



Improving older people's
lives through creativity

Joining Equal Arts

Welcome to Equal Arts and thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer.

We are a creative ageing charity supporting older people in Newcastle, Gateshead and across the UK.

Our team works to improve the lives of older people through creativity and our arts activities around the North East provide creative opportunities to help improve people's health and wellbeing.

We strongly believe in the health benefits of the arts and support care staff and artists to deliver musical, visual and movement-based creative sessions with active older people and those living with dementia.

There is evidence people with dementia are creative once other cognitive impairments have taken over and it's our belief creative care should sit alongside physical care.

With our team of volunteers and artists we are committed to continuing our work with the health, social care and culture sectors encouraging them to offer innovative and creative interventions for older people.



“I knew I wanted to do something once I retired. I like to be involved and meet people and Equal Arts is a great way of doing this.

“I find it hugely worthwhile.”



**Creativity is contagious.
Pass it on. *Albert Einstein***

What is Creative Friends?

Creative Friends is a new form of befriending service supporting older people in our communities at risk of loneliness.

Unlike traditional schemes Creative Friends focuses on people’s shared creative interests to help form new friendships.

User-led, it brings together participants based on activities such as music, pottery and visual art.

Joined by a volunteer (known as a Creative Friend) participants are encouraged to explore their interests together.

The service is available to individuals aged 55 and over living in the Gateshead area identified as at risk of loneliness.

It is also open to those who feel they would benefit from support to explore new cultural and creative experiences.

What makes a good Creative Friend?

For participants to get the most out of the service they will need the support of great volunteers. We value commitment and are looking for volunteers able to encourage people to embrace the opportunities available to them.

Are you...

- **Friendly**
- **Understanding**
- **Non-judgemental**
- **Punctual**
- **Honest**
- **A good listener**
- **Able to commit to at least one four-hour session per week for a number of weeks**
- **A driver with a full UK driving license and access to a car?**



The value of volunteering

At Equal Arts we believe strongly in the value of volunteering.

Whether you are close to retiring, looking for a change in direction or starting out in the world of work, volunteering is a rewarding and beneficial experience.

We greatly appreciate your time and effort. As an Equal Arts volunteer you will be a valued member of our team, given every opportunity to grow and develop as we devise new programmes and projects.

You will have the direct support of the Creative Friends Project Lead, who first joined the charity as a volunteer, with further support from the rest of the Equal Arts team.

As soon as you join our team you will be given the direct contact details for the Project Lead, the Project Manager and the Equal Arts office.

Please feel free to contact us at any time while volunteering with us.

We are never too busy to help.



What do we offer volunteers?

Initial training for our volunteer team includes:

- **Equal Art's core values**
- **The concept behind Creative Friends**
- **Data protection**
- **Client confidentiality**
- **Safeguarding**
- **Lone-working**
- **Professional boundaries**
- **First aid**
- **How to physically support older people**
- **Session plans for Creative Friends**
- **Smartphone training**

Checks

Creative Friends volunteers are required to have an up-to-date Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check. We will pay for this check and support volunteers in applying.

Your DBS is valid for three years and can be transferred to use for other positions or organisations.

Expenses

A mileage allowance of 35p per mile will be paid for all mileage incurred during the delivery of weekly sessions.

Any out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed on the production of receipts.

To get involved email mark@equalarts.org.uk or ring 0191 477 5775.