



Simeon Care for the Elderly
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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR RESIDENTIAL VOLUNTEER CO-WORKERS

Participating in Community Life

We have volunteers from all over the world who come to Simeon for a year to experience what it is like to live with others and to care for older people. Volunteers at Simeon live alongside other volunteers and the elderly residents. Simeon Teams – Care, Homemaking, Kitchen, Maintenance, and Admin, work together to ensure Simeon runs smoothly. As Volunteer Co-workers you are an important addition to the Care Team and will help to support the residents with their daily routine and personal care with the aim of maintaining and enhancing their quality of life.

Part of your experience in Simeon will be to learn about living and working together and helping to create a sense of home and community. To ensure you have the opportunity to make the most of community life, our current policy at Simeon is not to accept volunteers who have family in or around Aberdeen.

Some of our residents are very ill and frail and need a lot of physical care. Some have a learning disability or dementia. Other residents are more independent and need support to maintain their independence. Volunteers help them to do things they enjoy, like going for walks, playing games, reading or writing letters. It is a rich and rewarding experience, and also can be very demanding

Simeon life is based on Christian principles, recognizing Sunday as a special day and the celebration of the Christian festivals central to this. You do not have to be a Christian to live and work in Simeon, but you must feel able to support these activities which are of great importance to the residents and the community. We respect the spiritual and religious orientation of each individual that joins our community.

Simeon is part of the wider Camphill movement of life-sharing communities. Camphill was initially inspired by Rudolf Steiner's teachings of Anthroposophy (a term deriving from the Greek words of *anthropos* – human, and *sophia* – wisdom). There are several other Camphill communities in the Aberdeen area, mainly involved with children or adults with disabilities. Volunteers have the opportunity to attend events, celebrations and courses at other Camphill centres and meet other international volunteers living and working in these different settings.

Aberdeen City offers a wide range of amenities for sports, musical and other leisure activities.

What will I do?

You will help to provide care to some very ill and frail people, some of whom may die while you are with us. Our volunteers must be ready and willing to learn how to give intimate personal care such as help with bathing, toileting, feeding, and dressing.

Please read the [Description Volunteer Co-worker](#). Please note that any opportunities for short term placements (less than 6 months) are limited, and we are unlikely to be able to accommodate such requests.

I have never done care work, will I have training?

We will teach you how to care for our residents, and we will not ask you to do anything you are not ready, willing and able to do. During the first three months you will have practical training, and formal induction to care skills and principles to enable you to carry out your role effectively and to assist your own personal development. Where possible, we will also offer specialist short courses, for example, Dementia Care. You will have a 'Mentor', who will be an experienced member of the Care Team available to you for ongoing conversation and support.

What about the Language?

Communication is a key part of the day-to-day work at Simeon. It is essential that all volunteers can communicate to a satisfactory level in English. As part of our volunteer recruitment process we will interview you by Skype or telephone, and assess your level of English.

What about my working time and free time?

Volunteers are expected to be present and actively "life sharing" in Simeon 5 days a week and have two free days a week – not necessarily at the weekend. Volunteer Co-workers join the rest of the Care Team on duty for flexible 7.5 hour shifts between 7.00am (0700) and 9.00pm (2100) with ample rest breaks. Care and life at Simeon goes on 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

On duty hours include supporting the residents and other general community duty tasks around the home. We require everyone to act co-operatively to ensure we all get time off to pursue other activities and interests. We do our best to meet requests for specific needs, like attending classes or clubs.

Volunteers are each asked to develop and carry out a Community Project, and one shift period per week is allocated to you for that purpose. The Community Project is an activity that will benefit the community. That might mean working with one resident, an activity for a group of residents, or enhancing home life.

Can I take a holiday or short break?

You will accrue holidays or 'annual leave days' during the time you are present and working in Simeon, (up to a total of 28 working days in 12 months). You may request to take these days off at a time that suits you, and we will do our best to meet your request. We ask all volunteers and staff to give reasonable notice to take time off, and to accept it may not always be possible to meet your request.

How is Simeon organised?

Day to day management is delegated to the General Manager and a small management team who are responsible for all aspects of the community. They meet regularly and are practically involved every day, working alongside members of the care team.

Every shift has a Team Leader and a Nurse, who carry responsibility for the care team's activities that day. As a member of the care team, we ask for your commitment and cooperation to the Team Leader and the team when you are on duty.

As a registered charity and a registered care home, Simeon is subject to a number of regulations. We are inspected by the Care Inspectorate twice a year who review our standard of care. The Simeon board of directors have regular council meetings to support Simeon fulfill its legal duties as a charity.

What about food? Where will I live?

We normally eat together "family style" for three meals a day with the residents while on duty. The main midday meal and supper are prepared by our cook. We cater for a variety of diets including vegetarian every day. During your time off food (including snacks and ingredients from the larder) is available.

You will have your own furnished room within Simeon and shared bathroom facilities. We will provide towels and bedding. You will be able to do your laundry in Simeon and to make use of a kitchen and communal spaces, with due respect for the needs of all residents and other volunteer co-workers.

What about telephones, computers and Internet use?

Internet access (WiFi) is available in each room, and you may bring your own laptop or tablet. You will be asked to read and sign a Computer Use Agreement.

Our Mobile Phone Policy is that we do not expect mobile phones to be carried or used within the common areas of Simeon. Making or answering calls, or the sending or receiving of text messages is not allowed during your working hours.

Expenses, travel, visas

You are responsible for your own travel costs to and from the community as well as for any visa applications and associated costs.

While you are here we will provide a monthly allowance of £175 to cover reasonable expenses.

For volunteers from outside the EEA, at the discretion of the Management Team, Simeon may contribute towards the cost of your travel home if you stay a minimum of 10 months. We will only contribute to travel by the least expensive mode of travel and for travel to your home country. This is calculated at the rate of £1.25 a day up to a maximum of £456.25 based on the length of your stay at Simeon and the actual cost of your travel home.

Do I need medical insurance?

We expect you to inform us of any health concerns or pre-existing conditions you may have before you come. You will be able to register with our local NHS medical practice for the duration of your stay. If you are a citizen of an EEA country, (ie, Member State of the European Union plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway, or Switzerland) please ensure you obtain an EHIC (European Health Insurance Card) and bring it with you.

Dental and optician's treatment are not free of charge in the UK and can be expensive. Simeon will not normally pay for these. Please see your dentist and optician and complete any treatments before coming to the UK.

Simeon is insured for liability in case of any act of negligence. We also insure your personal belongings in case of fire or theft, but please note that jewellery, contact lenses and money are not covered by our insurance. You should make your own provision for insurance when travelling.

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