



Introduction to *IT Can Help* **and** **Volunteering** **Module 1**

The Induction Pack is intended as an introduction to IT Can Help, disabled people and assistive technology.

Induction objective

The purpose of this Induction Pack is to introduce IT Can Help, promote engagement with volunteers and to provide initial disability awareness and training.

The Pack comprises four core modules:

1. Introduction to IT Can Help and Volunteering (this module)
2. Training
 - a. Disability awareness
 - b. Assistive technology
3. Useful resources and information
4. Induction Pack

Contents

Induction objective.....	2
Contents	3
Introduction to IT Can HELP.....	4
How IT Can Help Works	5
Structure of IT Can Help.....	7
Information for Voluneers or those Thinking of Volunteering	9
Acknowledgements	17

Introduction to IT Can HELP

The aim of IT Can Help is to help individuals with disabilities overcome computer problems and benefit from the use of IT in their everyday lives.

We do this through a network of skilled volunteers who can visit clients in their homes or other convenient locations such as day centres.

In the past two years alone, the IT Can Help network has made over 2,000 visits, resolving many hardware and software problems and helping people to gain confidence in the use of IT.

Everyone involved in the Network is a volunteer; there are over 250 volunteers in more than 50 UK counties.

There is no charge to clients for the service provided.

IT Can Help – INDUCTION PACK

Message from Bob Twitchin, Chair IT Can Help Management Group

- On behalf of the Management Group, I'd like to thank all of you for your commitment to IT Can Help and to assisting disabled people to share in the benefits of using IT, particularly for communication and social inclusion. There are few organisations which depend to such a large extent on volunteers, both for assisting clients and as organisers, and we greatly appreciate all you contribute, in time and expertise.
- **Induction Pack**
In this pack we have tried to bring together the information you need to understand IT Can Help and to get to grips with working as a volunteer. Things have changed rapidly and will continue to change: the needs of our clients, the world of IT and the ways in which voluntary organisations have to work. I want to thank particularly Andy McMahon, who has taken the lead for volunteer training throughout the UK, has created this pack and is working with us to make on-line training available and provide tools for volunteers.
- **Training and Supporting Volunteers**
This is a very important priority. In this pack you will be learning more about assistive technology, hearing about other opportunities for training and other ways in which we can work more effectively to assist clients.
- **Getting Feedback from our clients**
From time to time we receive glowing compliments from clients about how they have been helped. Very occasionally clients are dissatisfied and we have a procedure to deal with any complaints. Like all organisations which provide any kind of service, we need to know how well we are meeting the needs of the people we wish to help. The MG have been looking at ways of encouraging more clients to give us feedback

- **Meetings for Volunteers**

We want to encourage local, regional, and national meetings for volunteers for training, discussion and support.

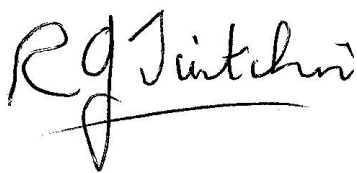
- **Helping Disabled People – Spreading the Word**

Most of our Organisers tell us that they would like more clients for their volunteers and the MG is keen to make more disabled people aware of IT Can Help and the help our volunteers offer.

We are following a number of approaches:

- Flyers for distribution.
- Publicity through organisations working with disabled people – Thalidomide Trust, Leonard Cheshire Disability, REMAP and our partner Abilitynet
- Regional publicity campaigns where the BCS Press office will help organisers target local press and radio with press releases and case studies.
- New posters and leaflets including a new logo.
- **Local Publicity – You can help, please look for opportunities to publicise our work.**

- **Please let us know how you feel we are doing**

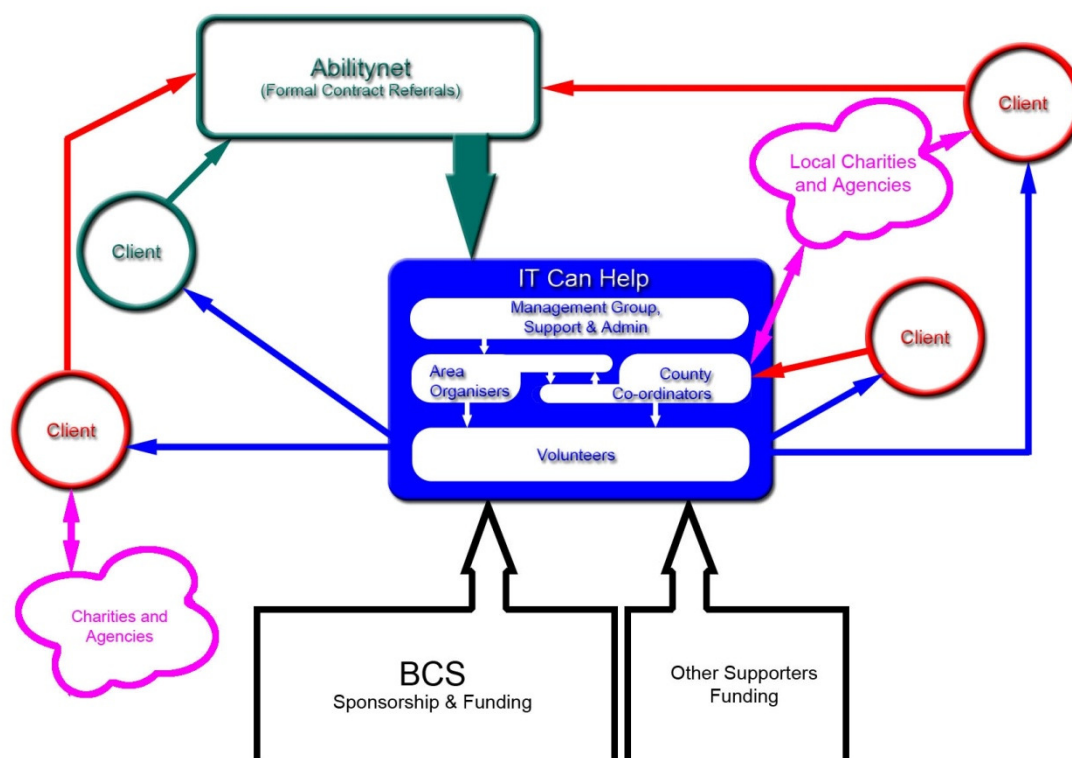


Bob Twitchin

btwitchin@itcanhelp.org.uk

Chair IT Can Help Management Group. August 2009

How IT Can Help Works



Structure of IT Can Help

The organisation has a management team to set strategy, develop partnerships and secure funding. The management team also deals with administrative functions such as security clearance, training and payment of expenses.

Geographically, the Network divides the UK into a number of regions. Each region has an Area Organiser who is responsible for its development and maintenance. A region includes a group of counties, each with its own County Coordinator. It is the County Coordinator's responsibility to coordinate the activities of local volunteers and to manage the client demand. They are also responsible (with support from the Area Organiser) for recruiting volunteers, administering the local network, advertising for clients

and publicising the IT Can Help services throughout their county.

All applications for assistance are made to and assessed by the County Coordinator (or Area Organiser), who contacts local volunteers to see who can respond soonest. Applications are received from disabled people themselves, their carers, other persons acting on their behalf and via the freephone AbilityNet Client Helpline.

A high proportion of referrals are received via AbilityNet's 0800 number given on leaflets, posters or other promotional literature. The service level agreement with AbilityNet requires that the client is contacted within five days to acknowledging that IT Can Help has received the request; the assistance may not take place until sometime later when a mutually convenient visit can be arranged. Other referral sources include posters in libraries and Information Centres etc, leaflets in Doctors surgeries, disability organisation newsletters, newspaper and magazine articles, NHS and Social Services.

Information for Voluneers or those Thinking of Volunteering

What skills do I need?

The key requirement to be a volunteer is a commitment to helping people with disabilities. As we are an organisation whose aim is to assist with computer problems then clearly a level of familiarity with computers is desirable; however it is not necessary to be an IT professional.

Increasingly a number of clients – particularly those who are visually impaired – need Assistive Technology (AT) or require help with it. Therefore, AT experience or a willingness to engage in AT training (which would be provided) is a very useful addition to our skill set.

What Facilities Do I need?

As a provider of IT solutions, we make extensive use of the internet for email communication and delivery of training resources. There is a Yahoo group which provides a forum for volunteers to discuss and share problems and solutions and which all volunteers are urged to visit regularly. Therefore internet access is essential.

Of course, there may be times when it is more appropriate to communicate by telephone – say when first contacting clients or when there is a particular need for the Area Orgaiser or County Coordinator to talk to a volunteer. Other than those of the AO/CC,

volunteer phone numbers will not be disclosed to others without your consent.

Level of Commitment Expected

We are a volunteer organisation and therefore volunteers can set their own parameters for the amount of time they can allocate to the organisation. Area Organisers and County Coordinators will then endeavour to manage demand within these agreed parameters.

In any event, the number of referrals passed to any one volunteer is unlikely to be onerous and can be combined with one's employment or other voluntary work.

Visits to clients are by mutual arrangement and clients cannot insist on a specific day or time.

On occasions, a volunteer may be asked to visit a client in an adjoining county or area where there is no volunteer available or because of the volunteer's particular experience.

Who Can be a Volunteer and How to Apply

Anyone who is 18 or over can apply to be a volunteer.

If you have a disability which you feel may effect your ability to become a volunteer, please do get in touch, as your experience is much needed and we can work with you so that the organisation and our clients can benefit from your particular perspective.

The volunteer application forms can be completed online or downloaded from <http://www.itcanhelp.org.uk/howyou.htm>

Later, in advance of a meeting to discuss the role, you will be asked to submit – in confidence – to the Chair of IT Can Help details and dates of any convictions which may be relevant to the application.

IT Can Help will treat all information you supply in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Details held on the database will not be released to any other organisation unless there is a legal requirement to do so.

Becoming a Volunteer

Because IT Can Help works with vulnerable people, we need to gather background information on all volunteer applications.

This acceptance process involves:

- Introductory meeting with Area Organiser or County Coordinator. At the meeting you will be requested to produce evidence of identity in respect of your Disclosure Application. Also, please provide a passport type photo to CC and AO – preferably electronic format – for onward transmission to the Secretary
- References will be taken up.
- Criminal Records Enhanced Disclosure check
<http://www.crb.gov.uk/>
- Confirmation of appointment following return of satisfactory references and Criminal Records Bureau check. The Secretary issues the Welcome Pack which includes ID card, Disability Communications Guide and invitation to join the Yahoo group.

Until this procedure is complete, volunteers will not usually be permitted to visit clients unless another volunteer is present. In special circumstances the County Coordinator may make an exception to this rule

Client Relationship

- Opposite sex clients
 - A high proportion of clients are female whereas most volunteers are male. Opposite sex clients, especially if female, are therefore contacted in advance by CC/AO who explains the situation and the client is given the option of having someone else present during the volunteer visit; but most don't bother or it isn't practicable for whatever reason.
- Being comfortable with client
 - Volunteer will be aware in advance of the client's disability and in some situations it might be preferable for two volunteers to visit.
- Do I need to ask for a client to prove their disability?
 - Request and disability stated taken at face value. Whether via AbilityNet or otherwise, all the client has to do is phone or email asking for assistance. (Other organisations may require references before accepting and make a modest charge.)
- Understanding the client's problem
 - Often the description of the client's problem contained in the referral may not be sufficient to diagnose the problem; possibly because the client or the carer is not an experienced computer user. When contacting the client it is therefore advisable to confirm, if possible, the nature of the problem and basic facts about the computer – hardware, set up and software and whether they have sole use of the computer.

- Does IT Can Help Provide training to clients?
 - Our core purpose is problem solving and assisting with computer setup; we are not a training organisation. However, through these activities, some training is inevitable. Clients vary in their ability to assimilate training and should more than say three visits be required the client should consider attending a training course run locally or approaching another organisation which offers training. Refer back to County coordinator or /Area Organiser if this could present a problem for the client
- Visiting clients
 - Computer problems can often take some time to diagnose and resolve therefore you should allocate a reasonable amount of time for each visit. If you are unable to resolve the problem within the time available, explain the situation to the client and arrange a mutually convenient early return visit.
- Client visit Issues
 - If any untoward situation arises during the visit, the volunteer should make an excuse to leave early and report the matter to the CC/AO.

How do Volunteers Benefit

Volunteers benefit from the satisfaction of providing a service that is highly appreciated by the clients and, for those who are that way inclined, the challenge of solving computer problems.

Does IT Can Help Provide training to volunteers?

IT Can Help is keen to invest in its volunteers and has a dedicated person on the management team to promote and provide training to volunteers.

In fact, this Induction Pack is part of an ongoing process to improve induction and training. Further information is available throughout other modules of the Induction Pack.

Volunteers can access online training material by contacting training@itcanhelp.org.uk

Activity Coordination

County Coordinators and Area Organisers are charged with coordinating and allocating requests for assistance. It is therefore necessary that volunteers keep their CC/AO informed of any changes in their circumstances that might affect their ability or availability to support clients – such changes include, but are not restricted to, moving to another area, change of address or other contact details, vacation, other demands on time.

Expense claims and Reimbursement

Volunteers provide their time free but travel and other expenses incurred on behalf of IT Can Help are reimbursed. We positively encourage you to claim your expenses.

A claim form is available from our online area, or from your area organiser.

Where the expense includes VAT, the original receipt should accompany the expense claim so that the VAT can be recovered; where there is no VAT shown on any receipt, the receipts can be scanned and submitted with the expense claim form by email either following each visit or periodically.

Acknowledgements

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Comments/amendments to training@itcanhelp.org.uk

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