

Our Volunteer Handbook



Town Break
Dementia Support Services



At Town Break Dementia Support Services, we support people living with dementia and their unpaid carers across Forth Valley — including Stirling, Falkirk and Clackmannanshire.

Our mission is to inspire and enable people across Forth Valley to live well with dementia. Whether through one-to-one companionship or group-based activities, we create safe, inclusive spaces where everyone affected by dementia can feel valued, supported and heard.

As a volunteer, you are a vital part of our story — helping us make everyday moments brighter for the people affected by dementia.

Hello and Welcome!

Thank you so much for choosing to share your time, skills and kindness with Town Break. Volunteers are at the heart of everything we do, and your support makes a real difference to the lives of people living with dementia and their unpaid carers across Forth Valley.

This handbook is the first step on your volunteering journey with us. Inside, you'll find everything you need to feel informed, confident, and supported in your role. Whether you're joining us in a group setting or out in the community, we're here to make sure your experience is rewarding, safe, and meaningful.

We're so glad to have you with us.

At Town Break, every action matters — and every person counts.

Like Kirstie, who offered a friendly smile at the door. This helped Eileen feel safe enough to come inside. There, Scott had set up the art supplies Eileen hadn't touched in years. She painted a picture her daughter now keeps by her bedside. And because of that moment, Eileen's carer, Grace, felt hope — and asked for help for the first time.

When you give your time, you help unlock moments of joy, courage and connection.

Everything you need, right here.

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Volunteer Project of the Year Award: Health 2017
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Useful Contacts & Key People at Town Break

We want you to feel supported and confident in your volunteering role. Here's a list of who's who and how to get in touch with us if you need anything.

Remember, your Services Coordinator is your first port of call for support and information while you're volunteering with us. You can always go to them with any compliments, comments or complaints.

Board of Trustees

Our Board of Trustees provides strategic oversight, ensuring we remain true to our mission and values.

Meet the Team

| | |
|-----------|-------------------------|
| Helen | Chief Executive Officer |
| Daniel | Operations Manager |
| Faye | Finance Manager |
| Davina | Team Leader |
| Leighann | Community Fundraiser |
| Beth | Services Coordinator |
| Jan | Services Coordinator |
| Anne | Services Coordinator |
| Christina | Services Coordinator |
| Lesley | Services Coordinator |
| Scott | Services Coordinator |
| Kirstie | Services Coordinator |
| Eilidh | Services Coordinator |
| Lisa | Admin Coordinator |

Contact Details

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Phone: | 01786 641 841 |
| Email: | admin@townbreak.org |
| Team Emails: | firstname@townbreak.org (e.g. helen@townbreak.org) |
| Website: | www.townbreak.org |

If you're ever unsure who to contact, please feel free to email or speak directly with our CEO: helen@townbreak.org

Head Office Address

Town Break Dementia Support
1 Springkerse Road
Stirling
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Is Dementia The Same As Alzheimer's?

It's a common question and the short answer is no, they're not the same thing.

Dementia is an umbrella term used to describe a group of symptoms that affect a person's memory, thinking, and ability to carry out everyday tasks. It's usually progressive and caused by damage to the brain.

Think of it this way:

- Dementia is the syndrome (the set of symptoms).
- Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia.

Other causes include vascular dementia, dementia with Lewy bodies, frontotemporal dementia, and damage from strokes or brain injuries.

What Dementia Affects

People with dementia may experience challenges with:

- Memory
- Thinking and understanding
- Orientation (knowing where they are or what time it is)
- Language and communication
- Judgement and decision-making
- Mood, behaviour, or motivation

Important to note: Dementia does not affect consciousness, and every person's experience is different.

Why It Matters

- Dementia is one of the leading causes of disability in older people worldwide.
- It affects not just individuals, but also their carers, families, and communities.
- There is still stigma and misunderstanding around dementia, which can make it harder for people to get a diagnosis or the support they need.

At Town Break, we aim to change that — by offering kindness, connection, and dignity through every interaction.

Understanding Dementia: Clearing Up Common Misconceptions

There's a lot of confusion and misinformation about dementia. To help you feel confident in your volunteering role, we've put together some common myths and facts. Understanding the truth behind these will help you provide better support and challenge stigma in the community.

| Myth | Fact |
|--|--|
| Dementia and Alzheimer's are the same. | Alzheimer's is the most common cause of dementia, but not the only one. Dementia is an umbrella term for a group of symptoms. |
| Only older people get dementia. | While age is a risk factor, younger people can also develop dementia - known as young onset dementia. |
| People with dementia don't understand what's going on. | Many people with dementia are very aware of their surroundings and feelings, even if they struggle with memory or communication. |
| Nothing can be done after diagnosis. | While there's no cure, support, therapies, and compassionate care can improve quality of life and maintain abilities for longer. |
| People with dementia are always confused or forgetful. | Dementia affects each person differently. Some may struggle with memory, others with language, mood, or movement. |
| It's just a normal part of ageing. | Dementia is not a natural part of ageing. It is caused by diseases that damage the brain. |
| You shouldn't correct someone with dementia. | It depends. Sometimes gentle reorientation helps. Other times, joining their reality (especially in later stages) can reduce stress and confusion. |

There are many different forms of dementia. Alzheimer's disease is the most common, causing around 60–70% of cases. Other major types include vascular dementia, dementia with Lewy bodies and frontotemporal dementia. Dementia can also develop after a stroke or certain infections.



Our History

At Town Break Dementia Support, we're more than just a service; we're a community dedicated to making life better for those affected by dementia across Forth Valley. Since 1992, we've been providing compassionate, person centred support to individuals and their unpaid carers, helping them live well with dementia.

We believe in the power of connection and understanding. Our services are designed to reduce isolation, promote independence, and enhance well-being. Whether it's through our day clubs, one-to-one support, or creative activities, we aim to create a safe and welcoming space where everyone feels valued.

Our mission is simple: to inspire and enable people across Forth Valley to live well with dementia. With the right support and understanding, we believe everyone can navigate this journey with confidence and dignity, free from societal barriers.

At Town Break Dementia Support Services, our values guide our commitment to quality care. We strive to make a positive difference the lives of those affected by dementia.

Our Mission Statement

To inspire and enable people, across Forth Valley, to live well with dementia.

We believe that with the right support and understanding, everyone can face the challenges of dementia with confidence, dignity and hope - breaking down the barriers that society can sometimes place in their way.



Why We're Here

Why We're Here

There are an estimated 2,500 people living with dementia (PLWD) in Forth Valley (2022 figures). We're here to support these individuals, their unpaid carers, and families with compassionate, person-centred services.

The Global Picture

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that around 55 million people worldwide live with dementia. As populations age, this number is expected to rise sharply—to 78 million by 2030 and 139 million by 2050. To meet this growing need in Scotland and beyond, Town Break must continue to evolve and grow sustainably—and you play a key role in making that possible.

Why You Matter

You are incredibly important to Town Break. Every one of our amazing volunteers—whether fundraising, making a cuppa, answering phones, or taking part in events like the Kilt Walk—makes a huge difference to people affected by dementia.

We never forget this. That's why we take every step to make sure your experience with Town Break is rewarding, enjoyable, and supportive.

Our Volunteer Pledge

1. Always treat you with respect, consideration, and appreciation.
2. Ensure you have the best possible experience by following our Volunteering Standards.
3. Clearly explain your role's responsibilities and relevant Town Break policies so you feel informed and confident.
4. Provide appropriate training and opportunities for you to grow your skills.
5. Support you through regular meetings and informal chats.
6. Offer fair, honest, and timely feedback if there are any concerns.
7. Keep you updated on how your contribution makes a real difference.
8. Maintain a safe and respectful environment for volunteering.
9. Never forget the enormous impact you make.

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10. Always be there to support you.

Why Your Role as a Volunteer is Crucial to Our Brand

As a volunteer, you are one of the most visible faces of Town Break. Every interaction you have shapes how people think and feel about us - and that matters deeply.

Whether you're helping at an event, chatting with someone at a group, or sharing our message online, you carry our brand's values in your words, actions and attitude.

How to Represent Town Break's Brand Well

- Be welcoming and approachable: Your kindness and respect leave a lasting impression.
- Use our logo and materials correctly: Follow guidelines so our brand looks professional and consistent.
- Speak positively and accurately: Share our mission and services clearly and confidently.
- Respect confidentiality and privacy: Upholding trust is key to our reputation.
- Be proud and passionate: Your enthusiasm inspires others to support us too.

Our Commitment to You

To help you represent Town Break with confidence, we will provide:

- Clear guidance on using our brand and materials.
- Support with training and information about our mission and services.
- Opportunities to ask questions and share your feedback about your volunteer experience.

Together, we build and protect a brand that reflects the compassion, hope, and dignity at the core of everything we do. Thank you for being part of this journey.



Volunteer Story: Leigh's Journey With Town Break

Over a decade ago, Leigh reached out to volunteer with Town Break - and she's still a vital part of our community today!

Leigh is a familiar and friendly face among both staff and volunteers. You'll often find her enjoying a cuppa and conversation at our services, joining in activities or lending a hand in the kitchen. She has a passion for arts, gardening, and cooking - and even created a Charlie Chaplin-themed video for us during lockdown. Truly, she's one of our stars!

Leigh also completed a course at Stirling University, gaining valuable insight into dementia and how it uniquely affects each person.

One of her favourite memories as a volunteer? Our trip to the Botanical Gardens in Edinburgh!



Our Vision

We envision a Forth Valley community where people living with dementia and their unpaid carers are supported, empowered and included through social connection and meaningful cognitive stimulation.

How You Bring Our Vision to Life

It's simple - we couldn't do it without you. Volunteers like you are essential in turning our vision into reality. Your time, skills and enthusiasm help Town Break grow, develop and continue making a real difference in people's lives every day.

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A Role for Everyone

Whatever your skills or interests, there's a place for you with Town Break - whether you're a brilliant organiser, a master tea-maker, or a compassionate listener. We welcome them all!

There are many ways to volunteer with us, and we can't wait to put your talents to good use. Volunteers like you make a huge difference to the lives of people living with dementia.

Some ways you could get involved include:

- Joining our fundraising team.
- Providing a listening ear.
- Supporting at one of our groups.
- Offering office support.

If someone you know has been affected by dementia, your personal experience can be a powerful way to help others on their journey - while gaining valuable skills and experience yourself.

We welcome volunteers of all ages, backgrounds, and experiences. What makes you unique will help us reach communities that Town Break hasn't connected with yet. Every single volunteer truly counts.

We're So Proud of You

Our volunteers are the heart of Town Break - a diverse group spanning ages, ethnicities, and career paths, each bringing something special.

No matter your experience with dementia, your support makes a huge difference to people who need it most.

This diversity also helps us extend our reach to new communities, raising awareness and support for those affected by dementia.

Settle in For the Serious Bit: Guidance & Procedures

While volunteering with Town Break, it's important that you follow our core procedures. These help keep everyone safe, ensure we work legally and maintain consistency across all areas of our organisation.

You'll need to be familiar with guidance on:

- Expenses.
- Health and safety (including lone working and driving).
- Equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Data protection and confidentiality.
- Safeguarding.
- Problem-solving.
- Cash handling (if you're involved in fundraising).

Your Services Coordinator will help you understand which procedures apply to your role and is always available if you have any questions.

To receive a PDF copy of these policies and procedures, just ask any member of staff or email admin@townbreak.org.

Privacy Matters: Keeping Our Data Safe

Trust is everything. People need to know we will protect their private information - and there are legal rules to make sure we do.

When you handle information like names, addresses, or personal details, always remember how it would feel if the roles were reversed. For example:

Imagine a friend wants to take your photo. How would you feel if they said they would keep it just for themselves - versus if they planned to post it on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram? Would you want to review the photo first? Would you want to pose differently? Or maybe you wouldn't want them to take or share the photo at all?

Everyone feels differently about their personal data being used, so it's important we get clear permission before sharing or storing anything.

Please note:

- All digital media (photos and videos) taken at Town Break events or involving clients must follow Data Protection laws, including GDPR.
- Volunteers must not take photos of Town Break clients on personal devices.

We've Got Your Back: Keeping Everyone Safe

Volunteering with us should always be safe and enjoyable.

We ask all volunteers to follow some simple rules to protect themselves and others. In return, we promise to provide the information, training and support you need to volunteer safely and confidently.

Your safety, and that of our staff, supporters, clients and the public, is our number one priority.

All volunteers and staff must undergo a PVG (Protecting Vulnerable Groups) check before starting their role. This requires three forms of identification, two of which must include a photo (such as a passport or driving licence).

Safeguarding Tip

People living with dementia can be more vulnerable because of their condition. As a charity, we are trusted by the people we support and our volunteers and sometimes we hear about concerns or situations that need attention.

Remember, any adult can become vulnerable, not just those living with dementia.

Town Break has an Adult Protection Policy to guide and support volunteers, staff and everyone we work with. If you'd like a copy, just ask us by emailing admin@townbreak.org.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: Who do I ask if I'm unsure about a procedure?

A: Your Services Coordinator is your go-to person for any questions or support. You can also contact the office at admin@townbreak.org.

Q: Can I take photos during activities?

A: No, volunteers must not take photos of clients on personal devices. Any official photos are managed by Town Break and must comply with data protection laws.

Q: What should I do if I see something worrying?

A: Report any safeguarding concerns immediately to your Services Coordinator or senior staff. Your safety and the safety of others is our priority.

Q: What identification do I need for the PVG check?

A: You'll need three forms of ID, with two including a photograph (e.g., passport, driving licence).

Q: How do I claim expenses?

A: Speak to your Services Coordinator or contact the office for the correct procedure and forms.

Q: What if I feel overwhelmed or unsure about my role?

A: We're here to support you — please talk to your Services Coordinator. We want your volunteering experience to be positive and enjoyable.

Q: Can I change or cancel a volunteering session?

Please let your Services Coordinator know as soon as you can, so we can adjust plans.

Q: How do I keep track of my volunteer hours?

Your Services Coordinator will show you the simple way to log your time.

Q: Can I try different volunteer roles?

Yes! Tell us what you're interested in and we'll help you get involved.

Q; Emergency Procedures

If you're volunteering at Town Break or events, please:

- Find out where the emergency exits and meeting points are.
- Report any accidents or incidents straight away.
- If someone is in immediate danger, call 999 right away.

Your Services Coordinator will share any specific safety info you need for your role.

Q:Need to Contact Us?

General questions: admin@townbreak.org or 01786 641 841

Out-of-hours emergencies: 999 / 111

Volunteer support: 0800 389 6046

What to Do if You Have a Concern

If the situation is not life threatening, please contact your Services Coordinator right away.

They are your first point of contact and will take the necessary steps to inform the right person or agency.

If someone's life is in immediate danger, always call 999 without delay.

Volunteer Code of Conduct

As a valued Town Break volunteer, we ask that you:

- Treat everyone with respect, kindness and understanding.
- Keep all personal information confidential.
- Follow Town Break's policies and procedures carefully.
- Speak openly with your Services Coordinator or staff if you have any questions or concerns.
- Represent Town Break in a positive way wherever you go.

Your behaviour helps us create a safe and welcoming space for everyone involved.

Training & Development

We want you to feel confident and ready for your role, so we offer:

- Essential training like dementia awareness, safeguarding and health & safety.
- Optional workshops to build skills, such as communication and creative activities.
- Opportunities to grow personally and professionally, with support from your Services Coordinator.

Volunteer Support & Wellbeing

Volunteering is rewarding but can sometimes be challenging. If you ever feel unsure or overwhelmed:

- Reach out to your Services Coordinator or any staff member - we're here to help.
- Connect with other volunteers for support and encouragement.
- Use external support services if needed; just ask us for details.

Expenses and Reimbursements

We want volunteering to be easy for everyone. If you spend money on things like travel or materials for your role, you can claim it back. Just remember to:

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- Keep your receipts.
- Send your claim to your Services Coordinator or the admin team with the expense form.
- Ask us anytime if you're not sure what you can claim.

Helpful Resources & Next Steps

Want to learn more?

We're here to support you every step of the way. Check out our website for extra resources, training opportunities and upcoming events. Don't hesitate to ask your Services Coordinator if you want to know more or if you have any questions.

Stay connected

Remember to follow us on social media and keep an eye on your inbox for newsletters – these are packed with news, stories and ways to get involved.

Need support?

Volunteering is rewarding but can sometimes be challenging. If you ever need a chat, guidance, or extra support, please reach out to your Services Coordinator or use the volunteer support contacts we've provided. You're never alone in this.

Tell us what you think

Your feedback matters! We want to keep improving your volunteer experience. Look out for opportunities to share your thoughts through surveys or informal check-ins.

Ready to get started?

We can't wait to welcome you fully into the Town Break family. Together, we'll make a real difference for people affected by dementia across Forth Valley.

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We Love Talking

We're passionate about staying connected with you! Whether it's sharing training opportunities, celebrating our superstar volunteers, or keeping you in the loop with everything you need for your role, communication is key. But it's not just about us — we want to hear from you too! Volunteering with Town Break is a two-way street, and we're always ready to listen, support, and chat things through.

Here are three great ways to keep in touch:

Newsletters:

Our newsletters are packed with updates about Town Break, upcoming training, events, and volunteer highlights. They're a handy way to stay informed and get the most out of your volunteering experience. If you opt in, you'll receive them straight to your email inbox.

Social media:

Help us spread the word by following and sharing our work! You can find Town Break on all the major platforms:

Facebook: @TownBreak

Twitter: @TownBreak

Instagram: @town_break

TikTok: @town_break

Services Coordinator:

Your Services Coordinator is your go-to person for any questions, support, or ideas you want to share. They're here to help you get the most from your volunteering and to listen if you want to make things even better.



Thank You!

A huge thank you from all of us at Town Break – and, most importantly, from the many people whose lives you brighten every day.

Together, we're here to support people affected by dementia to live life as fully and joyfully as possible. Whatever challenges dementia brings, we stand right beside them.

One last thing...

All volunteers begin with a three-month probationary period. At the end of this time, you'll have an informal chat with a member of staff to see how things are going and talk about your experience.

To prepare your Town Break ID badge, we'll need a passport-style photograph from you. We can't wait to see you!

