed the Job Centre that you are not paid and there is no contract between you and Sufra (reimbursement of expenses is not considered as payment)

FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS

If you have some feedback on our services, then please let a member of staff know. We're always keen to take your feedback on board so that we can improve.

Initially, complaints should be raised informally by speaking to the member of staff or volunteer concerned. If this is not appropriate, the complaint should be raised with a member of the Management Team. When necessary, the complaint can be raised directly with the Deputy Director or Executive Director.

If the person making the complaint is not satisfied with the result of an informal intervention, they may submit a formal written complaint.

Any formal complaint should be made via our form on the [website here](#).

If you are unable to complete this online form, you can download a hard copy complaint form (see below) to fill out instead and sent to the address below.

Sufra NW London
160 Pitfield Way
London
NW10 0PW.

Please see our policy for more details.

Policies

- Data Protection Policy
- Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy

Copies of all policies and procedures can be provided on request by emailing admin@sufra-nwlondon.org.uk.

VOLUNTEER SAFEGUARDING PROCESS

Volunteer identifies safeguarding concerns



Volunteer immediately alerts a staff member



Staff member and volunteer agree further action



Agreed action is taken



Volunteer and staff jointly fill in the Safeguarding Incident Form



Volunteer to debrief or seek further support for their wellbeing

If there is threat to life, staff member calls emergency services



Find the SG Incident form here

FINISHING A VOLUNTEER PLACEMENT

pg. 23



We know that things change and that there might be a time when you want to move on from volunteering at Sufra. If this happens then please let your project leader know ahead of time so that we can thank you for your support, arrange a time to hand in equipment or log out of our systems, and arrange an exit interview.

We value your thoughts and would love to meet with you before you exit to understand what you liked about volunteering and where you think we can improve.

We offer a reference to volunteers who have completed at least 6 shifts shift **and** have been volunteering for atleast 3 months . Please contact your service lead and we will email you a reference with the dates of volunteering, role, and general responsibilities.



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



020 3441 1335

admin@sufra-nwlondon.org.uk

www.sufra-nwlondon.org.uk

160 Pitfield Way, Stonebridge, London, NW10 0PW

Registered Charity No. 1151911