



# Mary's Meals UK

## Volunteer Handbook





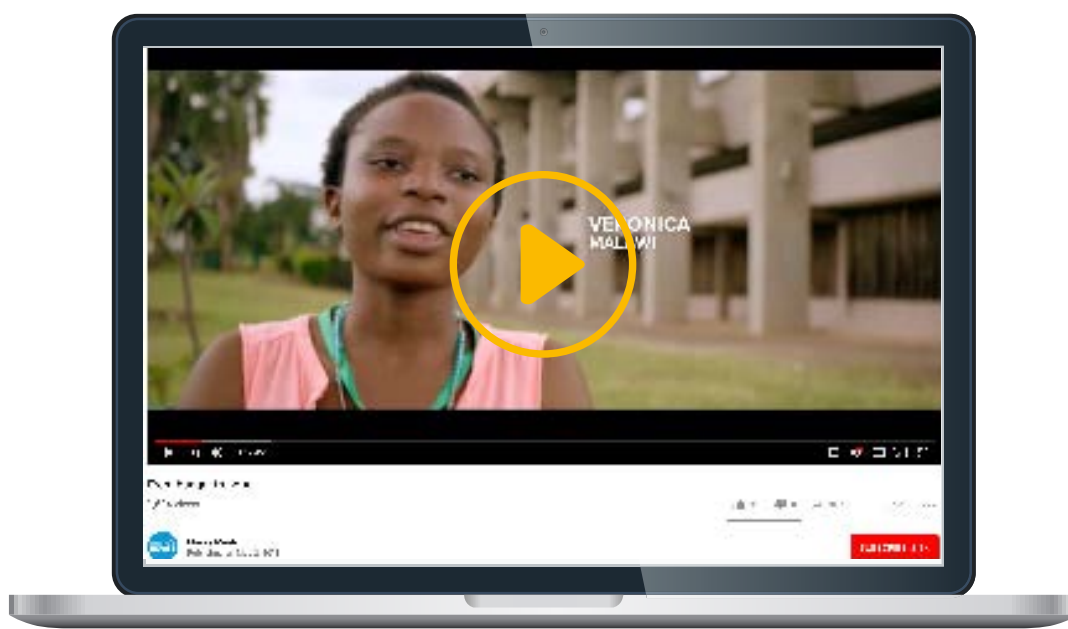




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Watch 'From hunger to hope'





# Welcome

Thank you so much for joining the Mary's Meals family. I hope you find this handbook helpful, informative and exciting.

In volunteering for Mary's Meals UK, you have become part of a global movement of people who will simply not accept that any child should go hungry in this world of plenty. We are passionately driven by our simple belief that every child in the world deserves an education – and enough to eat.

From small beginnings feeding just 200 Malawian children in 2002, we are now reaching more than 2.2 million children in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean with a nutritious daily meal in school.

This meal not only meets the immediate needs of the hungry child, but it attracts children to the classroom where they can gain an all-important education. And we firmly believe that the children who are receiving Mary's Meals today can grow up – better nourished and better educated – to become the men and women who will lift their communities out of poverty and end their reliance on aid.

But none of this would be possible without the incredible generosity of volunteers like you, who give freely of your time and skills to support our work. You amaze and inspire me every day with your little acts of love, spreading the word about Mary's Meals in your local communities and raising funds to help feed more children.

With 64 million children out of school around the world and a further 73 million attending school so hungry they're not able to concentrate and learn, our work is only just beginning.

You are playing a crucial part in shaping the future of Mary's Meals, and with it, the lives of so many people who both contribute to and benefit from this incredible work of love, joy and hope.

Thank you for your support.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Daniel Adams'.

**Daniel Adams,**  
Executive Director, Mary's Meals



**School + food = hope**



# About Mary's Meals

## Our vision

Our vision is that every child receives one daily meal in their place of education and that all those who have more than they need, share with those who lack even the most basic things.



## Our mission

Our mission is to enable people to offer their money, goods, skills, time, or prayer, and through this involvement, provide the most effective help to those suffering the effects of extreme poverty in the world's poorest communities.



## Our values

- We have confidence in the innate goodness of people.
- We respect the dignity of every human being and family life.
- We believe in good stewardship of resources entrusted to us.



**Our full statement of values is available [here](#).**



# Mary's Meals – a simple idea that works

**Mary's Meals is a global movement that sets up school feeding programmes in some of the world's poorest communities, where poverty and hunger prevent children from gaining an education.**

## About Mary's Meals

We provide one daily meal in a place of learning in order to attract chronically poor children into the classroom, where they receive an education that can, in the future, be their ladder out of poverty.

Mary's Meals was born in 2002 when Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow visited Malawi during a famine and met a mother dying from AIDS. When Magnus asked Emma eldest son Edward what his dreams were in life, he replied simply: "I want to have enough food to eat and to go to school one day."

That moment led to the founding of Mary's Meals, which began by feeding just 200 children in Malawi in 2002. Today we feed more than 1.8 million hungry children every school day across four continents. The average worldwide cost for us to feed a child for a whole school year is just £15.90.

Where Mary's Meals is provided, there is a rise in school enrolment, attainment and attendance. Wherever possible, we use locally grown food to support the local economy and help smallholder farmers.

We work extremely hard to keep our running costs low and to ensure that at least 93% of donations is spent directly on our charitable activities. This is only possible because our work is supported by an army of dedicated volunteers all over the world, who carry out lots of little acts of love on behalf of Mary's Meals.

Having been inspired, in part, by our founder's Catholic faith, this work is named in honour of Mary, the mother of Jesus, who brought up her own child in poverty. We consist of, respect and reach out to people of all faiths and none.



## Our global family

Mary's Meals UK (or MMUK), a charity registered in Scotland, is the oldest entity in the Mary's Meals family – the original organisation established as Scottish International Relief in the early 1990s, when Magnus first became involved in international aid during the Bosnian conflict.

Back then Magnus was a simple salmon farmer who, along with his family, decided to do something to help those who were suffering because of the war.

They relied heavily on the generosity of local people in Dalmally, Argyll, who relentlessly donated food, blankets and other items of aid, which were then stored in the family shed, before being driven out by Magnus and his brother to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

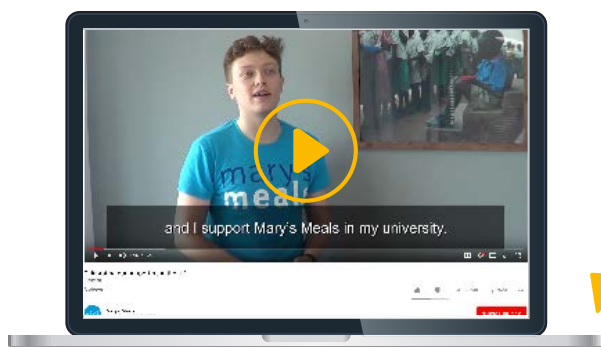


Though our largest office is now in Glasgow, that same shed – which continues to be filled, metaphorically at least, with the generosity of our supporters – still serves as the headquarters of Mary's Meals to this day!

Magnus is the founder and global CEO of Mary's Meals. He was named one of 2010's 'Top 10 Heroes' by broadcaster CNN and received an OBE in the 2011 New Year's Honours list.

He is the author of *The Shed That Fed A Million Children* and more recently *Give: Charity and the Art of Living Generously*.

Today, Mary's Meals UK raises awareness and funds under the direction of the executive director, and through the passion, commitment and dedication of our volunteers and staff, led by the director of communications, director of finance and operations, and director of supporter engagement and income. The organisation currently has offices in Glasgow, Dalmally and London. We also have home-based staff in other areas of the UK.



## Working together to feed hungry children

Funds generated by Mary's Meals UK support Mary's Meals International to ensure the feeding of more children. Programme affiliates and programme partners deliver food to the children every school day. National affiliates and international fundraising groups help to grow the movement by telling the Mary's Meals story around the world and through fundraising.

## We're only just beginning

More than 64 million primary school-age children are out of school around the world. Instead of sitting in a classroom, they are working in fields, begging on street corners, or scavenging among the garbage just to survive. Millions more attend school so hungry that they are not able to concentrate and learn.

Our vision is that every child receives one daily meal in their place of education and that all those who have more than they need, share with those who lack even the most basic things.

Working together with those who share our vision, we believe there is no good reason why this cannot be realised.

**Watch our film 'Celebrating our supporters in the UK'**



# This precious gift

## Mary's Meals UK Strategic plan 2021-2023

### 1. Proclaim our stories

The list of schools waiting to receive our meals is long. Mary's Meals UK is passionately driven to play its part in feeding many more little ones and we are determined to give voice to the stories of the children, communities, volunteers and supporters involved in this work – so that everyone across the UK may come to know the abundant love, joy and hope flowing through this worldwide and life-changing mission.



### 2. Nurture our communities

We have overwhelming and enduring experience of the innate goodness of people. Mary's Meals UK is committed to building an organisation which is increasingly capable of inviting as many individuals, organisations and local communities as possible to share in this mission; and which can encourage, help multiply, and effectively steward the many little acts of love generously poured out by our supporters.



### 3. Deepen our connections

We believe that the way we do this work is as important as its end results. Mary's Meals UK is dedicated to nurturing an organisational structure and culture which puts our deeply held values at the heart of everything we do; draws strength and inspiration from our origins; gladly relies on God's providence; excludes no-one; and prioritises building meaningful and long-lasting relationships with everyone involved in our work.



It costs just  
**£15.90**  
to feed a child  
for a whole  
school year!







# Volunteering with Mary's Meals

**By joining our volunteering movement, you can use your skills and passion to make a positive difference. We have a range of fulfilling and fun opportunities to help you raise awareness of the work of Mary's Meals in your local area.**

## Lead volunteer

Lead volunteers play a key role in empowering, organising and supporting a growing volunteer movement in their area. As the key liaison between Mary's Meals and our volunteer base in your local area, you will support our volunteers to proactively raise awareness of the work of Mary's Meals. Key activities include: supporting recruitment and training for new community volunteers in your area; organising and facilitating volunteer group meetings; sharing our story with local community organisations, schools, churches, and faith groups; organising fundraising events in your local area; promoting Mary's Meals' fundraising campaigns in your community and helping to generate support from businesses in your local area.

## Community volunteer

Community volunteers join a group of passionate volunteers in their area to motivate and inspire people in their local community to support our work. As a valued member of the Mary's Meals family, you will play an active role in the promotion of our nationwide fundraising and awareness raising campaigns. Key activities include: promoting our work on social media and in your community; giving talks to local groups; hosting community engagement events such as film screenings about Mary's Meals' work; organising local fundraising events such as coffee mornings and quizzes and meeting with other local Mary's Meals volunteers in your community.

## Volunteer groups

Being part of a volunteer group is a great way to link up with other people in your area. We have more than 60 groups across the UK. Groups meet regularly to support each other and discuss activities in their local area. [Get in touch](#) to find out more.

## Operations volunteers

Our Operations volunteers are incredibly enthusiastic and hard-working individuals who help to support our Mary's Meals shops in their local communities. The shop volunteers help to sort and organise donations from our supporters, whilst sharing the story of Mary's Meals to those who are enjoying shopping at their local Mary's Meals hub.

## Other opportunities

There are also other ways you can volunteer with Mary's Meals such as helping out with office administration. Find out more at [marysmeals.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer](https://marysmeals.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer)

# What our volunteers say



## Clare Hunter

Clare, from London, first heard about Mary's Meals when chatting to a family friend. After graduating from university, she decided to get involved by helping with our work in churches across London.

“The best part is seeing the joy that can come out of such unexpected circumstances. When you volunteer for Mary's Meals, people will surprise you phenomenally every day with their little acts of love.”



## Alison Page

Alison Page is a community volunteer on the Isle of Arran. She was inspired to support our mission after watching Child 31. Alison now gives talks to local groups and organises singalongs, coffee mornings and knitwear sales to raise funds for our work.

“Mary's Meals does what it says on the tin. Put simply, food + school = hope. It's just astonishing that only £15.90 is enough to provide a hungry child with school meals for a whole school year.”







## Lily Conway

Lily Conway, 81, volunteers with the Mary's Meals Armagh and Benburb Group in Northern Ireland. The retired primary school teacher visits schools to talk about our work and encourages pupils to fill Mary's Meals mugs with coins donated by friends and family. To date she has raised more than £16,000!

“What I love about Mary's Meals is that every hungry child matters and that so much of the donations go to feed the children.”



## Bernard and Irene Dillon

Bernard and Irene, from Liverpool, give talks and raise funds by organising concerts.

Their work as teachers in Zambia inspired them to get involved in our work. They love helping to feed children in a country where they have so many memories.

“Mary's Meals provides us with the best possible way we know to help this next generation of children without being there ourselves.”



## Joe Dennison

Joe, 32, first heard about Mary's Meals whilst on a retreat at Craig Lodge in Dalmally. Learning about our work from Magnus, our founder, made a big impression on him and he signed up to give talks in schools and parishes.

During lockdown he has been reaching out to priests in Yorkshire, where he's based, asking them to share our story.

“Hearing the story told by Magnus really made me think about what I could do and how, if we do our bit, God and Mary can make amazing things happen!”



# Supporting you

## Your point of contact

As a volunteer with Mary's Meals your manager will be whoever provides you with support to carry out your role and will be your main point of contact.

For example, in one of our charity shops it would be the shop manager, for community volunteers it will be your lead volunteer or supporter engagement officer. If you are unsure please ask any member of the team – your manager is here to help and enable you to contribute to the movement in a fulfilling and rewarding way.

## One-to-one meetings

Regular meetings with your manager will allow you time to ask questions, discuss plans and ensure that you are getting the most from your volunteering. These will be held at least every two months in person, by video call or by phone.

## Learning and development

We strive to empower our volunteers to perform your role to the best of your ability. We recognise that development is important and therefore provide any necessary training so you can carry out your volunteer role effectively and autonomously.

## Resources

You will have access to our online [volunteer resources hub](#), which contains all the information you need to spread the Mary's Meals story far and wide with confidence.

## Regular updates

You will receive a monthly volunteer newsletter by email. This includes stories about the children we feed, fundraising ideas, and updates to help you in your role.

## Fire safety

If you are based in a Mary's Meals office, shop or warehouse, you will be made aware of the fire safety procedure and shown your closest emergency exit.

If you are based elsewhere please familiarise yourself with the Fire Action Plan for the location you volunteer in.

## First aid

If you are involved in, or witness, an accident at work, please seek assistance from one of our first aiders.

If you are based in a Mary's Meals office, shop or warehouse, you will be notified of who is your appointed first aider.

All work accidents must be recorded in the site accident book. It is your responsibility to ensure that an accident you are involved in is logged in this book and that you inform your manager.

Please report any safety concerns you may have to your manager.

## Positive about mental health

Mary's Meals UK is committed to promoting positive mental health and we encourage you to speak to your manager about this.

We can provide you with resources on handling stress, maintaining relationships, parenting and childcare, managing money, caring for an older relative or health issues like losing weight or giving up smoking, provided through our employee assistance programme, Lifeworks.

## Alcohol and drugs

Mary's Meals UK has a zero-tolerance policy towards drinking alcohol or using unprescribed drugs and/or controlled substances when working, or when driving company vehicles.

We reserve the right to send people home if we believe you are under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.

If you wish to discuss any problems of substance abuse and need support please contact your manager.

## Smoke free workplace

All staff and volunteers have the right to a smoke-free environment. This means that all Mary's Meals UK premises and vehicles are smoke-free. Our policy includes electronic cigarettes and other vaping devices.

This ensures a comfortable and healthy working environment for everyone.



# Protecting you and Mary's Meals UK

## Volunteer Code of Conduct

Our Volunteer Code of Conduct outlines the standards that we all must strive to uphold at Mary's Meals UK. The code provides a basis for us all to maintain a working environment that creates trust, respect, dignity and is productive, positive, enjoyable, safe and free from harassment and discrimination for all.

All new volunteers are provided with a copy of the Code of Conduct on joining Mary's Meals UK. It is expected that all volunteers read the Code of Conduct and become familiar with it. As part of your orientation, you will be asked to sign confirmation that you have read, understood and will comply with the Code of Conduct.

## Children, young and vulnerable workers

Mary's Meals UK recognises the particular vulnerability of children and vulnerable adults in the contexts in which we work. All volunteers are required to have read and understood the safeguarding children and vulnerable adults policy and Code of Conduct, as well as committing to attend any appropriate training.

## Fraud, bribery and corruption

Any act of fraud, bribery or corruption is treated extremely seriously by the organisation. It is important that all volunteers report any attempts to offer them bribes, or get them to act in a way which could be to the disadvantage of the organisation, to your manager.

## Responsible use of company information technology (IT)

Volunteers have a duty to use Mary's Meals' IT resources responsibly and appropriately and protect our assets from misuse, theft and waste. Volunteers should never misuse company resources (for example telephone, email and internet access) for personal activities, or share user IDs or passwords.

## Confidentiality and data protection

We have a duty to our donors, partners and colleagues to respect the information we hold about them, and to ensure it is protected and handled responsibly.

If you collect personal information, you must make sure it is relevant, accurate and kept for no longer than is necessary. Always ensure that you keep donors, partners and your peers' information secure and use it only for the purpose for which it is lawfully obtained. Always ensure that data is appropriately and securely stored and disposed of. You should also be mindful of the risk of discussing confidential information in public places.

It is important that you never release information without first making sure that the person you are providing it to is rightfully allowed to receive it and where necessary, that it has been appropriately encrypted.

If you are ever unsure about how to handle our data, be cautious and seek advice from your manager.

# Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults

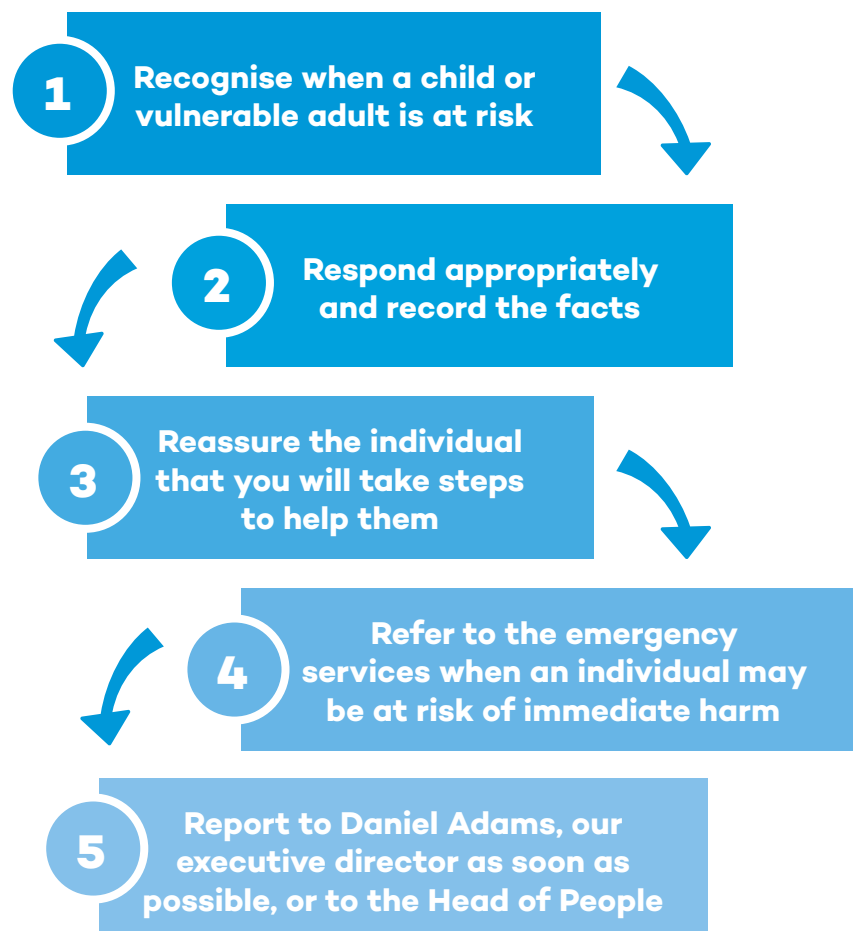
As a charity whose beneficiaries are children, our volunteers have an obligation and responsibility to protect, safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and young people we serve.

Through Mary's Meals activities to raise awareness and funds across the UK to support our mission, volunteers may encounter children and vulnerable adults.

Although volunteers are not responsible for their safety, it is paramount that we minimise any risk to children and vulnerable adults who come into contact with our people.

It is the responsibility of every individual who represents Mary's Meals, not just one person, to report any safeguarding concerns about children and vulnerable adults.

## 5 step guide to safeguarding



More detailed information about Mary's Meals safeguarding policy is available on the [volunteer hub](#).



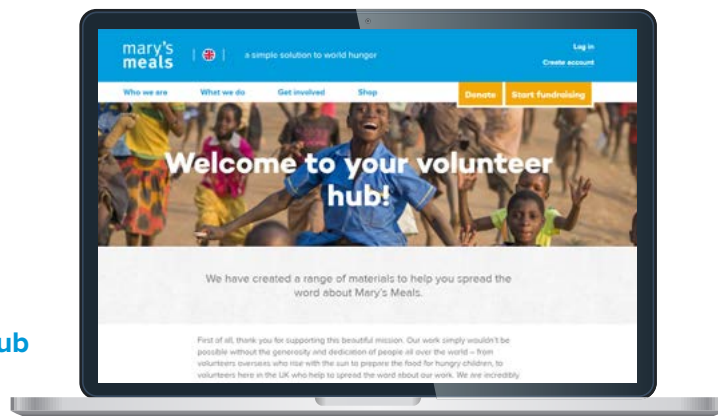
# Useful links

## Your online volunteer resources hub

We have created a range of materials to help you spread the word about Mary's Meals.

These resources have been designed to help you in your volunteering role. If you have any questions about how to use them or if there's anything you think we should add to the hub, please get in touch with your manager.

[marysmeals.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/volunteer-hub](https://marysmeals.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/volunteer-hub)



## Further resources

**Animation:** [Saving Grace](#) can be found on YouTube

**Book:** The Shed That Fed A Million Children

**Film:** watch [Child 31](#)

**Film:** watch [Generation Hope](#)

**Film:** Watch [Love Reaches Everywhere](#)

**Film:** watch [Mary's Meals – A Fruit of Medjugorje](#)

**How to build support:** will be shared with you upon joining Mary's Meals

**Policies and procedures:** will be issued to you upon joining Mary's Meals

**Impact assessment:** can be found in '[the impact of our work](#)' section of our website

**Key messages:** can be found in the resources section on [Volunteer Hub](#)

**People:** many of our staff and volunteers have been with Mary's Meals UK for much of its journey, talk to them to find out more about how we have developed

**Statement of values:** can be found on the [here](#).

## Our policies

Please ensure you have read, understood and signed where applicable, our policies and procedures. If you have any questions about them, please ask your line manager or a member of the people team.

If you have any questions about this handbook please contact: [volunteer@marysmeals.org](mailto:volunteer@marysmeals.org)



**Mary's Meals**

Registered at Craig Lodge, Dalmally,  
Argyll, Scotland, UK, PA33 1AR

Charity No. **SC022140**

Company No. **SC265941**

mary's  
meals

a simple solution  
to world hunger