

VOLUME

Loud & Proud About Volunteering

June 2018

#7

ACCESSIBLE ARTS

DRAWING PEOPLE
TOGETHER

//

HOME SAFE

A FALAFEL WELCOME
FOR A REFUGEE FAMILY
IN LONDON



JUST HER CUP OF TEA

OVERCOMING THE LANGUAGE BARRIER WITH NORA

VOLUME

Loud & Proud About Volunteering

EDITOR'S LETTER

At some point in our lives, most of us will have experienced the feeling of being excluded. I remember my first months in London. It felt a bit lonely and I didn't feel part of the community. While having my morning coffee, I would look at people going to work from my window and think: 'I wish I also had a job to go to.' I didn't know many people or really have a social life here. Slowly my London journey evolved and I started to feel more and more included every day. Eventually I met some great people and found myself a job. Not all of us are that lucky though. Sometimes we need a little hand to be and feel included.

When you don't speak the language for example. In 'Just Her Cup Of Tea' we spoke to Nora who teaches ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), and tries to give her students the confidence they need to feel more part of everyday life.

In 'Home Safe' you can read about the resettlement of a refugee family in London, who had to flee their home country because of war. The volunteers involved, one of them being our very own Volume photographer Barbara Luckhurst, made a real difference to this family's lives.

To be part of something, even if it's just for a few hours a week can really help people feel better and happier. Inclusion through Art for example can be very beneficial and fun too! You can find out more about this in 'Let's Get Together.'

I hope you'll enjoy Volume 7. I wish you all **A VERY HAPPY READ!**

HAFIDA AABBAD
Editor



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OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION

Resettlement Volunteer, Lakeisha Gayle-Brown, recently received an Outstanding Contribution to Volunteering Award from the University of East London, where she is currently a student. She was nominated by her supervisor, Carla Thompson, who said, 'she has been a merit to our organisation through her dedication to the service, our clients and her professional approach'.

Lakeisha is one of many Centra volunteers who combine their studies with the relevant practical and flexible experience that volunteering provides. As Joseph Crook, UEL's Volunteering Manager, points out "today's jobs market is very tough, and increasingly it is not enough just to have a degree. Approximately 73% of employers will hire someone with volunteering experience over someone without it.

During the last year, Lakeisha has been volunteering for two days per week with Centra's Prison Resettlement & Mental Health Support service. Her activities have included worked with clients to assess and identify their support needs, putting together release plans and supporting people to achieve their personal goals and secure housing on their release from prison. According to Carla this has been a huge success; "The issues that Lakeisha has helped our clients to address have been fundamental to their well-being which subsequently reduces the risk of reoffending."



REAPING REWARDS

Our three Food Growing Volunteers (Jo, Caroline & Jill) have successfully applied to the Clarion Futures Micro-funding grants programme. Money will be spent on equipment that will make their projects more accessible to new growers and safer for existing participants. Taking place at three sheltered housing schemes in Islington, these activities encourage our older residents to engage with their communal green spaces, learn new skills and eat more healthily.



GOOD CIRCULATION

Every month, our Health Promotion Volunteer, Anita, puts together a handy summary of a relevant national health campaign. Subjects can range from A(lzheimers) to z(inc deficiency) and usually include posters, awareness-raising tips and links to further information.

If you would like to be added to our monthly Health Promotion mail-out please get in touch.

JUST HER CUP OF TEA

BY BARBARA LUCKHURST

NOT BEING ABLE TO UNDERSTAND OR COMMUNICATE WITH THOSE AROUND YOU CAN EXCLUDE PEOPLE FROM SO MANY ASPECTS OF LIFE



A team of volunteer tutors of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) make a real difference to the lives of residents in several of Centra's schemes.

One of these volunteers, Nora Ilcsik, has been teaching English to residents of Pebble Centre in Hackney since 2016. Born in Hungary, Nora arrived in London in 2007, already a lover of the language, particularly English expressions.

'Not my cup of tea' is one of her favourites.

TEAMWORK

"As soon as I started learning English in Hungary I thought it would be nice to learn more and help other people experience using it to communicate." In 2015 she qualified as a tutor and took the volunteer role as an opportunity for work experience.

The Centra volunteering team helped with materials and advice on how to approach students. Now the ESOL volunteers meet every three to four months to share ideas and resources. As one of the earliest volunteers she often helps the 'newbies'.

"I'M HAPPY I LEARN SOMETHING NEW EVERY WEEK"

- Enrique, ESOL student

EVERYDAY ENGLISH

Nora concentrates on teaching and practising everyday conversations; the language we use at the doctor's, in shops, or going for a coffee. She believes that giving her students encouragement as they learn is important. "I have to give them praise on how much they have achieved because they have often had bad experiences of learning in the past."



"IT'S A GOOD FEELING
WHEN YOU ACHIEVE SOMETHING
WITH THE STUDENTS"

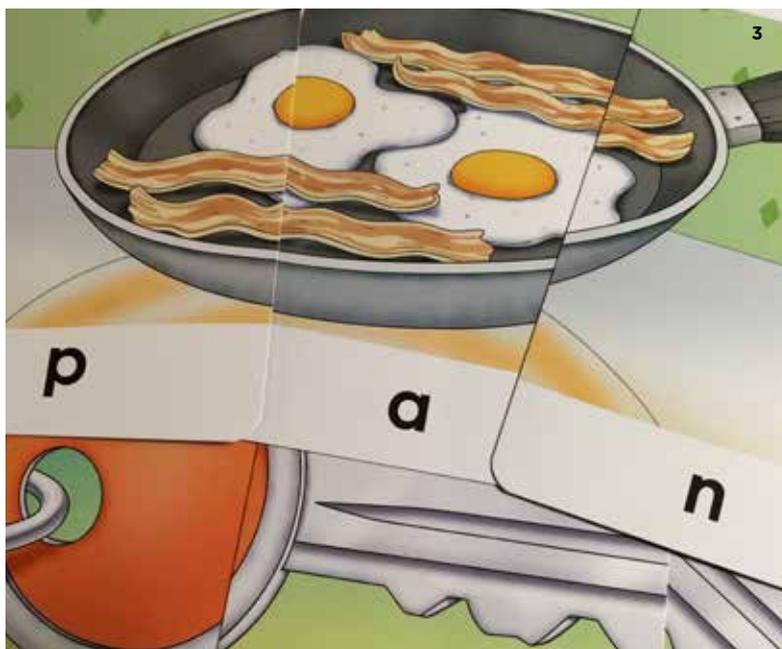
- Nora Ilcsik, ESOL tutor

COMMUNICATING WITH CONFIDENCE

Her lessons make a real difference to people's lives as they learn to communicate with other residents and people around them. "They feel more confident using English and learn to trust themselves. Even if they make a few mistakes people can understand." Ayesha, one of her students, agrees; "Now it's easy to go to the shop and to the doctor." Enrique adds, "I'm happy I learn something new every week."

A GOOD FEELING

Nora has also benefitted from volunteering. "It's always a good feeling when you achieve something with the students. You see a light in their eyes when they learn an expression and use it in the next lesson. And I've made friends with other volunteers too."



Will she continue to volunteer?

"Definitely, and if I move to another country I'd like to take this idea of volunteering wherever I settle down. Dedicating your time to people who need your help is rewarding."

Opposite page

1. Nora Ilcsik

This page

2. ESOL textbooks

3. Learning

Material

VAARWEL HAFIDA



It is with a mixture of great sadness and excitement that we bid farewell to our wonderful Editor, Hafida Aabbad.

Back in 2013, we had the idea of having a publication that told the inspiring stories of our volunteers, that would also be written, photographed, designed and edited by volunteers. Hafida was the first to join this team and has been with us ever since, first as writer, then as editor. After writing an article about reminiscence work she was inspired to take on a second role, facilitating a reminiscence group with the residents of Hawberry Lodge in Islington. It is this combination of curiosity about people and a determination to get the job done that has made her such a great editor.

After over five years of volunteering with Volume, she returns to Amsterdam to plan her next project; a new family.

This seventh edition of Volume will be her last so we are taking this opportunity to say thank you and to wish her well in her next adventure.

WE WILL MISS YOU Hafida

and Volume 8 won't be the same without you
(in fact, Volume 8 might not even happen without you!)

LET'S GET TOGETHER & FEEL ALRIGHT

BY MICHAEL BOWDEN

ENGAGING IN A CREATIVE ACTIVITY CAN LEAD TO A MORE POSITIVE STATE OF MIND



2



3



4

A study in the Journal of Positive Psychology (Tamlin, Conner, DeYoung & Paul, 2016) indicates that creativity has a positive impact on happiness in social relationships and in other aspects of life. In other words, being creative helps us feel better!

Meet Maria Calla, 'up-cycling' fan and one of a growing number of creative volunteers inspiring sheltered housing residents to express themselves through Art.

“THEY HAVE DISCOVERED SKILLS THAT PREVIOUSLY REMAINED HIDDEN”

- Maria Calla, Creative Arts Volunteer



Opposite Page
1. Stamp art piece
2. Stamp
3. Pottery flowers
4. Foxes in the snow

This page
5. Bob-in-progress (photo by Arts Volunteer team)

INSPIRING OTHERS

A graduate of the Academy of Fine Art in Rome, and a former teacher of street children, Maria has experience of inspiring others; “this is what I taught tearaway teenagers in Italy, but when the crisis came I lost my job and decided to come to London.” She started volunteering with Swallow House in Haringey two years ago, using her years of study and work to help run a weekly arts group for up to eight older people of mixed abilities.

“Sessions are about stimulation and promoting active memory. They have become more confident and decisive, and some have discovered skills that previously remained hidden”

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

At Barkway Court in Hackney, Andrea Carrington, who previously ran her own business designing jewellery, felted scarves and clothes, explains how she became involved in this work; “My grandmother was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s in 2015 and I was determined to find out more about the condition. I attended a Dementia Friends group at Centra and have been volunteering since then.”

Such experience prepared her for supporting a group of artists whose ages range from 70 to 96 years. “Through collage and patterns, painting, sketching, felting and fabric painting I focus on their emotional well-being and happiness.”

CREATING AND ENGAGING

One such artist, who can experience memory lapses and confusion, is busy sketching portraits from a magazine. He lifts his head now-and-again to explain how he discovered he could draw as a sickly child. The group’s most senior member has been recovering from a cataract operation. She strolls in shouting “Andrea where is my paint? The artist is back, hurry up!”

Creating an engaging, inclusive arts session for people who might experience a range of physical and psychological barriers requires great sensitivity and ‘creativity’ from the volunteer.

INCLUSION THROUGH ART

At Oaks Court in Merton, Creative Arts Volunteer Jo Kheir understands how challenging this can be: “One group member is completely blind, another struggles from the after-effects of a stroke, others are in wheelchairs and have very little hand movement. One of the group has no communication skills and limited movement from Parkinson’s disease.”

Jo is a mother-of-two with 13 years of experience working in the media and design industry. Searching for a new direction that fitted round family commitments, she completed an art therapy foundation course at Roehampton University.

FLICKING THE PAINT

“I vary the classes, using different media to engage them in different sensations, experiences and challenges” continues Jo, “Clay has been very successful. They have tried paper art, CD art and I have had them all working in acrylics and watercolour - and even flicking the paint!”

“I VARY THE CLASSES, USING DIFFERENT MEDIA TO ENGAGE THEM IN DIFFERENT SENSATIONS”

- Jo, Creative Arts Volunteer

Materials used in the arts groups have been donated by participants, pulled out of skips and purchased with a small amount of funding from Centra.

If you have any art resources lying around unused that you would like to donate please get in touch and add a bit of colour to someone’s life!!!



HOME SAFE

BY HAFIDA AABBAD

In 2015, the UK's former Prime Minister David Cameron, promised to take in 20,000 refugees from the camps on the border of Syria over a period of 5 years.

Cameron: 'The UK needs to live up to its moral responsibility towards people forced from their homes.'

COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP

Three years on, the Home Office, working with UNHCR (UN Refugee Agency) have managed to successfully resettle 10,538 refugees in the UK. UNHCR identifies vulnerable families who want to be resettled away from the war. Most are supported by local councils, but some are helped to resettle by Community Sponsors.

Barbara is one of a group of citizens concerned about the refugee crisis, who decided to apply to be a

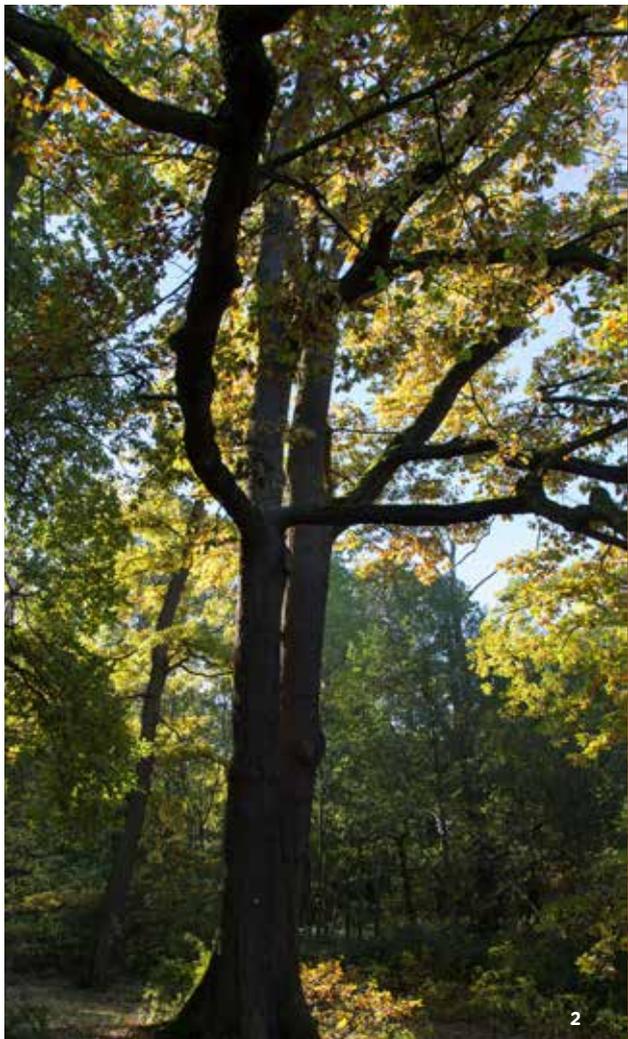
VOLUME MAGAZINE IS CREATED BY A TEAM OF VOLUNTEERS. BARBARA LUCKHURST, WHO IS VOLUME'S PHOTOGRAPHER, TALKS TO US ABOUT ONE OF HER OTHER VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES WITH A REFUGEE FAMILY IN ENFIELD.

Community Sponsor to help vulnerable families fleeing factional violence to settle in Enfield.

That's how 'Enfield Refugees Welcome' was born, a community sponsor where Barbara is one of the Steering Group members.

FROM ONE REFUGEE TO ANOTHER

One of the first steps was the house search. Barbara: 'After we found a goodhearted landlord who would rent out the house at local housing allowance rate, we needed to furnish it. In our search for furniture, we came across a Dutch lady whose mother had just passed away. The mother had fled the Nazis in the Second World War, so when the daughter heard about 'our mission' she donated almost all her mother's furniture. She said that she knew her mother would have loved it if her belongings were given to another refugee family.'



**'HOW DID YOU KNOW FALAFELS
WERE THE CHILDREN'S FAVOURITE FOOD?'**
- Mum

FALAFEL WELCOME

A Community Sponsor helps a family in all stages of their resettlement, from welcoming them at the airport, to helping the family get around in their new neighbourhood. Barbara: 'Arrival day was very exciting. Some volunteers collected the family from the airport while some of us were back at their new home, getting a meal ready.' On the journey from the airport, the children were excited to see that London has so much green space and wanted to visit the local park as soon as they could.

When they all got to the house and saw the food, Mum asked: 'How did you know falafels were the children's favourite food?'

ENGLISH AT THE KITCHEN TABLE

After the family settled into their new home, there were still many things to be arranged. Barbara: 'Since they've arrived, I've helped with teaching the whole family English at their kitchen table and been with them as they enrolled for school and college. I remember the first time I took the family to a primary school for the young one, right before the summer break. The child was so excited, and at the same time a bit sad to have to wait until after the summer to start at the new school.'

BEFRIENDING

Another crucial part of the Refugee Welcome project is befriending. 'It is really important in helping people settle in a new life. Having someone with you when you go to official appointments, or try to work out how to pay bills really helps build confidence. Befriending volunteers also help the family to get around in the local area, adjust to the new country and listen to concerns and worries,' explains Barbara.

'RESETTLEMENT' PARTY

After the family had been in the UK for six months, the Enfield Refugee Welcome Group organised a party to celebrate the occasion. Barbara: 'It was great to see how happy and confident all the family looked as they arrived and chatted to people.'

When asking the family how they like it here and what they think of London, here are some of their responses:

'I like my school. I do my homework every day'

'I like everything in London.'

'I like my group.' (Meaning of group: the volunteers who helped the family)

'I love my family.'

- 1 & 2. Grovelands Park
- 3. I like London
- 4. Party Cake

For more information about Enfield Refugee Welcome Group, or if you're interested in volunteering with them, please visit: <https://www.enfieldrefugeewelcome.org>

THIS IS HOW YEHIA ROLES

VOLUME CELEBRATES YEHIA, A PHILOSOPHY GRADUATE WHO TELLS US ABOUT HIS VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE WITH CENTRA AS A 'SOCIAL CLUB VOLUNTEER'.

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

> I was born in Egypt, moved to the UK when I was eight and have been living in London for about eight years. I graduated from King's College London in 2016 with a degree in Philosophy. I now work in Angel for a charity called the Centre for Ageing Better.

WHAT LED YOU TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER?

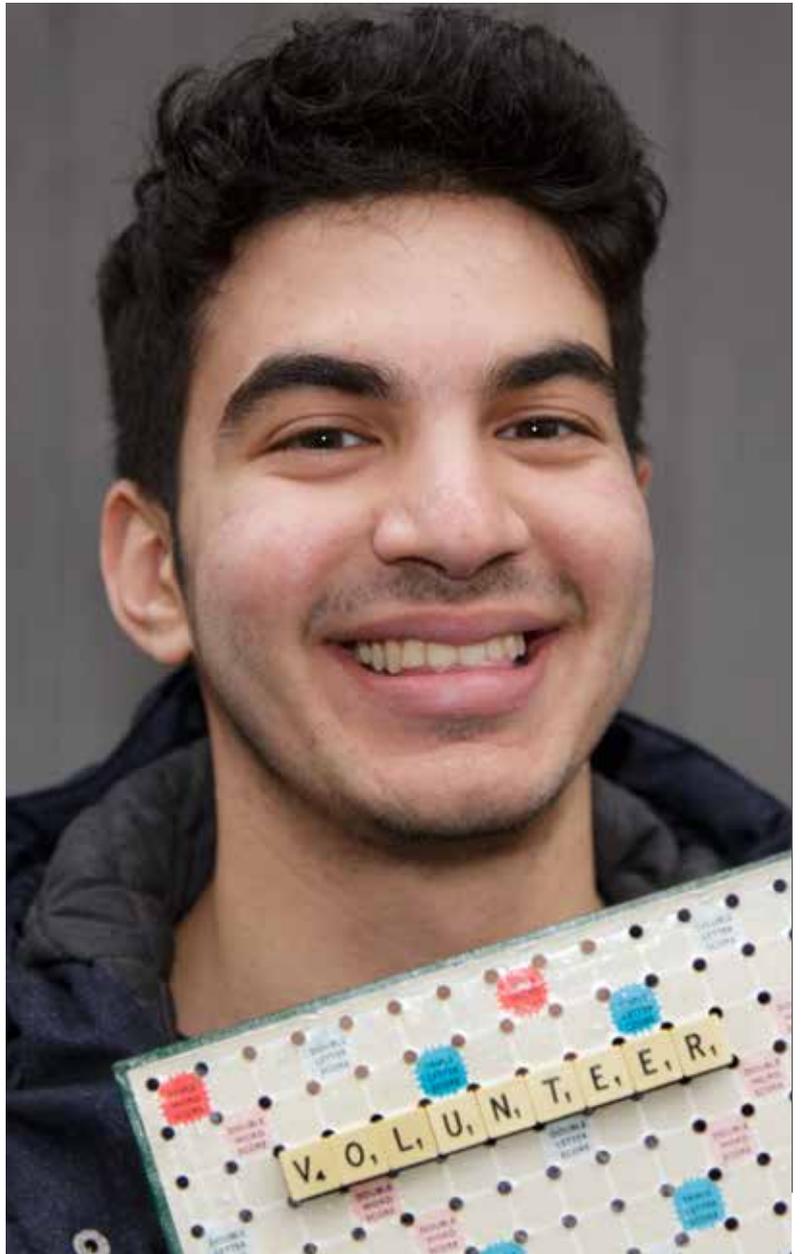
> I see volunteering as a great opportunity to meet a whole range of people, get to know them really well and contribute to their lives positively. Whenever I feel that I have too much spare time I search for a new volunteering opportunity, preferably something that is completely new to me. Doing something I haven't done before allows me to challenge myself and develop new skills. I was fortunate enough that this role with Centra ticked all of those boxes.

WHAT DO YOU DO FOR CENTRA?

> I don't think this is my official title, but the Support Coordinator and I came up with the name of 'Social Club Volunteer'. We tried to identify what was missing for the residents. They had a volunteer who would do some chair exercises and another who provides support with digital technology. We identified the 'gap in the market' was a social activity. What we do each week varies, but to date we've played bingo, cards, scrabble, Cluedo, and have plans to keep trying all kinds of things in the future like film, darts and music.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO GET OUT OF VOLUNTEERING?

> With volunteering, my first thought is always about making a positive difference. There's only so much that you can do, but the least you can hope for is that you've put a smile on one person's face even if for a moment.



"THE LEAST YOU CAN HOPE FOR IS THAT YOU'VE PUT A SMILE ON ONE PERSON'S FACE EVEN IF FOR A MOMENT"

- Yehia

What I realised during volunteering, was that you also have to be resilient. Days where the number of attendees is low (or even when no one shows up) can be disheartening, but I definitely feel that I don't let it affect me as much as I feared it would.

ARE YOU ACCOMPLISHING THAT?

> Yes, that's one thing that I can say I've personally gained from my experiences as a volunteer. Just as I was taught on the resilience course offered by Centra, I've tried to focus on the positives and solutions rather than the doom and gloom.

WHERE IS RYAN NOW?

EACH ISSUE WE TRY TO TRACK DOWN A FORMER CENTRA VOLUNTEER TO SEE WHAT THEY ARE UP TO NOW. MEET RYAN, PREVIOUSLY A SOCIAL MEDIA VOLUNTEER AND CURRENTLY RUNNING HIS OWN DIGITAL MARKETING CONSULTANCY.

WHAT LED YOU TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER?

I was unemployed and I wanted to work. I had a lot of diverse skills in marketing, technology and art, but I wasn't sure if my CV was saying what I wanted it to say about me. With advice from many people, I realized that volunteering was the way to get noticed and break into the charity sector.

WHAT DID YOU DO AT CENTRA?

I'm proud to say that I was the founding member of Centra Volunteering's Social Media team. We created a Facebook profile to promote our volunteering activities and to recruit new volunteers. We also created a page to allow volunteers to collaborate with each other. Alongside this I also led a workshop teaching social media skills to volunteers.

WHAT DO YOU DO NOW?

I do pretty much what I started doing at Centra. I help my clients to develop their digital marketing skills and social media campaigns. I have a website; ryannicolls.com, and I am in the Mailchimp expert Directory.

HOW DID YOUR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE HELP?

Setting up a digital project enabled me to achieve a long-term dream. It was crucial to what I do now. Centra also gave me the opportunity to facilitate a digital needs assessment for their volunteers, which helped me to further develop my confidence, skills and experience in this field. Having Centra on my CV was a good way to get my foot in the door.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE SOMEONE WISHING TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER?

Think about what you want to do and look at your strengths and weaknesses. If you need to develop your skills, volunteering gives you the freedom to do this in a safe, supportive environment.

TEAM VOLUME



MICHAEL BOWDEN

Writer

Has lived in London for ten years. Interested in music, cooking, reading and sport.



BARBARA LUCKHURST

Photographer

Student of life, education, photography and Swahili.



SOFIA SANTOS NEVES

Art Director

Chatterbox from Lisbon, enjoys fries, photobooths and movie nights. Loves languages and patterns.



Centra delivers a range of services to support people who require a safe, comfortable place to live or who require assistance to find a secure and sustainable home. We provide care, support and assistive technology to more than 130,000 people across the UK.

CENTRA VOLUNTEERING

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