

# Our volunteers handbook



**WE ARE  
MACMILLAN.  
CANCER SUPPORT**

# HELLO AND WELCOME

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with Macmillan Cancer Support and for helping to reach and improve the lives of people affected by cancer.

Volunteers are at the very heart of our organisation. You're Macmillan's face in the local community. You raise money to fund vital cancer services and help us to deliver them. You tell people we're here for them and your voice helps us shape and improve cancer care. You are essential to everything we do!

It's our ambition to make sure anyone who gives their time to us feels valued, understood and proud to be part of Macmillan. This handbook is here to explain the things you need to know about volunteering with us. We hope you find it helpful. If you'd like more detailed information on any of the subjects covered, please speak to your main Macmillan contact. They'll be more than happy to help you.

Thank you once again for deciding to make a difference.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lisa Dowling". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

**Lisa Dowling**  
Head of Volunteering and Community Action



'I find it so fulfilling. It's such a brilliant cause, and we make a huge difference to the lives of people with cancer.'

Community fundraising volunteer

# A LITTLE BIT ABOUT US

Macmillan is the UK's leading cancer care charity. We're a source of support, helping with the things that people affected by cancer want and need.

As well as supporting people with cancer, we also help carers, families and communities. We guide people through the system, supporting them every step of the way. We also fund nurses and other health care professionals and build cancer care centres.

But we give so much more than just medical help. People need practical support at home, so we provide anything from some precious time off for a carer, to a lift to a hospital. People need emotional support, so we listen and share information through our cancer support specialists, website and trained professionals.

People need financial help to cope with the extra costs cancer can bring, so we give benefits advice and grants to help with anything from heating bills to travel costs.

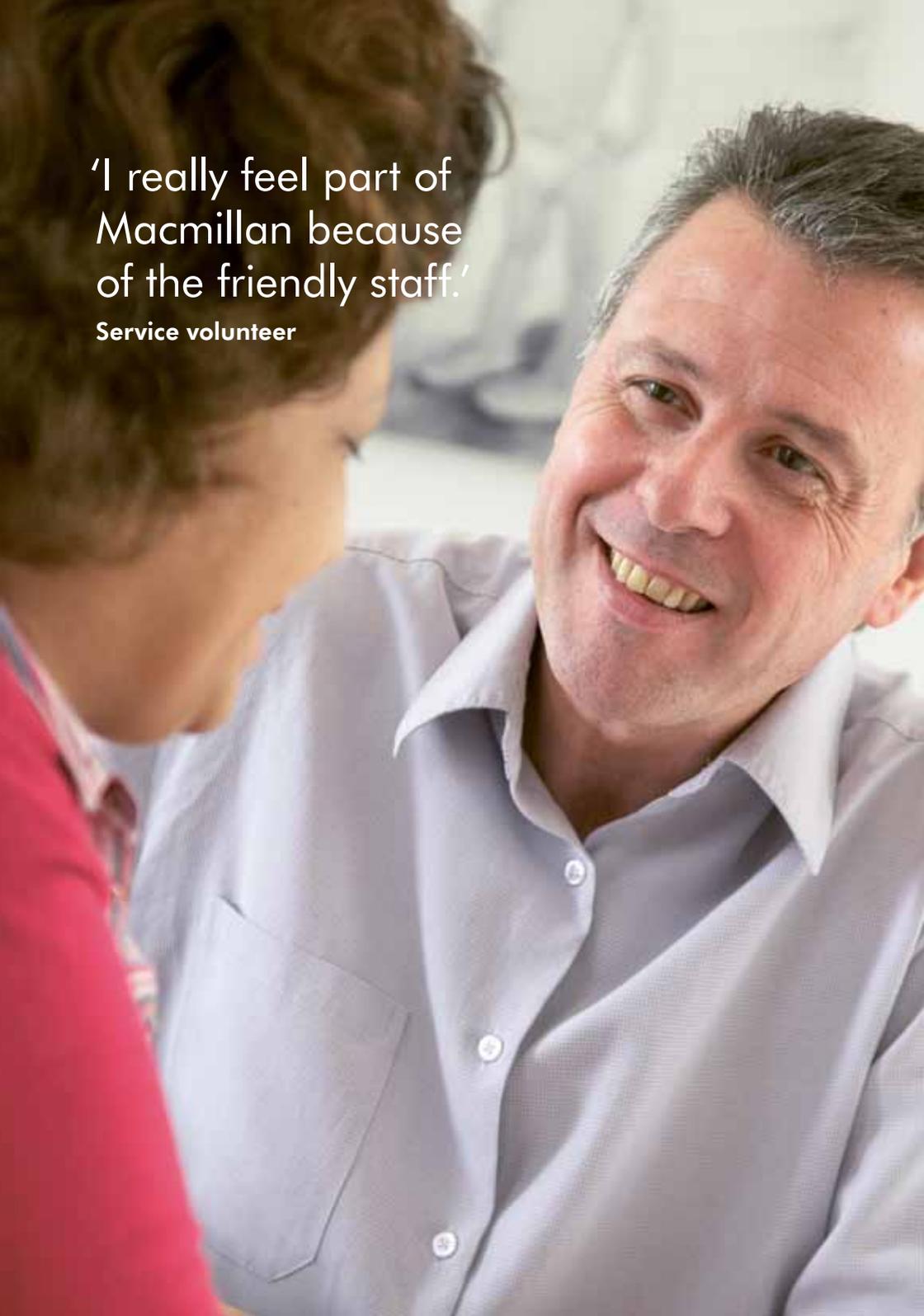
Macmillan is also a major campaigning charity. We want to improve cancer care on a local and national scale, so we work with people affected by cancer to force change. This could be anything from getting a coffee machine installed in a waiting room, to bringing about reforms in the law.

# A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOU

Incredibly, we now have over 15,000 volunteers in the UK. They live everywhere from Aberdeen to Aberystwyth, Belfast to Bournemouth.

Volunteers get involved for a variety of reasons. Some want to make a difference to the lives of people affected by cancer, others want to develop new skills and some simply want to meet new people and have fun. We don't have a typical volunteer.

**Every person who volunteers for us does have one thing in common: they're absolutely vital to our work.**

A close-up photograph of a middle-aged man with grey hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, smiling warmly. He is looking towards a woman whose back is to the camera; she has curly brown hair and is wearing a red top. The background is softly blurred, suggesting an indoor setting.

'I really feel part of Macmillan because of the friendly staff.'

Service volunteer

# WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

There are oodles of ways for you to get further involved in our work. Here are just a few examples of the opportunities we offer.

## Help in your local area

Join a fundraising group or hold your own event to raise money for Macmillan.

'There's no typical month with the work I do... I may go to pick up a fundraiser's cheque, attend a working group meeting, give a talk to the local Rotary club, or just help out with a collection at our local supermarket.'

– Fundraising volunteer

## Become an office volunteer

Put your skills to good use or learn new ones whilst volunteering in one of our offices.

'I've picked up new skills, developed existing ones and become more confident in my own abilities.'

– Office volunteer

## Take on an internship

We offer internships across the organisation.

'It improved my knowledge of how different organisations work and how to adapt to different working cultures.'

– Intern

## Share your opinion

If you've been affected by cancer use your experience to help shape the future of cancer care by joining Cancer Voices.

'I'm probably more confident now than I was before I got cancer. I'm not afraid to stand up in front of a room of people and talk about issues that are important to us all. It's a way for me to be a part of the changing face of cancer care in this country.'

– Cancer Voice

## Cheer with Team Macmillan

Join our cheering and motivation squads who provide inspiration and support to the fabulous people who run or walk to raise money for us. You could also be a marshall, a first aider or help run the event on the day.

'The support from Macmillan throughout the event, especially at the cheer points pulled me through.'

– London Marathon runner.

## Campaign for change

Help change the law or influence the Government by joining our e-campaigners. You can take part in many of our campaigning activities by just a few clicks of your mouse – from contacting your MP to emailing your local newspaper.

If you'd like more information on any of these opportunities or you want to find out about other ways to get involved, please speak to your Macmillan contact. Alternatively visit [macmillan.org.uk/getinvolved](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/getinvolved)

# WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US

We want to make sure that you enjoy your role and get the most out of it.

Our commitment to our volunteers, we will:

- always treat you with respect, consideration and appreciation
- ensure you have a clear idea of your responsibilities, including the length of time we'd like you to be involved in a project
- give you information about the training and support available to help you carry out your role
- provide you with support through regular meetings or discussions (the format will depend on your role)
- offer you fair, honest and timely feedback on your work
- update you on how your work has made a difference.

# WHAT WE EXPECT FROM YOU

We expect high standards from all our supporters, whether they are paid staff or volunteers.

To ensure you get the most out of your role, please try to do the following:

- always treat Macmillan staff, supporters and fellow volunteers with respect, consideration and appreciation
- act in a professional way whenever you represent Macmillan in public
- act in a way that doesn't discriminate against or exclude anyone
- provide as much notice as possible if you are unable to fulfil your volunteering commitment, or if you no longer wish to be involved in a project
- if you don't fully understand your role and responsibilities, please ask your Macmillan contact for guidance.



# WE'LL SUPPORT YOU

'The team were really welcoming. I had a full induction and they made time to answer any questions I had.'

**Office volunteer**

## **Induction**

Your Macmillan contact will introduce you to your team and anyone else who you might be working with. They'll also go over health and safety requirements. Please use this opportunity to ask any questions and to highlight any areas you would like further training and support in. If based in one of our offices you'll be asked to complete our online induction.

If you'll be volunteering with us over a period of time, we recommend a settling in period which gives us both a chance to assess how things are working out.

## Training

We want to ensure that you feel happy and confident to carry out your role. As a Macmillan volunteer you'll be able to set up an account with our online learning website Learn Zone. This will give you free and easy access to a wide variety of online resources, e-learning programmes, professional development tools and information about our latest learning opportunities. Just visit [learnzone.macmillan.org.uk](https://learnzone.macmillan.org.uk)

## Reliability and commitment

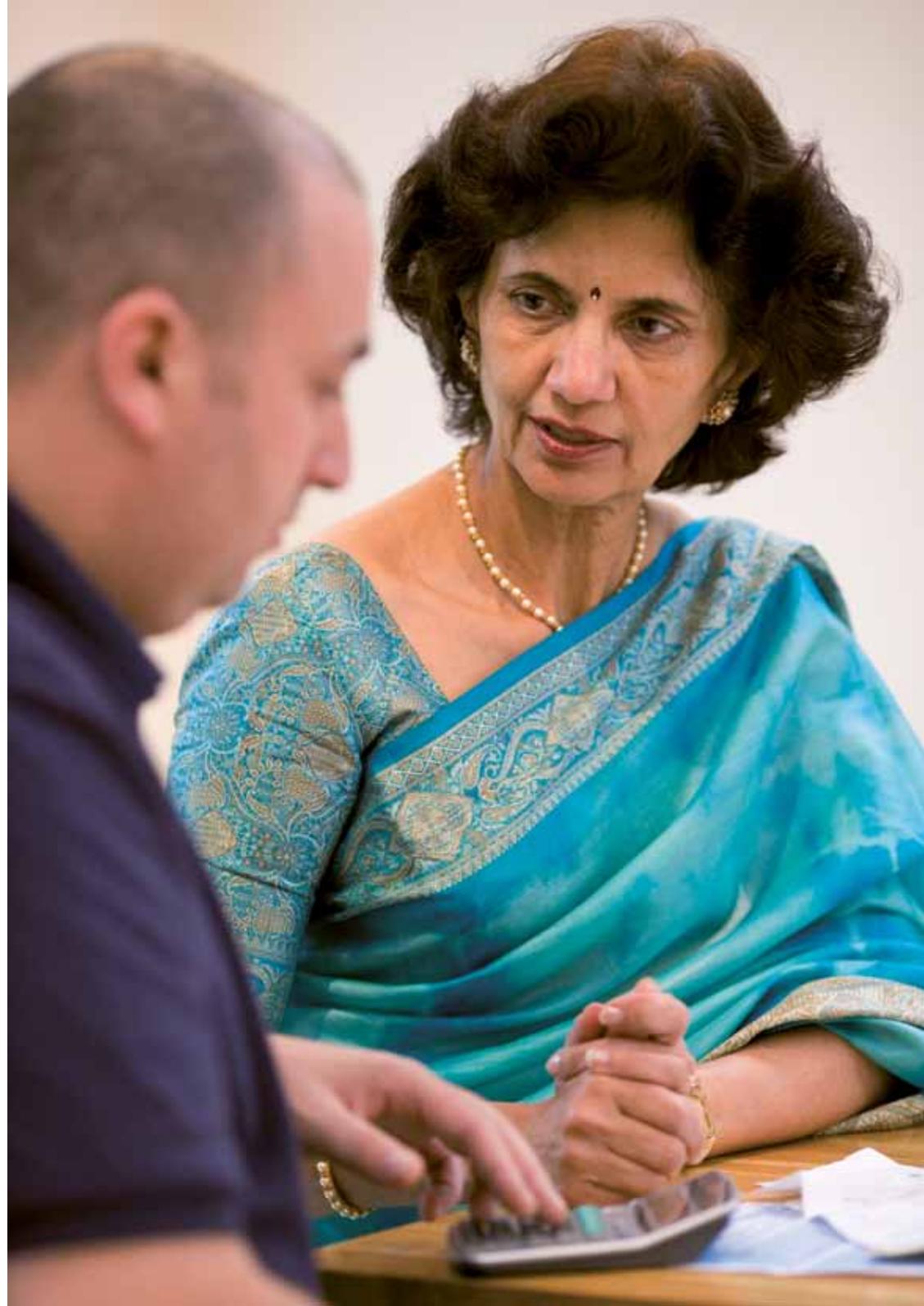
It's very important that you're reliable and you stick to any arrangements you've made with us. If your circumstances change, please let your Macmillan contact know as soon as possible.

If you're planning to go on holiday, please let your Macmillan contact know that you'll be unavailable for certain dates and when you plan to return.

## Support

You'll receive ongoing support from your Macmillan contact. As part of your development, please make a note of how each task you carried out went, what you did and if there were any issues that arose. Most volunteers will have a review meeting and the frequency of these will vary depending on the nature of your role and your time commitment.

The review meeting, in person or by phone, will focus on how the role is going, what support you need and, if necessary, update you on what's happening at Macmillan. It should be an opportunity for volunteers and staff to raise issues and for you to talk constructively about your involvement with us.





# THE ESSENTIALS

As a volunteer, you'll need to be aware of the following policies and procedures at Macmillan. Please take a few minutes to have a good read through and familiarise yourself with them.

## Expenses

Macmillan will reimburse volunteers for any reasonable out-of-pocket expenses. We'll only reimburse the amount that you have spent as a result of your volunteering, up to agreed maximum levels. Tickets and receipts must be provided in order to reclaim this money. It remains the decision of the volunteer as to whether they want to claim expenses or not.

## Gifts

Giving or receiving gifts may give the impression of favouritism and could raise expectations of the level of support you can provide in your role. As such, we ask that volunteers don't give or receive personal gifts to or from staff or anyone receiving support services from Macmillan.

## Health and safety

Macmillan is committed to looking after the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone who works for us, on our premises or uses our services. This commitment applies equally to our large team of volunteers who are vital to the services we provide.

Any activities carried out on a voluntary basis are covered by the same health and safety legislative requirements as those carried out by Macmillan employees. It's therefore important that you understand and accept your personal responsibility towards promoting and maintaining health and safety standards in order to provide a safe working environment for all.

Volunteers with specific responsibilities for health and safety, will receive training and guidance to help them to fulfil their responsibilities. Suitable risk assessment(s) must be prepared for all activities being carried out in the name of Macmillan.

### It's important that you:

- Carry out your duties without endangering either your own health and safety, or that of colleagues, third parties and/or the general public.
- Comply with all relevant instructions and procedures relating to safety and follow guidance provided by Macmillan.
- Inform your Macmillan contact of any personal health and safety requirements that you have.

If you have any doubts regarding your health and safety role or responsibility please speak to your Macmillan contact as soon as possible.

## Accidents and incidents

All accidents and incidents must be reported to your Macmillan contact as soon as possible. If you feel that it's a real emergency, please contact the emergency services immediately.



## **Personal safety and ID cards**

On your application form you will have provided us with an emergency contact, who we will contact in the unlikely event of an emergency. If it's required for your role, you'll be issued with a Macmillan volunteer ID card which you should always have with you when carrying out your activities.

## **Boundaries**

Clear boundaries are important for staff, volunteers and service users. They enable us to carry out a service according to agreed expectations and ensures that everyone receives the same quality of service.

We realise that staff and volunteers may sometimes have contact with clients in a personal capacity – as friends, family or colleagues. In this situation, please take care to avoid any apparent conflict of interest.

## **Confidentiality**

Volunteers must maintain confidentiality during their time with Macmillan. For this reason, when you complete an application form you are also signing a confidentiality declaration. This means that confidential information about people we support, volunteers, Macmillan employees and our work is kept private, unless sharing this information is required by law.

## **Criminal Records Bureau Checks**

Macmillan is involved in working with or supporting children, young people and vulnerable adults in a wide variety of ways. If your role involves working with these people you will be required to undergo a Criminal Records Bureau check as part of our policy on safeguarding. Your Macmillan contact will be able to provide you with more information if it's required for your role.

## **Data protection**

Before we can collect, store, or use data about an individual, the law requires us to ensure that we have that individual's consent to do so. The way we do this is by using what we call 'Data Protection Statements'. Our statements comply with the Data Protection Act. This is a legal act that protects people's personal information.

You may, in your work with us, have access to and handle the personal information of the people you are helping. It's vital that you're aware of our policy please ask your Macmillan contact for a copy of this, if it's required for your role.

## **Diversity**

We are committed to a policy of treating all volunteers and volunteer applicants equally and fairly. We accept volunteers based on their suitability for the role. We won't discriminate against any volunteers because of their age, disability, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, nationality, political beliefs, race, religion, sexual orientation or socio-economic background.

## **No smoking policy**

Smoking is not permitted on Macmillan property or when staff and volunteers are involved with Macmillan activities.

## Insurance

Macmillan has Employer's Liability Insurance, this provides insurance against liability for injury and disease experienced by volunteers or staff as a direct result of their involvement with Macmillan activities.

As a registered volunteer you are also covered by our public liability insurance when carrying out your volunteer duties on our behalf. This covers our legal liability to pay compensation for injuries or illness to a third party or damage to the property of third parties, which are due to Macmillan's negligence at fundraising or other events. It does not cover pure accidents (eg if a spectator at an event trips over their own feet, or malicious damage eg deliberate damage to equipment).

## Car drivers

It's important to note that if you're involved in an activity for Macmillan that involves using your car, you must inform your own insurers. Most insurance companies agree to cover car journeys at no extra charge – check this with your own insurance company. Your car will not be covered by the Macmillan insurance described above. Your main Macmillan contact will be able to provide you with a copy of a template letter that you can use to inform your insurance company of your intent to drive as part of your role.





## How we talk

When you're volunteering for Macmillan, you may notice that we use a certain style of language. The way we talk is a key part of our personality and our 'voice' is an important tool for helping people understand who we are and what we do.

It's essential that we maintain one voice – one that's consistent, clear, and easy to understand. One that expresses Macmillan's passion for supporting people affected by cancer. Whether you're speaking on behalf of Macmillan, drafting an email or writing a letter, it's well worth getting to grips with the Macmillan 'tone of voice'. Your Macmillan contact will support you or you can download our style guide from [be.macmillan.org.uk/aboutourbrand/howwetalk](https://www.be.macmillan.org.uk/aboutourbrand/howwetalk)

## What we wear

As a volunteer for Macmillan, you're also an ambassador for the organisation. You're responsible for presenting a positive image to visitors, clients and the community.

Please use your judgement to dress appropriately for the activities you're asked to carry out. We can provide a Macmillan branded t-shirt or polo shirt for you to wear while carrying out your duties. If you're ever unsure about what to wear, just ask your Macmillan contact.

# HOW MUCH YOU MEAN TO US

## Acknowledging your contribution

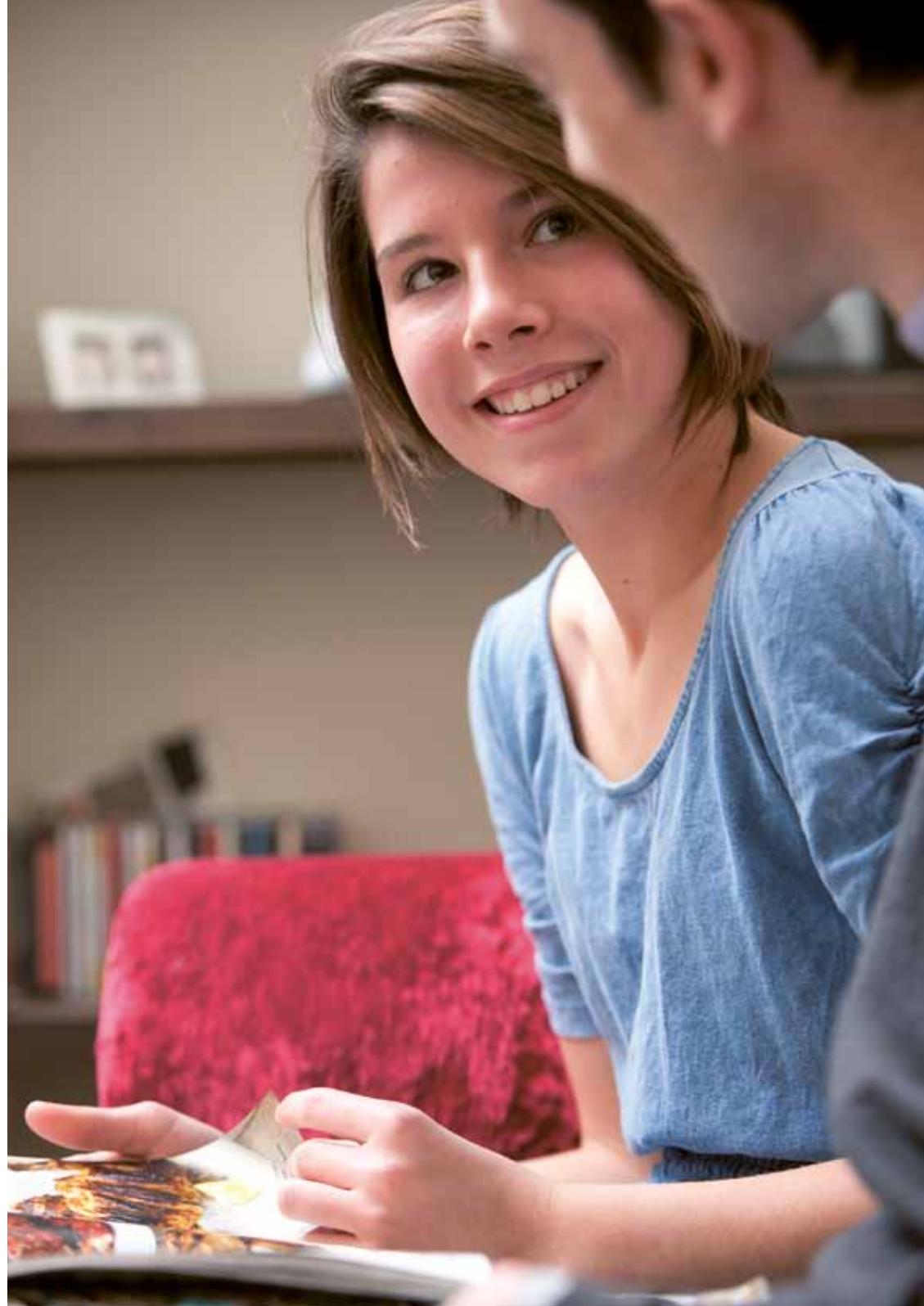
We honour the amazing work of our volunteers with the annual Macmillan Volunteer Awards. Staff and volunteers can make nominations, for more details and to see all the award categories visit [macmillan.org.uk/volunteer](https://macmillan.org.uk/volunteer)

Additionally, your Macmillan contact will provide you with a written reference upon request.

## Keeping in touch

As a volunteer with Macmillan we want to keep you in the loop. You can ask to receive our quarterly newsletter, *Mac News*, which is jam-packed with the latest information about everything we're up to. Once a year you'll receive *Macmillan in a Nutshell* – this will let you know all of our key achievements over the previous 12 months.

What's more, you can also access [be.macmillan.org.uk](https://be.macmillan.org.uk) to create your own posters and flyers, order merchandise or cancer information. Simply visit the site to sign up.





# DEALING WITH DIFFICULTIES

'Our Volunteer Manager is excellent as a listening ear and helpful with our problems.'

**Service volunteer**

## **Problems within your role**

If you encounter a difficulty with any aspect of the role, please talk to your Macmillan contact as soon as possible for advice and support.

If the role isn't working out as hoped, please let your Macmillan contact know. Together you should try to work out any difficulties. If it is agreed it can't work, this shouldn't be seen as a failure. Speak to your contact about finding a more appropriate role, or visit [macmillan.org.uk/volunteer](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/volunteer) to find out about other opportunities.

## Dealing with complaints

Although dealing with complaints can be difficult, it can give us a positive opportunity to improve the way we do things and provide a better service for people affected by cancer.

At Macmillan we define a complaint very broadly, as 'a statement of dissatisfaction'. This covers any kind of comment – spoken or written – which relates to dissatisfaction, whether or not it's labelled as a complaint, and whether or not it needs a formal response.

We have a centralised complaints procedure to ensure that we capture all feedback. If you wish to make a complaint or you receive a complaint from someone about your service or anything to do with Macmillan's work, please pass the information on to the Volunteering department. Email [volunteering@macmillan.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@macmillan.org.uk), call **020 7840 4961**, or post your information to Volunteering department, Macmillan Cancer Support, 89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7UQ.

# USEFUL INFORMATION

Main Macmillan contact

Contact details

I joined Macmillan on

**[learnzone.macmillan.org.uk](https://learnzone.macmillan.org.uk)**

Username

Password

**[be.macmillan.org.uk](https://be.macmillan.org.uk)**

Email

Password

Macmillan Cancer Support improves the lives of people affected by cancer. We provide practical, medical, emotional and financial help and push for better cancer care.

One in three of us will get cancer.  
Two million of us are living with it.  
We are all affected by cancer.  
We can all help. We are Macmillan.

## **Questions about living with cancer?**

Call the Macmillan Support Line free on 0808 808 00 00 (Monday–Friday 9am–8pm).  
Alternatively, visit [macmillan.org.uk](http://macmillan.org.uk).

Hard of hearing? Use textphone 0808 808 0121, or Text Relay.  
Non-English speaker? Interpreters available.