



# Volunteer policy @ease

The @ease community consists of a fast growing group of enthusiastic people who would like to do something for young people who are (temporarily) not feeling so well mentally or have other questions. A small part of these people are connected to the @ease organization as paid employees. However, most of our work is done by volunteers. This requires many hands that are motivated to perform these activities without direct financial compensation, are involved in the ins and outs of the organization, are flexible and willing to contribute to the propagation of the @ease vision. Without volunteers there is no @ease. We therefore consider it essential to take good care of 'our people'. In this document you can read how we shape the volunteer policy.

## Who can become a volunteer at @ease?

In fact, anyone can become a volunteer at @ease; the activities depend on age and personal background. We are here for and by young people; the commitment of young people is always central at @ease. For example, we ask young people to actively think about our offer, our promotion and the actual organization of an @ease location.

An essential part of our working method is the provision of a listening ear by peers (peer support). In the various volunteer teams, they work directly with professionals from local health and welfare organizations.

Age category	What can you do at @ease	Important
Up to 18 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ You can think along with @ease through our local or national youth council.</li> <li>✓ You can do an internship at @ease and learn more about what we do for young people.</li> <li>✓ You can participate in promotional activities to make sure more young people hear about @ease.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✎ You do not (yet) do @ease conversations in our consulting rooms or via chat.</li> <li>✎ You have a regular point of contact at the @ease branch.</li> </ul>
From 18-30 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ You can have @ease conversations on location and via chat with young people who are looking for a listening ear.</li> <li>✓ You can do an internship at @ease as part of your education, both research internships and practical internships are possible.</li> <li>✓ You can think along with @ease through our local or national youth council.</li> <li>✓ You can participate in promotional activities to ensure that more young people hear about @ease.</li> <li>✓ You can participate in media activities.</li> <li>✓ Depending on your background, you can be involved in supporting the location manager.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✎ You complete the two-day @ease training before starting.</li> <li>✎ You conduct @ease interviews together with 1 other volunteer.</li> <li>✎ You receive guidance from an on-site professional in your possible internship and any media activities.</li> <li>✎ You can submit a VOG.</li> <li>✎ You have sufficient distance to your own problems.</li> <li>✎ Your empathy is good and you are open to development.</li> </ul>
Over 30 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ You can have @ease conversations on location and via chat with young people seeking a listening ear.</li> <li>✓ Depending on your background, you can be involved as a care professional or to support the location manager.</li> <li>✓ You can think along and participate in promotional activities to ensure that more young people hear about @ease.</li> <li>✓ You can participate in media activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✎ If you are over the age of 30, we will discuss together to what extent it is appropriate for you to have @ease conversations. After all, our visitors count on a peer.</li> <li>✎ You conduct @ease conversations together with 1 other volunteer and receive guidance from an on-site professional.</li> <li>✎ Volunteer professionals are welcome depending on their professional background. Embracing the @ease working method is an important prerequisite. The training will pay extensive attention to this</li> <li>✎ You can provide a VOG.</li> <li>✎ You have sufficient distance to your own problems.</li> <li>✎ Your empathy is good.</li> <li>✎ You must complete the two-day @ease training before starting.</li> </ul>



## Your journey as a volunteer at @ease

Contact phase	What will happen?
Volunteer is not yet familiar with @ease	<p>New volunteers are always welcome for existing and newly opened drop-in locations. We recruit new volunteers through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Current volunteers, professionals and other stakeholders;</li><li>✓ National and local social media;</li><li>✓ Vacancy text at <a href="http://www.ease.nl">www.ease.nl</a>;</li><li>✓ Information meetings at local network partners (schools, healthcare institutions, municipalities, etc.);</li><li>✓ PR materials such as posters, flyers and advertisements.</li></ul>
Volunteer shows interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Volunteer sends an email to the relevant @ease branch;</li><li>✓ Volunteer spontaneously walks into the relevant @ease branch;</li><li>✓ The location manager of the relevant @ease branch invites volunteer for an introductory interview.</li></ul>
Volunteer comes for introductory interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Introduction interview takes place with (assistant) location manager and 1 other volunteer and/or professional. In the interview an explanation is given of the various volunteer tasks needed at @ease and questions of the volunteer are answered. The volunteer's motivation, suitability and availability are also questioned. Finally, attention is paid to any experiential expertise and to what extent someone has sufficient distance from their own problems.</li><li>✓ If in doubt, an additional interview follows in the presence of an @ease professional.</li><li>✓ If interested, the volunteer is told which volunteer tasks are available and when he/she can participate in the next volunteer training.</li></ul>
Volunteer comes for additional interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Professional specifically tests whether volunteering at @ease can be too stressful or whether volunteers have sufficient distance from their own problems. The outcome may be that someone is suitable for conducting conversations with youth or that he or she is not (yet) suitable for conversations. In the latter case, it is sometimes possible to do other work at @ease.</li></ul>
Volunteer attends @ease training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Volunteer attends two-day @ease training.</li><li>✓ Volunteer receives volunteer folder with background information and documents to sign.</li></ul>
Volunteer starts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Volunteer hands over signed volunteer contract and related documents from volunteer folder and a VOG (declaration of good conduct).</li><li>✓ Volunteer is added to local app groups.</li><li>✓ Volunteer schedules him/her/them self for shifts.</li><li>✓ Volunteer is invited to social activities.</li></ul>
Volunteer is in trial period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ For 4 months there is a trial period. The volunteer works with experienced other volunteers. At the end of the trial period, the volunteer evaluates with a professional how things are going.</li><li>✓ The trainers give the site manager any points of attention that need to be addressed.</li></ul>
Volunteer is working at @ease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Volunteer participates in booster trainings and interviews.</li></ul>
Volunteer is leaving @ease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ With volunteers leaving we discuss learnings and development points for both the volunteer and @ease.</li><li>✓ We thank volunteers for their efforts. When someone has done an internship at @ease, we give a small thank-you-gift.</li><li>✓ If desired, we provide a certificate or LinkedIn recommendation.</li></ul>



## Mutual expectations

We think it is very important that a volunteer feels welcome and finds the work fun, meaningful and challenging. Of course, @ease also wants volunteers to be suitable for their task, to be competent and skilled and to want to develop this further. Therefore, we attach great importance to training and supervision, so that volunteers can grow and learn from the different work.

When someone chooses to become a volunteer it is their own choice. However, volunteering is not without obligations. For example, we expect:

- ✓ volunteers are available at least two afternoons a month; more is always welcome;
- ✓ possible own psychological problems are not an obstacle when having conversations with the youngsters;
- ✓ volunteers respect and support the objectives, working methods and vision of @ease;
- ✓ volunteers are willing to cooperate with others;
- ✓ volunteers keep their appointments;
- ✓ volunteers handle confidential information with great discretion.

And of course, we also have something to offer, namely:

- ✓ appreciation for the work performed;
- ✓ a pleasant working atmosphere with a network of fellow volunteers and various professionals;
- ✓ work that matches one's own qualities, abilities and choices;
- ✓ training and intervision;
- ✓ gaining work experience and various skills;
- ✓ being meaningful to others.

## Training & Guidance

Before someone officially starts as a volunteer, they attend the two-day @ease training. In this training, someone learns all about the @ease methodology, can practice extensively with conversation situations and gets to know other volunteers and professionals. After that, volunteers participate for a period of time. After 4 months we evaluate together. Any points of attention that the trainer has given are included in the evaluation.

Volunteers are supervised by a diverse team of experienced (care and welfare) professionals of which at least one is always present at the location. This professional not only takes care of the interim and follow-up discussions with the volunteers; this person is also available for questions and tips about the work. We regularly organize intervision sessions under the guidance of a professional, so that we can discuss the work together with all the volunteers. Finally, we organize various booster trainings on specific relevant topics (think: talking about suicide, loverboy issues, eating issues, refugee issues, etc.).



## Safety

- ✓ Talking in pairs

A conversation with visitors is never conducted alone, but always together with another volunteer. At every @ease location there is also an experienced (care and welfare) professional present who evaluates the conversations in between and afterwards. If necessary, this professional can also consult with a psychiatrist on call. We think this is important to be able to guide everyone properly and we also want to deal carefully with any acute problems young people may have.
- ✓ Safe community

As a volunteer you enter a safe community where everyone is welcome regardless of background and where there is also room to talk about feelings. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. Volunteers can participate in social activities, but they do not have to.
- ✓ Confidential information

Volunteers will encounter people who dare to talk about their problems for the first time. It can be incredibly difficult to confide in someone. It goes without saying that information should not be disclosed. However, volunteers may discuss situations and experiences with a fellow volunteer or the professionals on site.
- ✓ Aftercare

If there was an intense, complicated or heavy conversation, the professional at the @ease site will check in the evening and/or the day after to see how the volunteer is feeling and offer support if needed.
- ✓ Personal data

Volunteers sign that @ease may process their personal data in a volunteer administration system. We treat these data confidentially and in compliance with privacy laws and regulations. When volunteers stop working at @ease, this personal data will be destroyed within 24 months.
- ✓ Confidential Advisor & compliants

All volunteers are informed about confidants and the e-mail for complaints and undesirable situations in the workplace at @ease. See also the Integrity Policy on our website.

## How do we secure agreements with volunteers?

All @ease volunteers receive a volunteer folder with all relevant information. They also sign a volunteer contract and some documents agreeing to the @ease values, the house rules including confidentiality agreements and the code of conduct. Finally, all volunteers must be able to provide a VOG (Certificate of Good Conduct).

## Expenses

Volunteer work is unpaid. However, travel expenses can be reimbursed.

## Volunteer compensation

In specific cases, for example when a volunteer demonstrably performs extra activities in the field of PR or organizing certain events, the granting of a volunteer allowance could be possible. We are developing guidelines for this that will eventually apply to all locations.