

# VOLUNTEERING

## About Streetwise Opera

Streetwise Opera uses music as a tool to help homeless people move forward in their lives – we build confidence, self-esteem, social networks, skills, creativity and enjoyment and show how these outcomes produce a kaleidoscope of further tangible impacts. These include more engagement with agency services, getting back in touch with family and reducing self-harm/alcohol consumption. We run two programmes: a music Workshop Programme in 11 homeless centres nationally and Professional Productions which involve our performers working alongside top professionals. In just ten years, Streetwise has grown into a nationally recognised charity with bases across the country and winner of a number of major awards in the arts and homelessness sectors. Our large bi-annual productions are inclusive with no auditions for the homeless participants, but neither do we compromise on the highest production and artistic standards – resulting in shows that are not tokenistic or patronising but instead help participants to feel respected and valued, turning stigma into celebration.



## Purpose of the Role

Your role will be to provide practical support to Streetwise Opera staff and Workshop Leaders in a variety of possible ways, as outlined below and we will aim to match your skills and interests to an appropriate area of work.

***Many homeless organisations ask volunteers to provide an ear for participants and listen to their stories. At Streetwise Opera however, we operate in a different way by aiming to elevate our participants beyond their day-to-day issues and take them out of their daily lives by showing them their creative potential. As such, we treat participants as artistic, creative people and don't become involved in their everyday situations at all. Please be very sure that you are comfortable with this approach – if you are not, then volunteering with Streetwise Opera may not be the right thing for you.***

## Administration

As an admin assistant you will have a variety of duties from producing and distributing newsletters and other marketing and promotional materials, to maintaining databases, filing, photocopying and archiving materials. Sometimes we need help with mail outs – and then it's a case of all hands on deck to fill envelopes and post them out.

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## Theatre Trips

Streetwise Opera regularly take groups to see staged productions and concerts at a variety of exciting venues and festivals. Your role will be to support the staff on the trip with meeting and greeting participants, directing them to their seats, buying programmes and refreshments, assisting the more vulnerable members during the interval, gathering the group at the end of the performance and if necessary helping them into taxis.

## Public Performances

Streetwise Opera are often asked to perform at external events ranging from meetings and conferences to the bi-annual main production. Your role will be varied and will depend on what is needed in terms of support on the day. It is likely to involve supporting the company managers, meeting participants and taking them to the venue, helping set-up the waiting area and rehearsal space, organising refreshments, assisting participants into costume, directing the audience to their seats, looking after valuables during the performance and tidying up at the end.

## Development Events

Each year Streetwise Opera organise several fundraising events to help raise funds for our work and to develop new supporters and audiences. These events can be anything from a quiz or open mic night to performing an 'Opera in a Day'. Your role will involve helping to set up the venue, arranging chairs, tables, seating plans, helping with ticket allocations, displaying information or prizes, assisting in greeting guests, looking after participants should they be attending, and any other jobs that the Streetwise team require.

## Workshops

Volunteering in workshops will involve a weekly commitment for ten or twelve workshops, or possibly a longer-term involvement. The role would include all the small things that help a workshop run smoothly such as setting out the chairs, handing out/photocopying word sheets, getting the kettle on at the tea break, helping to tidy up at the end and generally helping the workshop leaders and support staff. This opportunity would particularly suit volunteers who would enjoy taking part in the workshop alongside the participants.

## Person Specification

Streetwise Opera aims to encourage diversity and positively welcomes volunteers regardless of race, religion, sexuality, gender or disability. Whilst we feel there is no such thing as a typical volunteer there are some key skills and qualities that are necessary for some of these roles:

### Qualities (essential)

- Friendly and approachable
- Ability to adapt to any given situation
- Willingness to take on tasks and do them to the best of your ability
- Commitment to agreed scheduling and good communication with the Streetwise office

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## Skills (desirable but not essential)

- Specific skills that you may have could be very useful to us, so please mention these when applying for the role. E.g. administration, catering, a knowledge of finance, experience of working in the homeless sector or with vulnerable adults or experience of working in other community settings.

## Expenses

We will reimburse volunteers' travel expenses.

## The benefits of volunteering with us

We offer a variety of volunteer opportunities within a dynamic, friendly environment. Our activities present interesting challenges for all involved, whilst also being great fun.

Our volunteers have the opportunity to gain skills, experience or training in the following areas:

- Working alongside vulnerable adults
- Managing large groups
- Health and safety awareness
- Further knowledge of opera