

Volunteer Handbook

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About EMERGENCY UK

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EMERGENCY UK is the British affiliate of EMERGENCY. EMERGENCY UK supports EMERGENCY through advocacy, fundraising, and recruitment of medical staff. Its London-based Volunteer Group is an essential component of this work.

Getting Involved

1) Welcome & Meet the Team

Welcome to the EMERGENCY UK Volunteer Group! We want you to feel happy and well-prepared in your volunteer role and invite you to read this handbook, which offers practical guidance on what we do.

EMERGENCY provides free, high-quality healthcare to victims of war, poverty and landmines, alongside building hospitals and training local medical staff. Since 1994, EMERGENCY has treated 10 million people in 18 different countries. EMERGENCY UK – the organisation’s British affiliate – is a Registered Charity and coordinates fundraising, awareness-raising, communication, and recruitment activities on behalf of EMERGENCY in the UK.

Our volunteers provide invaluable support, increasing awareness of our work and raising vital funds. As such, providing support and guidance to our volunteers is very important to us. So please do not hesitate to reach out to the Volunteer Secretary should you have any questions, concerns, or ideas.

The Volunteer Secretary is not your only point of contact – experienced volunteers together form the Volunteer Committee and have numerous oversight responsibilities:

Volunteer Committee:

Secretary: Sara Mittica

Volunteer Recruitment: Roberto Garbero & Giuliano Roversi

Treasurer: Francesca Veronesi

Stalls: Marco Bellio

Events: Camilla Molignano

Fundraising: Manuela Vibi

Social Media: Annalisa Crudeli

2) Why Volunteer?

The Volunteer Group aims to:

- Raise awareness within the community about EMERGENCY’s work, projects, and values;
- Spread the word and strengthen EMERGENCY’s presence in the UK;
- Support EMERGENCY UK and EMERGENCY by raising funds and collecting donations.

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3) Benefits of Joining the Group

- You can take part in unique events and cultural activities;
- You can meet people who share similar interests and values;
- You can develop your network and get involved in new opportunities.

a) Meetings and Socials

The volunteer group has regular meetings and socials.

Meetings normally take place **at CAN Mezzanine, 49-51 East Road, London N1 6AH**. Details of meetings and socials will be circulated on the mailing list (more information below) and on the volunteer Facebook group.

Meetings and socials are a good opportunity to:

- Discuss ideas and raise any concerns;
- Exchange views and opinions;
- Receive updates on EMERGENCY's projects;
- Establish collective solutions;
- Turn ideas into action.

Meetings and socials are integral to the group's success: enabling the proactive allocation of tasks and identification of who is available to carry them out, in order to progress events and initiatives.

For meetings, the agenda is normally circulated beforehand, and minutes are shared shortly afterwards. Rooms at CAN Mezzanine are available only until 9pm, therefore good timekeeping during meetings is essential. It is ideal if one of the volunteers attending each meeting helps the Chair to keep an eye on the time.

If broader and more complex topics require decisions, we encourage the use of polls and surveys (i.e. via Google Forms) to involve more people (especially those who cannot attend meetings in person); get improved feedback; and spread the word about new ideas and initiatives. This also helps save time during meetings.

b) Google Group and Email Communications

The Google Group is managed by the Volunteer Committee. New volunteers are added to it after completing a registration form. By submitting this form, consent to be contacted via email is given. If you receive an email from the Google Group and wish to answer, **please do not reply to the general Google Group email** but instead select only the individual volunteers who are directly involved in the subject of the email. If you have questions about the Google Group, please ask Volunteer Recruitment Team.

c) Social Media

The EMERGENCY UK Volunteer Group makes use of a private group on Facebook. Meetings and socials are flagged, and timely updates are communicated through this page, as well as via the Google Group mailing list.

The Volunteer Committee oversee administration and moderate content. If you wish to post on the page, the Volunteer Committee will have to provide authorisation. Content posted on the page should remain relevant to EMERGENCY UK and volunteers' activities.

d) Training Sessions

New volunteers are invited to join meetings and training sessions when these are available (resource and time dependent). Stay tuned for future sessions – TBA!

These are a great opportunity to discuss EMERGENCY's projects in detail, and to train volunteers on how to represent and discuss the organisation in public and how to answer any questions. Training is usually organised by both the Volunteer Committee and a representative from the office.

Fundraising

A comprehensive overview on fundraising for EMERGENCY UK can be found in the Fundraising Guide.

4) EMERGENCY UK Volunteer Stalls Procedure

We are often given the opportunity to set up a booth or a stall at events such as concerts, gigs, film screenings, festivals, markets, and so on. Our main supporters in this regard are currently TIJ Events, the Italian Bookshop, and Cinema Italia UK.

The aim of these stalls is to:

- Raise awareness about EMERGENCY's work amongst members of the public, who might not already be familiar with the organisation. We always bring **leaflets** to hand out and ask people to sign up to the **official EMERGENCY UK Newsletter**.
- Collect donations.
- Encourage potential new volunteers. Those interested are asked to provide an email address and are then put in touch with the Volunteer Recruitment team.

The stalls require a minimum availability of **2 people + 1 backup volunteer**. This mandatory minimum ensures that no one individual is alone left to handle the proceeds from donations/sales and any remaining materials. If the minimum staffing requirement cannot be met, the stall will not be set up.

In order to help run a stall, **volunteers are required to have signed up to the Volunteer Code of Conduct and have attended a training session**. If the duration of the event means the stall is to be present for more than three hours, a larger number of volunteers is required, to allow for shifts. There is no set rule detailing how long each volunteer is required to staff a stall. Instead, this is worked out on a case-by-case basis, depending on volunteers' availability.

It is always useful to take a photo with the singer/speaker/celebrity performing at the end of the show/event. Photos are posted on the volunteers' Facebook page and are a great way to spread the word with other volunteers and among the wider public.

Presenting EMERGENCY to the public:

When at a stall or event, volunteers are representing EMERGENCY UK. It is therefore essential that they keep in mind – and act in accordance with – the organisation's core values. Volunteers should also be able to communicate key details about EMERGENCY's work. It is particularly important to avoid expressing personal political views, so that EMERGENCY's reputation, integrity, and strict neutrality are not compromised. Volunteers should always be



polite and respectful when speaking in public. Should the need arise, in difficult situations volunteers are advised to contact the Stalls Coordinator for guidance.

A full overview briefing on EMERGENCY is provided during training sessions and **volunteers should keep up-to-date** with the organisation's work. A good way to do this is to follow our social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram); regularly check our website for updates; and subscribe to the EMERGENCY UK Newsletter. This can be done at www.emergencyuk.org and takes only a few moments.

a) Logistics

Everything you will need to set up a stall – merchandising, leaflets, etc – is kept in the office (CAN Mezzanine, Old Street).

Volunteers taking part in stalls always exchange contact details with the Stalls Coordinator and other volunteers taking part in the event. Volunteers are responsible for all materials: from the moment they collect them from the office or from another volunteer, until they are returned to the office or to another volunteer who will be going to the next event. Volunteers are responsible for checking who will collect the materials from the office, how they will be passed on from volunteer to volunteer for the next event, and how they will be returned to the office. **The Stalls Coordinator should be told in advance (3-4 days minimum) who will pick up materials and when, so that this can be communicated to the office. All email communications with the office should primarily be handled by the Secretary.**

The Stalls Coordinator should always be made aware of who is in possession of the materials, but it is the responsibility of everyone involved to monitor their whereabouts.

What is in the materials 'trolley' bag?

- EMERGENCY UK merchandising and brochures;
- Price list;
- Donation box;
- POS machine and instructions.

b) Handling Donations

Donations to EMERGENCY UK can be made in a number of ways. For example, by buying merchandise or giving donations at stalls. Volunteers should also remind the public that it is also possible to become regular donors by visiting the EMERGENCY UK website. If donations are being collected in aid of a specific project (i.e. the Anabah Maternity Centre), volunteers should be informed of this and prepared to discuss it.

A small red plastic tub – bearing EMERGENCY's logo – is used to collect cash donations.

Best practice:

- Donations can be made by cash or POS machine. The price list and POS usage instructions should always be kept together.
- You will find a price list in the trolley. If in doubt, please contact the Stalls Coordinator or the Treasurer.
- At the end of each event, please leave £10 in cash (mixed denominations) in the donation box, so that there is sufficient change for the following stall. This £10 is not counted as proceeds from fundraising.



- At the end of the event, please keep a written record of items sold on the list provided, and report the total proceeds back to the Stalls Coordinator as soon possible – ideally within 24 hours by text, WhatsApp, email, or a photo of the list – who will then pass this on to the Treasurer.
- Please flag any sold-out items, so that content can be restocked as needed.
- Proceeds from stalls are transferred to the EMERGENCY UK bank account. This can be done by sending a bank transfer to the Treasurer or Secretary. Please do so **as soon as possible**: ideally within 24 hours. The Treasurer or Secretary will then transfer the funds to EMERGENCY UK. Cash proceeds must be delivered to the Treasurer, who will then make a bank transfer.

Points to consider:

- The donations box must not be left unattended during any event.
- Volunteers should always deposit donations straight into the box in front of the donor, for the purposes of transparency and maintaining trust.
- Deals (i.e. '3 for the price of 2') should generally be avoided. Try to stick to the price list in order to maximise donations. Please discuss any suggestion for deals or promotions in advance with the Stalls Coordinator.

c) Handling Personal Data

At stalls, volunteers collect email addresses of members of the public who wish to know more about EMERGENCY UK's activities and sign them up for newsletters. This is done via an app which is available on smartphones and tablets. Volunteers handling personal data should be informed about the importance of data protection requirements. They can learn more by reading the [regulations](#) online.

d) Feedback

Your feedback is important after an event. Please let the Stalls Coordinator know what you think and offer suggestions on what could be done better or differently next time. Monthly meetings offer the perfect setting to provide feedback:

- How was attendance?
- What were people most interested in?
- What challenges did you encounter during the event?
- How would you rate this event? (0 - Unlikely to Attend Again; 10 - Will Definitely Attend Again)
- Did some items sell more easily than others?

5) Other Fundraising Events

The Volunteer Group organises fundraising events several times a year, including:

- Summer Drinks, during which EMERGENCY UK medical staff share their stories and describe their experiences working on projects in the field.
- Swing Dance Night.

Such events require several weeks of preparation and **the approval of the office before proceeding**. A simple fundraising proposal should be drafted by the Fundraising Coordinator and forwarded to the office. The Volunteer Group has a **£1500 annual budget**, with which to organise larger fundraising events.



The **office can pay directly for costs incurred in the course of planning and/or running events** – such as promotional materials, venue or equipment hire, and so on. Substantial cash payments should be avoided by the volunteers.

Inasmuch as the ultimate goal is to fundraise, we always aim to book venues which will offer their facilities and support either for free or at a low cost. However, all potential costs for fundraising events will be assessed on a case by case basis.

a) Promotion

As soon as an event is set up, volunteers with some skills in design should be contacted to create a flyer (for the Facebook event and also to print). Flyers and promotional materials should always detail EMERGENCY UK's logo, website, and charity number (No. 1148818).

The earlier Facebook events and flyers are available, the better. Ordinarily, 6 weeks in advance provides sufficient time to promote an event. Anything less than 4 weeks for promotion is generally insufficient.

When presenting to members of the public at events, it is often useful to make use of leaflets, flyers, PowerPoint presentations, and so on. However, it is essential that **all promotional materials detailing EMERGENCY and its work must be approved by the office before being shown or distributed publicly. This includes all materials bearing the organisation's logo.**

b) Events Format

There are plenty of possible formats for fundraising events, and the group has been discussing different ideas. If you have a suggestion, or if you've spotted an ideal venue, please get in touch with the Volunteer Committee to share your proposals!

6) VR Equipment

The use of Virtual Reality technology is a fantastic way to showcase EMERGENCY's work, and is guaranteed to encourage further generous donations from members of the public at stalls and other events. Training in the correct use of this equipment is provided on a rolling basis. It is imperative, however, due to its high value that **following use all VR equipment must be returned to the office within 24 hours.**

Volunteers' Relationship with the EMERGENCY UK Office

The Volunteer Group is an invaluable part of EMERGENCY UK, and the charity wouldn't be the same without it! The office provides regular support to volunteers by helping with training sessions, attending meetings, and providing updates on EMERGENCY's latest projects.

It is important to bear in mind that most queries can be answered by the Volunteer Committee and that **questions should be addressed to the Volunteer Secretary** (volunteer@emergencyuk.org) in the first instance, rather than to the office directly.

The office is solely responsible for inviting suitable speakers to events. Event proposals can be submitted to the office via the Volunteer Committee. If approved, the office will then assume responsibility for identifying and inviting appropriate guest speakers. In the event that

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a potential speaker contacts (unsolicited) the Volunteer Group first, this should be brought to the attention of the Volunteer Secretary, who will subsequently inform the office.

7) Office-Led Events: Volunteers' Contributions

Volunteers are also involved in events organised by the office, if/when requested. They usually provide support by managing stalls, helping with logistics, aiding access to venues, etc. The Volunteer Secretary is the main point of contact for this type of event. As above, **questions should be directed to the Volunteer Secretary.**

Procedures

8) Expenses & Reimbursement

Generally speaking, it is advisable to focus on free or low-cost activities and materials. However, out of pocket expenses can be reimbursed **providing these are agreed to by the office in advance.** If an expense is agreed, you **must provide a receipt or invoice** for the services or materials purchased.

Volunteers should **never** personally pay for event expenses without the prior approval of the office. If they do these funds may not be reimbursed. In most circumstances, it is standard procedure that the office pay directly for any materials or costs related to volunteers' activities and events. (See Section 4).

9) References

If you wish to get references for your CV, please get in touch with the Secretary. In most cases references are only given after 6 months of voluntary commitment and following regular participation.

Voluntary roles are not the same as office-based internships. For up-to-date internship opportunities, please visit: www.emergencyuk.org/work-with-us/internships/.

10) Code of Conduct

All volunteers agree to abide by the Code of Conduct which will be periodically updated and always available on the EMERGENCY UK website.

11) Resolving Concerns and Differences

Being kind and respectful to all volunteers is what enables the Volunteer Group to learn, grow, and achieve. If an issue does arise, please first discuss it with the appropriate member of the Volunteer Committee, who may be able to facilitate resolution.

12) Feedback

If a volunteer has any concerns whatsoever about the functioning of the group, they are welcome to contact the Volunteer Secretary. Any concern is worth raising and feedback helps the group improve!

13) Leaving the Group



Volunteers are entitled to temporarily interrupt or permanently cease their volunteering with EMERGENCY UK at any time. It is not necessary to specify why. The Volunteer Group is thankful for all contributions and understands that circumstances change! If possible, departing volunteers are encouraged to communicate their reasons to Secretary: feedback is always welcome.

Departing volunteers are automatically unsubscribed from the Google Group. Should they wish to subscribe to the newsletter, they can do so directly within the email.

Appendix

14) Examples of Past Fundraising Events

Summer Drinks (June 2017)

- Bar/restaurant (Johnny Bruschetta, Islington).
- Tickets £15: £10 for venue fees and £5 donation to EMERGENCY UK.
- Hannah – a nurse who has worked in several EMERGENCY projects – discussed her experiences for about 20 minutes, halfway through the event.
- The Facebook event was set up 4.5 weeks before the event.
- 42 people attended. Ticket sales, raffles, and donations raised a total of £750. Less costs for restaurant services (£420), the total net proceeds for EMERGENCY came to £330.

Swing Dance Night(s)

- Tickets £12, hosted at New Unity Islington
- 2018 costs: Food + Drinks (around £200) and Venue Hire (£485) = total cost £685.
- Band played for free.
- Eventbrite link was set up and Facebook event created 5/6 weeks beforehand.
- Attendance:
 - 2018 – 88 Attendees (Autumn)
 - 2017 - 80 Attendees (Early Summer)
 - 2016 - 120/130 Attendees (Spring)

15) Contacts

Group of Volunteers

As a first point of contact for the Volunteer Committee, please contact the Secretary: volunteer@emergencyuk.org.

To remain up-to-date with the EMERGENCY UK London Group of Volunteers' activities, please make sure you are part of the Google Group mailing list. If you are active on social media, be sure to join the London Volunteers' private Facebook group. Comprehensive fundraising guidance can be found in the Fundraising Guide.

Office

David Lloyd Webber – Acting Programme Manager / International Communications Lead
(David.lloydwebber@emergencyuk.org)



To remain up-to-date with EMERGENCY UK's activities, please subscribe to the [Newsletter](#) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#). Comprehensive information on projects, financial statements, and the latest Activity Report can be found at www.emergencyuk.org.