

VOLUNTEERING IN THE KITCHEN

BUCFP kitchen has been providing meals for people for twenty years with nearly all of the meals being cooked by volunteers. It is a vital part of the centre as lunch provides the central focus of the day at 1 o'clock. We usually cater for about forty people.

WHO DO I APPROACH IF I AM INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING IN THE KITCHEN?

Speak to Ellie, the participation worker, or just fill out a volunteer form from the office. The form will be sent to the weekly staff meeting and we can contact you to let you know if we need any help.

WHAT TIMES DO KITCHEN VOLUNTEERS WORK?

Lunch needs to be prepared for one o'clock. There is no hard and fast rule about when you start, although about 10.15 is usually the time most volunteers start. However if you wish to start earlier or later you can so long as you are confident of having lunch ready for one o'clock. Serving lunch takes about half an hour which means that you are finished about 1.30. However if you have childcare or other issues which mean you have to leave early this can be accommodated.

I HAVE A CHILD – HOW CAN I VOLUNTEER?

BUCFP crèche is open every weekday morning. So long as we know you are cooking we can provide a crèche place for you. Please speak to the crèche workers once you have arranged your shift to let them know what day you will be in so that they can plan to accommodate your child.

WILL I BE WORKING ON MY OWN?

New volunteers are never expected to work alone. If people have the necessary experience then of course they can work alone – however normally people work along side someone who has been cooking here for a while for a few weeks. Once they feel they have gained enough experience then they can choose to cook on their own. However this is not necessarily the ultimate aim and we also welcome people who may want to help out for an hour or two to assist the main chef. Indeed we need a combination of both sorts of volunteers to help out to make the kitchen work. Usually we aim to have two people in the kitchen, as three can be a bit crowded, although this is not a hard and fast rule and so long as people are happy it is adaptable.

WILL I BE TOLD WHAT TO COOK?

NO. It is one of the most important principles of the kitchen that if people are willing to give up their free time to help the centre, then they should be allowed to have their own creative input. The only guidelines that chefs must keep within are

- All food must be vegan. This ensures that everyone can eat at the centre.
- If you are cooking something spicy then you must do an alternative as a lot of children do not like spicy food
- You cannot use peanuts as some people have severe allergic reactions to them
- All ingredients must be reasonably priced

Aside from that you can do what you like – if you need a particular ingredient for a specific recipe then it can be ordered.

VOLUNTEERING IN THE KITCHEN (continued)

WILL I NEED A FOOD HYGIENE CERTIFICATE

No – however if people are volunteering in the kitchen regularly we will endeavour too send them on a food hygiene course at our expense as obviously this is good for them and us.

BASIC FOOD HYGIENE RULES

1. Make sure that you and your clothes are clean
2. Always wash hands before starting and after going to the toilet or dealing with rubbish
3. If you have any infectious diseases – especially infected wounds or sores or diarrhoea – DO NOT COOK
4. Wear an apron and keep hair tied back
5. **Always make sure that left over food is thoroughly cooled and placed within refrigerator within 2hrs.** Food that is constantly refrigerated should be okay for 72 hours. Only reheat food once. If there is a large quantity of hot food left then the quickest way to cool it is to spread it out on a large baking tray and then refrigerate when it has cooled properly. If it is not sufficiently cool when you leave ask someone else to put it in the fridge for you.
6. If in doubt about food in the fridge check with someone
7. Check fridge temperature on arrival – it should be at 4C – if not tell a member of staff.

KITCHEN MEETINGS

These take place about once a month and are a chance for you to have a say in then way the place is run. Meeting dates will be put on the notice board in the tea bar.

EXPENSES and LUNCH and COMPUTER COURSES

Lunch is free on the day you are volunteering and you can claim your public transport travel expenses to and from the centre so long as you have the ticket. Once you have volunteered for eight weeks or more you are entitled to attend one of the centre's computer classes per term free of charge for the duration of the time you are volunteering.

PROBLEMS AND COMPLAINTS

If you experience any difficulties which you are unable to sort out then talk to the kitchen coordinator (Charles) if he is about or raise them at a kitchen meeting. If not speak to the day coordinator whose name is written on top of the backboard in the main area. If you feel there is an issue with any staff member, volunteer or any aspect of running of the centre which you feel has not been or cannot be resolved through these channels then you have a right to make an official complaint. Forms for this can be obtained from the office and your complaint will be investigated by a sub committee of the trustees called Staffing Sub Committee. Hopefully however any problems can be resolved verbally.