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A GUIDE TO  
VOLUNTEERING  
WITH  
**CAMDEN  
WOODCRAFT  
FOLK**

[www.camdenwoodcraft.org](http://www.camdenwoodcraft.org)



Camden Woodcraft Folk is a branch of The Woodcraft Folk.  
Registered Charity no: 1073665.



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# INTRODUCTION.....

## About Camden Woodcraft Folk

The Woodcraft Folk is a national organisation run by volunteers for children and young people of all ages. It is designed to help young people develop their self-confidence and activity in society, with the aim of building a world based on **equality, friendship, peace** and **co-operation**. Groups have been run in Camden for over 25 years. We run weekly activity sessions, and camping trips and other activities throughout the year.

## Volunteering with Camden Woodcraft Folk

Volunteering with Camden Woodcraft is a highly rewarding and, above all, fun way of giving something back to your local community. There are many ways you can volunteer with us, offering a variety of opportunities to make use of all the different skills or experiences you may be able to bring. Whether you can only help **once in a while** or are able to commit **more regularly** this leaflet should offer some ideas to inspire you. If you can help in a way we haven't thought of then please do get in touch! Some volunteers prefer to help out with groups that are not their child's group. It's up to you!

## What We Offer

Woodcraft's existence relies on volunteers, so it is essential that our volunteers are supported in the way that suits them. Benefits include:

- a clear explanation of your role
- a regular **newsletter**
- a **FREE** Woodcraft Folk **T-shirt or Hoodie**
- **FREE training**
- **guidelines** that cover all aspects of our work, including safeguarding children and health & safety etc
- you are welcome to **contribute to decision-making** at our regular meetings
- a **mentor** if you want or other support
- you will be fully covered by insurance

# What We Expect

All volunteers are expected to:

- provide details of two referees and to become a member of the Woodcraft Folk, signing up to its Aims and Principles
- fill out a **Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check** if working with children on a regular basis
- attend a 'Welcome to Woodcraft' introductory training session
- some roles will be easier if you attend the monthly meetings held group leaders, and the more committed roles will require regular attendance
- for roles that involve working with young people we expect an awareness of what is age-appropriate conversation and behaviour
- to enjoy working with children in an informal educational environment

## A Note about CRB checks

CRB checks are required by law and a useful tool in helping us protect our young people. Personal information is completely confidential. The CRB check result goes directly to you. We will only be notified of convictions which are deemed by Head Office to be relevant. It is expected that a new 'Vetting and Barring' system of checks will change this procedure in the near future. Please talk to your leader if you have any questions.

## WHAT SUITS YOU BEST?

Next to each role you will see a set of symbols to help explain some of the key things involved in the role:



**CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE** - these will largely require working with and looking after children and young people



**ADMIN** - these roles are mainly administration



**CAMPING** - these roles that take place on camps and trips away



**COMPUTER SKILLS** - roles with this symbol require a basic level of computer skills and access to a computer



**DRIVING** - roles with this symbol require a driving licence and access to a car



**MEETINGS** - roles with this symbol will work best when volunteers attend our regular meetings

# FIRST STEPS

If you are new to volunteering for us, these are some of the ways that you might consider starting off...

## SHARING A SKILL .....

It is always useful and fun to learn and share new skills!  
Examples of things you might be able to offer to teach us at a groupnight or camp might be:

Dance • Music • Film-making • Craft • Orienteering

**OR** do you have an unusual job you could talk about **OR** anything else you would like to contribute? Get in touch!

## HELPING AT GROUP .....

Most parents volunteer for Woodcraft by helping out at Group as part of the rota of helpers. This involves:

- Attending group nights once a term or as agreed
- If you have ideas, contributing them to help plan and run activities
- Supporting the group leaders by verbally reinforcing the rules and encouraging good behaviour
- Encouraging and helping children to participate fully in activities

## FOOD SHOPPING .....

Can you help buy food from a shopping list we provide, and transport it to the campsite?

## ORGANISING TRAVEL .....

Where possible we travel to camps on public transport or by coach and we often need help researching, arranging and booking transport.

**POSTING OUT LETTERS** ..... 

We regularly need to send out letters to parents. We will provide envelopes, printed labels and stamps.

**HELPING WITH BOOKINGS** .....  

One of the main jobs when organising camps is keeping track of people who have booked to go on a camp or trip and given in forms and money. This involves liaising with group leaders and the Treasurer, and ringing parents.

**FIRST AID** .....  

Are you a trained First Aider? Could you offer your skills on a camp? This could include being responsible for the first aid kit and medical forms and keeping an accident book.

**HELPING WITH EQUIPMENT** ..... 

Helping with equipment involves:

- Helping to sort, replenish or repair any equipment that will be needed for the next camp and ensuring it is stored correctly at the end of camp
- Helping to load/unload equipment from the lorry
- Buying equipment as agreed

**ATTENDING CAMPS** .....  

Attending camps is not for everyone but it is immensely rewarding and perhaps the most fun way to volunteer. You can try for a night to see if you like it. Adults attending camp are asked to:

- Support group leaders in caring for the children on camp
- Play an active part in activities carried out on camp
- Be a helper on a clan (clans are the groups of adults and children who do chores - cooking, washing up - together)

## DRIVING .....

For our camps we need someone to drive our equipment to and from the camp, as well as to offer lifts to children and leaders before , during and after camps. Do you have...

- Full driving licence and insurance and access to a vehicle?
- experience driving a mini-bus, or would be willing to be trained to drive one?
- an HGV licence or experience driving vans/lorries?

FIRST STEPS

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MORE INVOLVED

# MORE INVOLVED

If you have a bit more time, or have taken your first steps and want to offer more, perhaps one of these is for you?

## IMPROVING OUR LINKS WITH THE CO-OP.....

The Co-operative helps fund the Woodcraft Folk, and we want to make better links with the Co-op. This would involve:

- Being Camden Woodcraft Folk's representative at our local Co-operative Society, and feeding back to our regular meetings
- Promoting membership of the Co-op and Co-op campaigns within the district

## MAINTAINING OUR WEBSITE.....

Camden Woodcraft has an amazing new website that we want to make the most of. You can help by:

- Receiving training on how to maintain it
- Writing or working with leaders or young people to collect news stories and pictures about activities/events

We also have a Facebook page that volunteers help administrate.

## FUNDRAISING.....

Woodcraft always needs additional funds! If you have experience fundraising, or would just like to have a go, you can get involved by:

- Looking for sources of funding such as government or council grants
- Offering ideas for and helping with fundraising events e.g. Jester Festival
- Filling in grant application forms, with assistance from Leaders and Treasurer

## HELPING WITH ADMIN.....

Do you have administration skills or experience? Are you good with 'Word' or 'Excel' or databases? Woodcraft has a variety of administration needs that you could help out with, including:

- Producing letters about camps, events etc.
- Keeping a contacts database up and running
- Setting up an email group and emailing out information
- Ringing round parents about events or with information, or setting up a phone tree

## PLANNING FOOD FOR CAMPS.....

This role can be combined with the KP role on camp or done separately. It might involve:

- Adapting menu and amounts using a spreadsheet, taking into account numbers of people attending the camp and liaising with KP, and Folk Marshall
- Creating a shopping list to distribute to volunteers
- Ordering food through a local stockist for delivery or collection
- Full training and support can be provided

## CO-ORDINATING PARENT ROTAS.....

Elfin and Pioneer group leaders are supported by a rota of parents. We ask all parents to help if they can. You can help co-ordinate this by arranging the rota, briefing group helpers and helping arrange cover where cancellations occur.

## CO-ORDINATING CAMP ARRANGEMENTS....

This role can be done by the same person who acts as Camp Chief on a camp, or the role can be done completely separately. It involves:

- Overseeing all arrangements for the planning of a camp, including bookings, site arrangements, and logistics, with support from other volunteers
- Regular liaison with group leaders, Camp Chief, the site and any other volunteers helping to plan the camp

Full training and support provided.

## CLAN LEADER .....

On camps, all of the chores, such as cooking and washing-up, are rotated between combined groups of children and adults called 'clans'. Adults that have experience of helping on clans on previous camps might be made clan leader. This involves:

- Taking responsibility for ensuring everyone on clan attends their duties, starts in good time, are equipped as necessary, and work in a safe manner
- Liaising with KP and other relevant people to ensure instructions, amounts, timings etc are followed correctly

FIRST STEPS

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# REGULAR COMMITMENT

These roles require a bit more time and commitment, and often need a bit more experience.

REGULAR COMMITMENT

## GROUP LEADER.....

After helping regularly with groups, you may want to develop towards becoming a Group Leader. This involves:

- Being responsible for your group during group nights, camps and trips
- Ensuring groups are run according to the Aims and Principles of the Woodcraft Folk
- Planning and co-ordinating activities in co-operation with others
- Supervising helpers

## SECRETARY.....

This role is mainly about supporting monthly district meetings, which involves arranging and attending the meetings, sending out invites and writing up and circulating action points.

## INCLUSION OFFICER .....

We want to make sure our groupnights and camps are as accessible as possible for young people and adults with disabilities. Can you help us by:

- Completing assessments of venues used regularly by groups with the aim of Camden district becoming a gold awarded district
- Implementing actions agreed at meetings that will improve accessibility for members with disabilities
- Becoming familiar with Woodcraft Folk's Inclusion Policy
- Drawing up a district policy based on the Woodcraft Folk's national policy with the aim of it being adopted by the district

## SAFEGUARDING CO-ORDINATOR.....

This role is ideal for a childcare professional. The main responsibilities include:

- Have some training in the area of child protection
- Provide training to new volunteers in child protection
- Keep up to date with current legislation regarding child protection
- Be responsible for ensuring that our policy and procedure is followed
- Be ready to intervene in any hazardous situations involving a child and encourage others to do so as well
- Be the first port of call for any leader, helper etc. who has concerns about a child
- Liaise with (and at times pass on information to) the statutory child protection agencies.

## ADULT MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY.....

We want all volunteers and as many parents as possible to become adult members of Woodcraft. This role includes:

- Encouraging all volunteers over 18 to become a member
- Processing membership and CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) applications, and following up references
- Keeping up-to-date records of all Adult members
- Giving out welcome packs and T-shirts to new members

## VOLUNTEER CO-ORDINATOR.....

Supported by Group Leaders the Volunteer Co-ordinator helps to support volunteers by:

- Being the first contact for enquiries about volunteering and helping to recruit and support new volunteers
- Helping to develop ways to improve volunteering opportunities with Camden Woodcraft
- Planning, organising and co-ordinating 'Welcome to Woodcraft' sessions
- Co-ordinate volunteers to fill in feedback forms

## TREASURER.....

The Treasurer is responsible for recording, monitoring and overseeing the income and expenditure for the District. This involves:

- Being responsible for paying money into and out of our district bank account (ie subs and camp fees, hall rents and expenses) keeping records of all transactions
- Keeping accounts to present to the AGM and return to Head Office once a year
- Chasing unpaid subs and camp fees, liaising with group leaders and Camp Co-ordinators

## DISTRICT CO-ORDINATOR.....

The District Co-ordinator oversees the smooth running of the district by:

- Delegating roles to other Group Leaders and volunteers, after regular consultation
- Chairing regular meetings
- Liaising with the Treasurer about the District's finances, taking a long-term view of how funds should be spent to develop the District
- being the main contact for Woodcraft Folk Head Office

## EQUIPMENT OFFICER.....

This role is best carried out by someone who has gained familiarity with using our equipment on camp. It involves:

- Repairing/replacing equipment where necessary
- Ensuring equipment is used in a way that reduces wear and tear and damage, informing Camp Chief of issues as necessary
- Ensuring equipment is packed away according to storage requirements and that any damage is logged

## KP/CATERING.....

'Keeper of the Provender' is the traditional Woodcraft term for the person responsible for the catering on camp. This role can either be combined with the role helping to plan the food for camps, or just done on camp:

- Collecting food orders/checking food deliveries
- Keeping track of food stocks on camp, substituting and restocking where necessary
- Overseeing the cooking clan and briefing clan leaders
- Being aware of Food Hygiene rules, taking up training where available

## FOLK MARSHALL (ACTIVITIES ORGANISER).....

This role involves:

- Running the programme of activities on camp, updating campers on what is being done each day
- Ensuring there are enough helpers and the right equipment for activities
- Adapting the programme where necessary to take into account weather and other unforeseen circumstances

## CAMP CHIEF.....

This role can be combined with Co-ordinating arrangements for camp, or done separately. Camp Chief oversees the smooth running of the camp by:

- Running camp circles
- Briefing adults on issues and the carrying out of their roles
- Chairing daily meetings
- Liaising with the site authorities
- Dealing with any emergencies
- Holding the casting vote should disagreements occur

# FURTHER INFORMATION.....

In 2009 Camden Woodcraft benefited from a grant from Voluntary Action Camden which funded this booklet. We thank them for their support.



Go to the Camden Woodcraft Folk website to find out what events are coming up, reports from our young people about what we have been up to, a 'contact us' form and much more...

[www.camdenwoodcraft.org](http://www.camdenwoodcraft.org)



There is also a website about the Woodcraft Folk across Britain. Here you will find lots of information about what we stand for, our National policies and what is happening across the country...

[www.woodcraft.org.uk](http://www.woodcraft.org.uk)

# WHAT OUR VOLUNTEERS SAY.....



*"I got involved because I so appreciate what Woodcraft gives to my son and other children – a chance to be connected to nature – and realise that it cannot continue without people getting involved . . . It was a challenge to go camping as an adult! But the camaraderie and the personal challenge makes it an extremely fulfilling experience."* **Ranju**, a Venturer parent, takes part in camps



*"You get a real sense of achievement. It is great to work together with such a wide age range of kids, (and indeed adults). I can use what skills I have to benefit."* **Henryk**, a Venturer parent, helps organise, set up and takes part in camps



*"I love running my elfin group because the kids are great company, I've made lots of new friends and I like feeling part of something that has a positive impact on my community but is also great fun."* **Joanna**, a Pioneer and Venturer parent, is Elfin Group Leader



*"Its not just being part of something your own kids really love, but seeing how much all the kids enjoy it."* **Matt**, an Elfin and Venturer parent, is a Group Helper, takes part in camps and helps with First Aid



*"Woodcraft rocks. People get together, learn about their strengths, share experiences and have a great time."* **James**, a Pioneer parent, helps transport and set up equipment and takes part in camps