



## First Step Trust in Sheffield

*Here we answer some common questions prospective workforce members often have about working at FST in Sheffield.*

### **Background**

FST has been operating in Sheffield since 1996, offering voluntary work experience to people who are out of work due to ill health but who want to work towards gaining employment. With FST you will be offered real work regardless of your level of experience – we will train you from scratch and help you get ready for employment.

We operate as a small business and are about to open SMaRT Venue Coffee Shop. Work in the coffee shop, kitchen, cleaning and administration teams is on offer. All our workforce from the manager down have a part to play in ensuring the business' success financially and in individuals' progress to employment.

In the past in Sheffield we ran garden maintenance, painting and decorating and similar businesses which are all now closed.

### **Eligibility**

If you are of working age but unemployed due to ill health and live in Sheffield, you are welcome to apply to join our volunteer workforce.

Working at FST is not an end in itself – it is the first steps on a journey – anyone joining our workforce should intend to move on towards employment (paid or voluntary) or education – or want to test how far along that road they are able to go.

### **Referral**

Referral is easy – a **phone call** starts the process. This call can be made by you, a support worker or your GP.

We usually first meet a potential workforce member for an **informal chat** at our office. If you consider First Step Trust could be for you we will then arrange an interview and ask you to complete an **application form**.

The **interview** is aimed at understanding your work history, skills and aspirations – as well as ensuring you understand First Step Trust and what will be required of you as a volunteer workforce member.

A formal **reference** and statement of support is requested from a person you name. For those with a Care Plan, this should be your main support worker; for others this could be a GP or social worker.

## ***Work experience opportunities***

We offer part-time and full-time voluntary work for up to a year. Experience is not necessary and we provide any on-the-job training you need.

Although we run a Coffee Shop, this does not mean you should limit your employment prospects to these areas – what is more important is improving health, gaining confidence, building recent employment history and getting work-based references. You may wish to eventually work in an entirely different field – that's fine and working at FST can help you prepare for it.

We have positions in:

- Food preparation
- Barista (drinks preparation)
- Customer service
- Building management and Office cleaning
- Business administration

During your time with us you have the opportunity to **build a recent job history** – invaluable in proving to a prospective employer or college that you can be relied upon.

You will need to establish essential work habits such as good timekeeping; stamina; consistent quality of work; team-working; initiative and skill development and we will actively encourage and help you with these.

If appropriate, and towards the end of your time with us, we will help you into an additional, short-term, work experience position with a local company. This gives you additional exposure to employment – and more to put on your CV!

When eventually moving on from First Step Trust we can **provide you with work-based references** to support your applications.

## ***What will be expected of me?***

We expect each workforce member to do their best to develop their own abilities and to treat FST as a place of work.

We will agree with you the times you will be at work and this needs to fit in with our business requirements – we operate a shift system. You then need to turn up for work reliably and on time – this means **giving top priority to work** during the agreed times. We need to have the people at work deliver what our customers pay for.

You may start off slowly and build up your hours – in fact we recommend you do so. Most people start on a day or two a week. Typically, you should probably aspire to adding a further day within about a month of starting work. If absolutely necessary we can discuss temporary exceptions to this pattern if it's key to enabling you to start work and moving forward.

We operate shifts starting and ending at various times between 7.30am and 5.30pm.

While you're working it is important you work to build your own abilities, work in a professional manner and deliver a quality job for our paying customers.

## ***What support is available?***

### **Work and work-based development**

FST offers you the opportunity to put things into practice in a work environment. This may be building self-confidence, building stamina for the working day, increasing concentration, improving social interaction, for example.

We will offer you constructive feedback on the job as well as meet with you regularly to discuss your progress and help plan your development. This will be practical advice that can help improve your employment prospects.

We provide support with CV writing and interview techniques; help with job-search; advice on training. We can also put you in touch with other agencies who can provide tailored occupation assessments; advice on benefits and access to relevant funding.

### **Qualifications**

Working with The Sheffield College we provide access to NVQs in catering, customer service and cleaning. You can gain accreditation to verify your skills in literacy and numeracy. We also provide British Safety Council training in Health and Safety.

### **Health**

First Step Trust concentrates on running a business that provides you with practical opportunities. We do not provide counselling or therapy – to do so would duplicate existing services.

We actively encourage our workforce to make full use of the resources provided by the NHS, Sheffield City Council and voluntary and independent service providers if this will help you improve your prospects of employment.

Where your health (mental or physical) impacts your work and job prospects we will discuss this with you but will otherwise concentrate on work-related matters.

## ***How does this affect my benefits?***

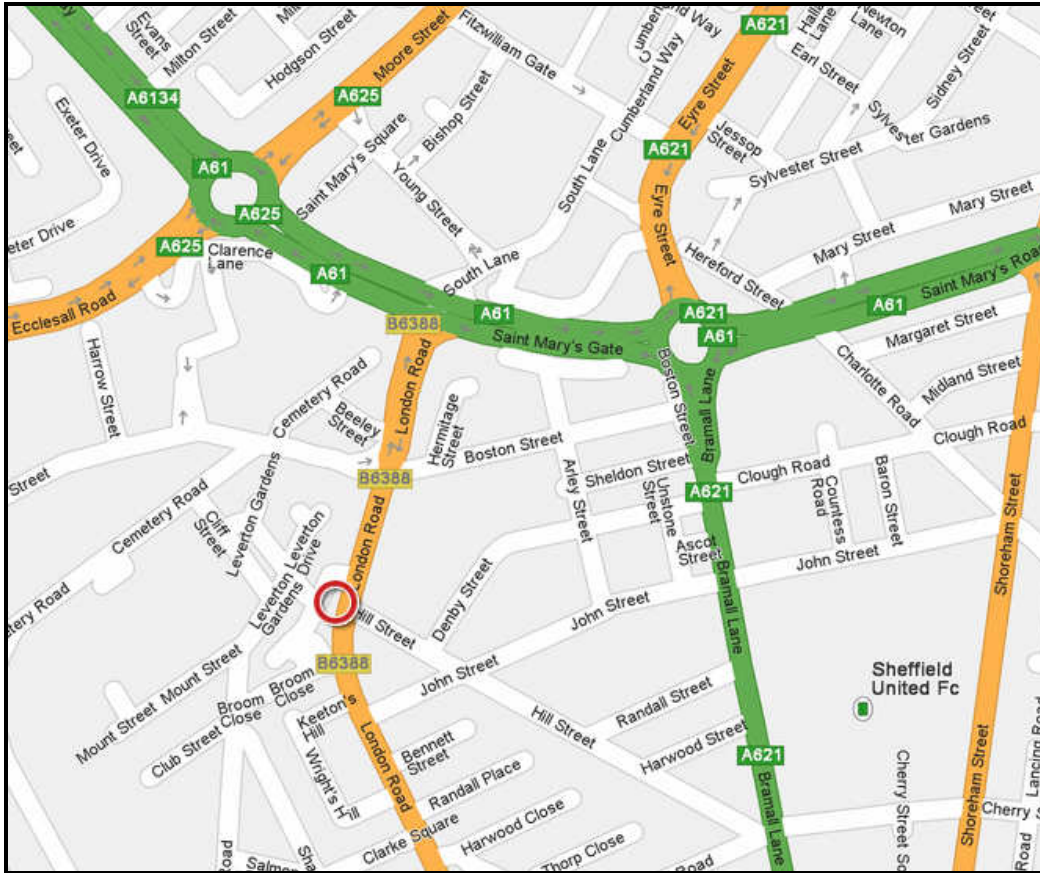
Because you will be a volunteer workforce member **there is no adverse effect on your benefits**. We can provide a small contribution towards covering expenses incurred.

### ***To find out more***

Contact Karl Newell or Faye England on 0114 281 2981

## How to find us

The position of our office is marked on the map below. It is a large white building with the entrance opposite Hill Street.



The following buses stop on London Road close to the junction with Boston Street:

**20, 20A, 25, 25A, 75, 76, 97, 98**

The following bus stops on Boston Street:

**22**