



Helping people,
helping the environment

FURNISTORE

Holmethorpe Industrial Estate
46 Holmethorpe Avenue, Redhill RH1 2NL
☎ 08450 544089

Email: Manager@furnistore.co.uk

Web: www.furnistore.co.uk



Volunteer Handbook

Welcome to Furnistore

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FOREWORD

Furnistore relies on the contribution of all kinds of people to make its work a success: its paid staff, its advisors, Directors and volunteers. It is this rich range of life experience and getting on with life that enables us to make Furnistore a place where community is formed and the work place is explored. As a volunteer we value your contribution of time and skills as an essential ingredient to our success.

INTRODUCTION

We hope you will find this Handbook useful.

It aims to answer most of the questions you may have about volunteering with Furnistore.

Other useful and important information is kept in the Volunteer Information Folder. You will be shown where this is kept on the first day. Make sure you have a look through this as well.

If you want more general information about the organisation itself, or have any further questions then please ask Sue Shortman, who is the volunteer coordinator or any other member of staff.

COMING TO FURNISTORE

Travel arrangements

Train: We are 20 min walk from Redhill mainline rail station.

Bus: We are 5 min walk from local bus stops. There are bus service links with Redhill, Reigate, Horley, Merstham, and Caterham

Car: There is limited parking space at the front of the building which is reserved for or visitors to the store.

NB If you would like more detailed information on finding our premises then please contact us.

Access to Furnistore

The ground floor where the store and ground floor reception is accessible. There is an accessible toilet on site.

Expenses

We will cover reasonable daily travel expenses on any day you volunteer with us. We will also provide lunch if you arrive before 1pm and spend more than four hours at Furnistore.

Expenses for travel can be paid daily on production of a receipt. If you are coming in more than once a week we can pay at the end of the week if you prefer. Amounts up to £15 can be paid in cash, anything more than that will be paid by cheque.

We do not currently pay for childcare or other caring expenses.

NB We do not want you to be out of pocket as a result of your volunteering so please keep all your receipts and remember to claim what is due to you.

Receiving Benefits?

As long as you only receive out-of-pocket expenses there should not be a problem with volunteering while on benefits. It is always good practice to keep the Benefits Agency informed if you are volunteering. Please talk to us if you have any concerns.

WHILE YOU'RE IN THE OFFICE

Breaks & refreshments

You can help yourself to tea, coffee, squash & water during the day in the kitchen areas. The upstairs kitchen has a fridge, a toaster and microwave that you are welcome to use.

Volunteers are entitled to an hour's lunch break. We eat in the in the upstairs kitchen.

Notice board & information

There is a notice board in the office that has general information, dates for meetings etc.

Staff meetings

You are welcome to attend staff meetings. Details of the dates and times are posted on the notice board in the kitchen. If you cannot attend but would like to bring something to the attention of the meeting then please discuss it with your line manager.

Office outings

Volunteers are welcome to come on staff social events.

Use of phone & photocopier

If you need to make an urgent local call while at Furnistore you can do so. Ask Ian how to do this.

You can also use the photocopier if you need to for job search or occasional personal copies. Please tell the Manager before you do this.

Smoking & Drinking

The offices, kitchen, shop, store and van are a 'no smoking' 'no drinking' zones.

Dress code

Furnistore staff dress relatively informally in the office, but look smarter when they have important meetings. In the same way we would like you to be clean and tidy when you are volunteering with us, and look smart when you know you are going to be meeting the public or representing Furnistore.

Insurance

Individuals who are volunteering or on work placement with Furnistore will, like paid staff, be covered by Furnistore's insurance while on the premises.

Health & Safety

A Director Robert Tomlinson is Furnistore's Health & Safety Officer. You will be told about the Fire Exits and procedures on your first day, but if you have any queries please talk to your line manager.

First Aid

Please contact your line manager if you need assistance or before taking anything from the First Aid box, which is kept in the store/van/office.

Privacy

Furnistore respects your privacy and right not to be questioned about your personal circumstances, your disability or prescribed medication that you are taking. You will be asked for some personnel details on your first day in the office (eg emergency contacts) and if there is anything you want to tell us at this time it will be treated confidentially.

OUR MUTUAL AGREEMENT

Volunteer Agreement

On your first day at Furnistore we will discuss your arrangement with us, and outline the times you will be coming to volunteer, and what tasks you will be performing. Once this is agreed we will keep it on file and refer to it during your time with us.

Flexibility

We are happy to make an Agreement that allows you more freedom about the hours you come to Furnistore: please talk to the manager about this.

Trial period

We really hope you enjoy volunteering with us. However in case there are any initial worries, we treat the first four weeks you spend with us as a trial period. At the end of that time we will have a chat and if you want to stop volunteering with us, that's ok. If you want to clear up some concerns or maybe change some of the tasks you're doing, that's also when we can discuss it.

Length of Agreement

Once you've decided that you want to stay with us, we can make a joint decision on how long your Agreement will last for. This will depend on the tasks you will be doing, and what you hope to gain from your time with us.

On-going Support and Training

While you are with us we will help you to complete the tasks you have agreed to perform. This may involve initial training, which we would identify during selection or induction.

You will be given the name of the staff member(s) who can give you the best day-to-day support for the tasks you are undertaking.

If you are not happy with anything you are doing or being asked to do you should talk to Ian or Jenny as soon as possible. You will not be asked to do the work of any staff member whose post has been made redundant.

We will also discuss your Volunteer Agreement on a regular basis with you – at least every three months. At this time we will look at what you have been doing recently, and see if there are any other areas of Furnistore's work you might want to become involved in. If you or Furnistore feel you need training to perform any tasks better then we will discuss it at this point.

Personal details

All your details are kept securely – either in a locked filing cabinet or in electronic format on our computer. If you want to look at any of the data please ask Ian.

Reporting absence or sickness

We value your time and rely on you to turn up when you say you will. However we will understand if you can't come for any reason on a day you agreed to, but please let us know as soon as possible so we don't worry.

If we don't hear from you for two weeks after you were due to come to Furnistore, we will assume you are no longer interested in volunteering with us and end your Volunteer Agreement. If you want to return to us after this time, please do contact us, but we may have to negotiate a new Agreement.

Problems

Furnistore wants you to be happy while you are volunteering with us. If you have any problems or concerns while you are volunteering, please talk to Ian as soon as possible, and we will try to sort them out promptly.

If we think there is a problem with the work you are doing for Furnistore then we will also try to talk to you as soon as possible.

For further details of how problems will be dealt with, please look at the procedure in the Volunteer Information Folder.

Equal Opportunities

Volunteers are expected to comply with Furnistore's policies on Equal Opportunities. A copy is kept in the Volunteer Information Folder.

Copyright

The copyright of any documents or work created by individuals who are volunteering or on work placement during their time with Furnistore will be deemed to belong to the organisation.

MOVING ON

References

Once you have volunteered with Furnistore for three months or 75 hours, we will provide a reference if you need one for paid work, study or another voluntary position.

Job search & Computer Use

If you want to use the computers at Furnistore to work on your CV or application forms then please ask Ian or your line manager who will check their availability for you. We are happy to give you advice or help with job applications, CVs, interviews, etc.

Please check before you use the Internet or email facilities for personal use – and have a look at the Policy in the Volunteer Information Folder.

Paid positions within Furnistore

You are welcome to apply to paid positions within Furnistore while you are volunteering with us. We advertise most positions in the local press, but will also bring them to your attention. You will be expected to go through the same selection procedure as other applicants.

Leaving Furnistore

When you decide to stop volunteering, whatever the reason, we hope you will fill in a Leaver's Questionnaire so we get some feedback about how you have found your time with us, and any suggestions you may have for improving the Volunteer Programme.

AND FINALLY...

Any more volunteers out there?

If you know anyone – friends, family, colleagues – who may be interested in volunteering then we'd love to hear from them.

They can phone Ian Buckland directly on 01737 773133 or she can send out an application form to them if you give him their details. Spread the word.

Contact Details:-



Furnistore

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Web: www.furnistore.co.uk



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