



**Get ready
to volunteer!**



ellen
macarthur
cancer trust

There is some preparation before a trip. Please use this checklist to make sure you have done everything you need to. Once all the boxes have been ticked, you're all set to go! **These must be completed a minimum of 4 weeks before your trip.**

FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS

Two references

We will contact your referees directly, but if they do not reply we will ask you chase them for your reference. You will not be able to volunteer until we have received two satisfactory references.

Complete your onboarding training

Your onboarding will be a mixture of video and online sessions to help you learn more about your role.

FOR ALL VOLUNTEERS

Completed Disclosure Check

The disclosure check you need will be determined by your location: England & Wales – DBS check; Scotland & NI – PVG Scheme Certificate. The team will be in touch if you need a new check or your current one needs updating.

Attended a Volunteer & Skipper Training Conference

Volunteers are expected to attend one every other year as a minimum.

Completed a Child Protection course

All volunteers must have completed a Level 2 Child Protection course and have a certificate or training record as evidence. These must be renewed every three years. This can be from an outside organisation, or we can send you a link to an online course.

Signed our Keeping Young People Safe Declaration

Volunteers must agree to our safeguarding rules every year by reading and signing our declaration about keeping young people safe. The link to the agreement will be sent to you via email.

Complete your Medical & Consent form

All our medical forms are electronic and will be sent to you via email. They need to be updated each year.

What we do

When a young person is given the ‘all clear’ at the end of their cancer treatment, their whole world has changed. Because of cancer’s impact on their mental wellbeing, simply picking up where they left off before their diagnosis just isn’t possible.

That’s where you come in. Together, we inspire young people living through and beyond cancer to believe in a brighter future.

Your enthusiasm and can-do attitude is what young people need to get the most out of their time with us. In particular, you can help them feel they belong at a time no one else in their life understands what they are going through, whoever they are, wherever they come from.

Safety on our trips is paramount, and you play a vital part in this. That means throwing yourself into your role, looking after your team, and being a positive role model across the week.

It is with your encouragement that young people will get stuck in and take those

all-important next steps in life. By learning new skills, taking on responsibilities, and making life-long memories, they will realise what they are capable of, celebrate their achievements, and have fun again.

Wellbeing after cancer

Young people with cancer deal with a range of emotional and mental health challenges: 70% experienced depression during treatment, 90% had anxiety, and 83% felt lonely (Young Lives vs Cancer, 2017).

On our life-changing adventures, they start to feel accepted, independent and optimistic after their treatment.

We know we have a positive impact on young people’s wellbeing.

As a volunteer, you are instrumental in a young person re-establishing their purpose and place in the world.



What happens on a trip?

Sailing trips

As Dame Ellen MacArthur always says, sailing is just the vehicle. What matters most is how the young people feel – and you play a massive part in that.

When young people arrive for their first trip, it may be the first time they have taken part in any post-treatment activity. These four days of sailing, which always follow the same itinerary, are designed to bring them together.

Many of them will be anxious about being away from home and meeting new people. By easing them into their new adventure, you will help them relax and be more open to the transformative benefits of sailing as part of a team.

Encourage them to try new things like helm the yacht and raise the sails, include them in games and conversations over hot chocolate. But be mindful that some may not want or be able to. Finding ways to make sure everyone feels included is one of the most important parts of the role.

Friendly and accepting

This is just as true on five-day return trips, where young people will be more familiar with the sailing aspect but are still faced with meeting lots of new people. Each week always begins with ice breakers so everyone – young people, volunteers, skippers, staff – can set a friendly and accepting tone for the days ahead.

A boat is an unfamiliar environment for most young people. Cabins on board are snug, so make them sound appealing. Motion sickness happens, so keep an eye out for it and lend a hand. Preparing food might be an entirely new activity, so be patient and make it enjoyable.

As conversations unfold naturally on board, be mindful that young people are not expected to talk about cancer. For some, our trips are a chance to leave that part of their life behind. For others, it is something to bond over. It is up to each young person whether it is appropriate to talk about, and it is up to you to make sure no one feels uncomfortable.



Outdoor adventures

Some return trips take place at outdoor adventure centres. The activities may be led by the centre's team, but our volunteers take part for much the same reasons as sailing trips. We rely on you taking the magic with you wherever we go, whether at sea or on land.

Some of the activities on these trips include: dinghy sailing, archery, canoeing, high ropes, mountain walks, and ghyll scrambling.

As with sailing, at the heart of these trips is the chance for young people to spend time with others who have been through similar experiences. They stay under one roof, rather than spread across a number of yachts, which some young people prefer. They arrive as individuals and leave as part of a community thanks to you fostering those connections.

Be there with them when they try new things. Share your enthusiasm to give them the confidence to push themselves. You can be the reason they go home feeling better than when they arrived.



The centres we work with change from year to year. To find out more information about the locations we will visit in the year ahead, check the Outdoor Adventures section on our website.

Things to keep in mind

Young people aged 14 and up receive three **'impact questionnaires'** a year. These allow us to understand the difference we are making, and also take note of where we could be doing more. You can see the anonymous results of them on the 'Our Impact' page of our website.

If you hear these being discussed on a trip, please emphasise their importance to young people. By being transparent about our impact, we can speak with confidence about what we do, reassure funders we make informed decisions, and seek to improve the experiences we provide.

We rely on high quality photography from trips to tell young people's stories. To do this, some volunteers are given **'media phones'** to send photos to our Communications team while the trip is happening. Parents and young people love to see these updates on social media.

These photos are also used on our website, in printed materials like this one, and in press releases. Using these phones to document the trip allows us to spread the word about what we do to other young people yet to access the post-treatment support they are looking for.

Roles and responsibilities

Sailing and outdoor adventures have their own unique roles. All of them working together make the magic happen wherever we go.

Sailing trips

Skipper – Commercially endorsed Skipper, educated to Yachmaster Offshore level as a minimum. Responsible for the safety and wellbeing of young people, the boat, and its equipment. First contact for queries.

Mate – Qualified Day Skipper or equivalent experience (or above). Assists with sailing and the safety of young people and other volunteers on board.

Crew Leader – Looks after young people, considering their needs such as clothing, sun cream, and hydration. May have no / limited sailing experience.

Outdoor adventures

Trip Lead – In charge of young people's wellbeing on trip. Sets the tone for non-centre run activities, such as meal and bedtimes. Liaison between us and the activity centre.

Deputy Trip Lead – An experienced volunteer on trips. Often a Group Leader and will step into the role of Trip Lead as needed.

Group Leader – Leads groups of volunteers to look after young people, and helps plan activities in-between centre-led programme.

Outdoor Adventure Volunteer – Looks after young people, considering their needs such as clothing, sun cream, and hydration.

All trips

Medic – Provides medical support for all and receives a full medical briefing after arriving at their trip location. There will be at least two medics on each trip. More information for Medics can be found in the Safe Medicine Management and Administration document.



Go here for full role descriptions

What you need to know

Getting to your trip

You are responsible for getting to your trip. You will either be asked to meet at the trip's starting location, the boat delivery location, or the meeting point for travelling with young people. We will try to confirm this at least eight weeks before your trip. Take a look at our website for information on how to get to Largs or Cowes.

Sailing trips have an early start, so if you are heading to the trip location, we encourage getting there the night before. You are welcome to stay on the boats, just let us know!

Boat delivery is only for some of our trips in Cowes. We will ask Mates to join Skippers for this. They will need to be available in the late afternoon/evening before a trip. Any other volunteers are welcome to join the boat delivery too.

If you're travelling with young people, you will meet them at a pick-up location on the first day

of the trip. We will cover the cost of the onward journey and vice versa on return. You will be expected to do both legs of the journey.

Briefing booklets

On the first day of your trip, you will have a briefing with the other volunteers and Ellen MacArthur Cancer Trust team members. These briefings are a perfect time to ask any questions ahead of a trip starting.

You will be given a 'briefing booklet' which contains information about everyone on a trip. These are **highly confidential** and include sensitive details, so you will be asked to sign them out and give them back at the end of the week for us to destroy.

If there is anything you need to know about a young person, it will be included in your briefing booklet. Please familiarise yourself with it and keep it on you, but try to only consult it out of the way of young people.



Looking after young people

Looking out for the physical, mental and social safety and wellbeing of young people is core to your role. Our standard operating procedures (SOPs) are in place to make sure everyone is safe on trips, from food hygiene and supervision of young people to keeping them safe during specific activities. The SOPs can be found on the boats or with the Trip Lead.

This is the first time some young people will be away from home on their own, so look out for signs of homesickness. Let your Skipper or Trip Lead know – they are very used to this and will have some reassuring tips.

Young people (or you!) may also experience seasickness. Again, let your Skipper know. There are lots of things they can do to try and resolve it.

Ultimately, your role is to notice if something doesn't look or feel right, listen if someone discloses something, and to take note and report it if they do. You'll be given a pocket guide at the start of your trip about what to do if you have a concern about a young person or member of the team on a trip.

Sometimes young people need support beyond our trips. There are lots of other organisations out there who might be able to help, so encourage them to look at our signposting page too.



Rules and guidelines



Charter

Crews/groups will have a short discussion about acceptable behaviour at the start of their trip, and come up with an agreement everyone will be asked to sign and respect.



Bullying

No form of bullying – verbal or physical – is tolerated. If a young person feels they are being bullied, or you see any evidence of this, talk to your Skipper or Trip Lead as soon as possible.

Belonging

You play a massive part in helping young people feel they belong at the Ellen MacArthur Cancer Trust. We aim to be visible, relevant and accessible to every young person with a cancer diagnosis. To do that, we must understand and remove barriers to accessing our support. We must also ensure young people feel able to be their authentic selves once they are here.

Young people of all religions, ethnicities, sexualities, genders, physical abilities, and backgrounds should get the chance to feel the same magic on our trips.

We believe everyone in our team is capable of making every young person feel welcome. However, we must be proactive in removing barriers and celebrating differences. There are cultures and communities each of us will be less familiar with. If volunteers approach this unfamiliarity with curiosity and warm acceptance, while challenging



exclusionary behaviours, we can make all young people feel like trips are a place they can be their whole selves and have a meaningful voice.

Young people feel isolated and experience disadvantage during and after their cancer treatment. It is vital they no longer feel that way once they access our support. You can make that difference.



Mobile phones

We encourage young people to be present and to engage with each other and the trip, but we know phones are a big part of their lives. When they arrive, they will discuss as a group when and when not to use their phones on the trip.



Social media

Volunteers cannot befriend young people on social media – not even if they are over 18. This would go against our safeguarding rules and breach professional boundaries.



Alcohol & smoking

There is strictly no alcohol on all trips. There is a no smoking/vaping policy on all boats and communal areas, and we promote no smoking/vaping across all our trips in general. Smoking is allowed at appropriate times and the smoker must not be wearing our branding.

After the trip

You are our eyes and ears on trips. With your honest feedback, we can improve what we do and ensure everyone has the best experience. We will ask you for this after each trip, which will help us shape future trips – for young people and volunteers alike.

Recognising the work our amazing volunteers do is really important to us. You can nominate a fellow volunteer who stood out during your trip for our **Luke Gilbert Volunteer of the Year Award**.

If you have not already, join our **Volunteer Facebook Group** to stay involved with our awesome community and keep up to date with all the latest goings on. Here you will also receive opportunities for further training and development, so you will feel even more confident when supporting young people. And why not check out our ‘Trust tutorials’ on our YouTube channel too?



Want to do more? Volunteering on trips is just one way you can inspire young people. Whether you have a knack for public speaking, want to shout about the Ellen MacArthur Cancer Trust at events and festivals, or can travel with young people to and from trip locations, you can continue to make a **massive difference all year round**. Scan the QR code to find out all the ways you can do even more good.

Then, if you are ready to **do it all again next summer**, look out for your invite back towards the end of the year.

You will have a fantastic week filled with smiles and laughs, and form life-long memories. Once it is over, you will also be glad of dry clothes and a good night's sleep! You will have earned it. **Thank you – we could not do what we do without you.**



Top tips from volunteers

"Don't be scared. The young people will make sure you have fun!"

"Travel pack essentials: always take a European plug socket (for boat trips), an aux cable and a mini speaker."

"Bring a bum-bag (or small across-body bag you can wear to carry your briefing book around. It's a bit big for pockets and ideally should be kept on your person."

"Trips can be full on, make sure you look after yourself. Do something everyday for you e.g. yoga first thing in the morning, a short walk, read a book."

"Be organised with your packing. Sometimes you don't have a lot of time when going to the showers to grab everything you need. A shower bag you can put your things in saves time."

"It's normal to feel nervous on your first day, remember you are surrounded by people that care about you and will help you."

"You're not on your own, there's an entire team around you (other Volunteers, Skippers, Trip Leads, Trust staff), they're there to support everyone."

"Be yourself."

"#trysomethingnew"



Have a great time!

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