

Abbot Hall

Volunteer Tour Guide

Role Information



Introducing Lakeland Arts

Lakeland Arts is one of the most remarkable arts and heritage organisations in the North and has an exceptional portfolio of attractions in an area of outstanding natural beauty. 2018 was the first full year of inscription of The Lake District as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Abbot Hall Art Gallery is a Grade I Listed Building in Kendal. The eighteenth century riverside mansion is a wonderful setting for our ambitious programme of temporary exhibitions and displays showing work of artists of national and international significance. Artists featured in major exhibitions over the past few years include Rembrandt, Canaletto, Barbara Hepworth, Graham Sutherland, Richard Long, Ben Nicholson, JMW Turner, George Shaw and Sean Scully.

The Museum of Lakeland Life and Industry boasts a collection of 25,000 objects telling the story of people who lived and worked in the Lake

District. The Museum brings the collection to life through exhibitions, period rooms and a Victorian street scene. Displays include objects relating to Arthur Ransome, author of *Swallows and Amazons* and Cumbria's farming heritage.

Blackwell The Arts & Crafts House is a stunning Grade I listed house overlooking Windermere. It is architect MH Baillie Scott's greatest house, retaining almost all its original decorative features, and it provides a perfect setting for historical and contemporary craft.

Windermere Jetty Museum of Boats, Steam and Stories will be a world-class museum displaying the nationally significant collection of boats that are all associated with Windermere. It will offer a range of activities for visitors including displays telling the history and stories of the boats and the people who built and used them, a publicly viewable conservation workshop, a boathouse with boats on the water and high-quality visitor facilities.



Volunteer Tour Guide - Role Description

Overview

Our Volunteer Guides give tours of the art gallery, interpreting the artworks on display.

What's involved?

- Our Tour Guides give guided tours of Abbot Hall, interpreting some of the most interesting artworks on display.
- The tours generally last about 30 to 40 minutes.
- The number of visitors on each tour can vary hugely – a group of between 10 and 15 visitors might be most typical.
- We encourage our guides to bring the art to life in an interesting and enthusiastic way.

Will I be trained?

- When you first join the volunteering team, you'll receive training from a member of the gallery team, including security arrangements and fire evacuation.
- Our Curators will offer specific training about the artworks currently on display, and will suggest ways to communicate this in an interesting way to our visitors.

What can I expect?

- We currently offer guided tours every Saturday afternoon, and selected days during the week.
- We plan our rota between 1 and 2 months in advance.
- We ask that you treat your slots on the volunteer rota as a firm commitment. We appreciate that there may be times when you're unable to attend at the last minute – please let us know as soon as possible so that we can arrange alternative cover.
- Some volunteers are able to cover occasional days, whilst others are able to make a regular commitment (e.g. 1 slot per week). We hope that volunteers can give some time every month; however we try to take a flexible approach that suits each individual's needs.

What skills are needed?

- Most of all we're looking for genuine enthusiasts who love sharing their passion for art with our visitors.
- Strong verbal communication skills and a clear voice.
- A friendly and welcoming approach to ensure our visitors get the most from their visit.
- Our Tour Guides generally have a good level of background art knowledge; however our curators will provide all the specific information you need.
- We'll provide notes, but not a formal 'script'. We're keen that our guides play to their individual strengths and convey their enthusiasm in a way that they feel is most appropriate.
- As the 'face' of Abbot Hall Art Gallery you'll need to look presentable and be friendly and approachable.
- You'll need to be sufficiently mobile to move around the building and be able to assist with the evacuation of the building in the event of a fire.

What are the benefits?

- Our Tour Guides have a lot of direct contact with our visitors. There's a lot of satisfaction from helping our visitors understand more about the art on display.
- Volunteering is a great way of meeting fellow volunteers and visitors.
- Our 'active volunteers card' gives you and your immediate family free admission to Abbot Hall, Blackwell and Windermere Jetty.
- Your 'active volunteer card' also entitles you to a 50% discount in our cafes, and a 10% discount in our shops throughout the year.
- Free car parking at Abbot Hall on days when you're volunteering.