

Employee Handbook

Prepared by Gillian Seale

Last updated: Apr 8, 2026

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Disclaimer - all of the art work in this handbook is original and was painted by Gillian Seale

1) Welcome Message

Dear Volunteer,

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with Tailored Yarn Memories.

Your time, skills, and compassion will make a profound difference to bereaved families across our communities. Losing a loved one is one of life's hardest experiences, especially for children. Through your work creating memorial books, eulogies, and legacy stories, you'll help families honor their loved ones and give children precious keepsakes they can treasure forever.

We're a small but growing Community Interest Company with big ambitions. You're joining us at an exciting time as we develop our volunteer training program and pilot our church partnership model. Your feedback and ideas will help shape how we grow.

This handbook contains everything you need to know about volunteering with TYM.

If you have questions that aren't answered here, please don't hesitate to ask — we're here to support you. Welcome to the team.

Together, we'll help bereaved families remember, honor, and stay connected to the people they love.

With gratitude,

Gillian Seale

Founder & CEO

Tailored Yarn Memories CIC



2. About Us

Company overview

This Story Tailor designs watercolour illustrations not clothes and stitches together words and ideas not pieces of material, to preserve memories and anecdotes in special eulogies and fictional legacies that are suitable for children.

Mission and vision

We want all children to have ways to remember those they care about who have passed away even if they are too young to attend the funeral. This is why we aim to support bereaved families by creating personalized memorial books, eulogies, and legacy stories that help children and adults remember, honor, and celebrate their loved ones.

Core values



Excellence

We create beautiful, professional memorial books that families treasure



Collaboration

We recognize that diverse perspectives drive success and innovation and believe that together, we achieve more.



Innovation

We combine AI technology with human creativity to make memorial storytelling accessible



Compassion

We approach every family with empathy, sensitivity, and genuine care

Our Directors:

- Paul McMichael
- Alan Ward
- Philippa Skinner
- Peter Jones

What does Tailored Yarn Do?

Previously we delivered watercolour workshops in local hospices and created free training courses to expand these nationally. My first legacy painting was for my close friend Debbie who lost her battle with cancer a few years back leaving behind a husband and two young boys. It depicted her family life and important vet work within the community. This activity has proved

very popular in palliative care settings like hospices as bereaved families benefit from the therapeutic nature of the workshops.

Next we recieved funding to deliver The Bereavement Journey Course (designed by professional counselors from At A Loss) in local churches. Then from here we started our first peer support let bereavement cafe that continues to run strong to this day.

Tailored Yarn Memories provides a very unique service to support children on a personal journey through their grief. Stories are a powerful way to bring comfort, healing and resilience. The bespoke bereavement stories are tailored by definition as we interview the family and record their memories then creatively map reality into fiction. We are now creating training packages to run online tutorials and guide more charities in creating their own stories to give to their children in memory of their loved ones who have died.

Our current projects

We create three types of memorial content for bereaved families:

1. **Eulogies** - Child-friendly tribute pieces (200-300 words) honoring the deceased
2. **Memory Books** - Photo-rich keepsakes with captions and stories
3. **Fictional Legacy Stories** - Illustrated children's books where the loved one is the character/hero

We use innovative AI tools combined with human creativity and compassion to make these memorial keepsakes accessible and affordable for all families.

Why is the work so important?

Every year 20,000 young children lose a parent in the UK alone. When we are bereaved as an adult we have a lifetime worth of memories to cling to. Children have far fewer, fading more quickly. Tailored Yarn bespoke books create a strong everlasting bond. Having spoken to many bereaved parents the thing their children struggle with most is the guilt they feel as they get older and can't remember what their mum or dad looked like, said or activities they did together as their few memories fade over time.

Our country has experienced a lot of grief especially through the recent pandemic but this doesn't even scratch the surface. In my bereavement work to date, I've met many families who don't feel there is enough support out there except the tremendous work done by the hospices. However these services are only appropriate for patients with terminal illness. We need to ensure

there is a local support network for families affected by strokes, heart attacks, traffic accidents, miscarriages, victims of crime, suicide to name but a few. The services and products we offer are vastly different from what currently exists and can help bring comfort and healing.

I've learned from attending my local bereavement advisory board that many charities and counselling services are over stretched and have lengthy waiting lists. This is one of the main ways I know there is a need for families to be given more support through grief and loss.

How is Tailored Yarn Memories having an impact?

I hope that within five years, most hospices and bereavement charities in the country will offer our bespoke memory book services to their families. We aim to help as many families as possible with the resources we have at our disposal. For this to become a viable sustainable product we need to train up more story tailored to help us achieve our mission.



3. OUR CURRENT VOLUNTEER ROLES

We have several volunteer positions, each contributing to our mission in different ways:

Volunteer Coordinator

Recruit, onboard, and support our volunteer team. Manage monthly team meetings and ensure volunteers have what they need to succeed.

Training Program Project Manager

Oversee business students creating our volunteer training videos. Ensure training materials are clear, comprehensive, and compassionate.

Pilot Project Coordinator

Coordinate our church pilot project and support deliverables. Work with our founder to demonstrate our model can scale.

Fundaisers and Grant / Bid Writers

Research funders and write compelling grant applications to secure funding for our work with bereaved families.

Chief Administrator

Helping us operate more effectively by updating documents, spreadsheets and company policies as well assistance with recruitment and fundraising bids

Bereavement Pastoral Worker

An expert in the field of grief and bereavement having a licence to conduct funerals in the church of England and will provide necessary training if required.

AI Expert / Technology Advisor

Evaluate and recommend the best AI tools for creating memorial content with consistent quality.

Memorial Book Creators

Create eulogies, memory books, and fictional legacy stories working directly with bereaved families. Requires empathy, creativity, and commitment to training.

4. HOW WE SUPPORT YOU

Reporting Structure

Volunteers report to:

- **Ken Izli** (Volunteer Coordinator)
- **Peter Flexman** (Volunteer Coordinator)
- **Gillian Seale** (Founder & CEO)

Supervision and support are provided by our coordinators, with specialist guidance from Gillian as needed.

Training & Induction

All new volunteers receive:

- **Induction** from Gillian Seale covering TYM's mission, values, and approach
- **Training** through shared documents or one-on-one shadowing
- **Ongoing support** from coordinators and experienced volunteers
- **Access to resources** including templates, guides, and software training

Regular Check-Ins

Your coordinators will check in with you regularly through:

- Informal chats to see how you're doing
- Support when you have questions or challenges
- Feedback on your work (constructive and appreciative!)
- Opportunities to discuss skills you want to develop

Personal Development

We want to help you reach your full potential! Let your coordinator know:

- Which areas and skills you're looking to develop
- What training or shadowing would be helpful
- What aspects of the role you most enjoy
- Where you'd like more support or challenge

Wellbeing Support

Working with bereaved families can be emotionally demanding. We provide:

- **Regular check-ins** to monitor your wellbeing

- **Peer support** through team connections
- **Signposting** to external support services if needed
- **Flexibility** to step back when you need space

If you're struggling with the emotional weight of this work, please talk to your coordinator. Gillian is a trained therapist and can signpost appropriate support.

External helplines available:

- **Samaritans:** 116 123 (24/7)
- **Cruse Bereavement Support:** 0808 808 1677
- **Mind Mental Health Support:** 0300 123 3393

Recognition & Thanks

We value every contribution you make:

- Regular appreciation and thanks from coordinators
- References provided upon request
- Recognition of your skills and achievements
- Inclusion in our impact reports (anonymously or by name, your choice)

We want every volunteer to feel genuinely valued — because you are!



5. WHAT WE EXPECT FROM YOU

Your Responsibilities

As a TYM volunteer, we ask that you:

Be Compassionate & Professional

- Treat bereaved families with empathy, sensitivity, and respect
- Maintain professional standards in all communications
- Represent TYM positively in the community

Respect Confidentiality

- Keep all family information strictly confidential
- Do not share details about bereaved families outside TYM

- Only discuss cases with coordinators or relevant team members
- Store sensitive information securely and delete after 6 months

Follow Safeguarding Procedures

- Complete required safeguarding training
- Report any concerns about children or vulnerable adults immediately
- Follow our safeguarding policy at all times
- Obtain DBS clearance if working directly with bereaved families

Communicate Effectively

- Respond to messages within reasonable timeframes
- Keep coordinators informed of your availability
- Ask for help when you need it
- Provide feedback to improve our processes

Honor Your Commitments

- Complete tasks you've agreed to take on
- Meet deadlines or communicate early if you can't
- Give notice if you need to step back temporarily
- Provide two weeks' notice if leaving (appreciated but not mandatory)

Be Open to Feedback

- Accept constructive feedback graciously
- Share suggestions for improvements
- Participate in reviews and evaluations
- Help us learn and grow as an organization

If You Need to Pause or Step Back

Life happens! If you need to pause volunteering due to:

- Personal circumstances
- Health concerns
- Work or family commitments
- Emotional overwhelm from bereavement work

Just let us know. We'll arrange for your workload to be covered without judgment or pressure. Your wellbeing comes first, and we'd rather you took a break than burned out.

6. PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Application & Onboarding Process

By the time you receive this handbook, you will have:

1. Applied through the Reach volunteer platform
2. Been interviewed and accepted
3. Be ready to submit your references (coordinators will help with this)
4. Be ready to obtain DBS clearance (if required for your role)
5. Received induction from Gillian Seale
6. Tasks will be posted on a weekly basis

Ken and Peter (our Volunteer Coordinators) will guide you through the reference and DBS process.

DBS Checks

DBS checks are required for:

- Memorial Book Creators (working directly with bereaved families)
- Anyone with direct contact with children or vulnerable adults

DBS checks are NOT required for:

- Roles working behind the scenes (grant writing, tech support, social media, etc.)

Your coordinator will confirm whether your role requires DBS clearance.

Expenses

We can reimburse reasonable expenses including:

- Travel costs (mileage or public transport)
- Materials needed for your role
- Printing or postage costs

Important: All expenses must be **agreed in advance** with your coordinator. Submit receipts promptly for reimbursement.

As a small charity, we appreciate volunteers keeping costs minimal where possible.

Time Commitment

We don't require volunteers to log hours. We trust you to contribute what you can, when you can.

Different roles have different time commitments:

Flexibility is key. Let your coordinator know your availability, and we'll work around your schedule.

Equipment & Resources

What you'll need to provide:

- Computer/laptop with internet access
- Email address
- Phone (for communication)
- Any standard software you use (Microsoft Teams, etc.)

What TYM can provide:

- Access to AI tools (Childbook.AI, Scrively, Designrr, etc.)
- Access to social media platforms (if relevant to your role)
- Templates, guides, and training materials
- Specialist software access on request

As a small charity, we're unable to provide equipment, but we'll ensure you have access to all the digital tools and resources you need.

Communication

We communicate through:

- **Email:** Primary method for official communications
- **WhatsApp:** Quick questions and informal team chat
- **Microsoft Teams:** Video meetings, file sharing, project collaboration

Gillian shares her availability regularly, and coordinators aim to respond within 1-2 working days.

Expected response times:

- Urgent matters: Same day or next working day
- Routine questions: 2-3 working days
- Non-urgent updates: When convenient

Team Meetings

Coordinators organize regular team meetings (frequency varies by team):

- Share updates and successes
- Problem-solve challenges together
- Build connections and community
- Provide mutual support

Attendance is encouraged but optional — we understand you have other commitments!



7. IMPORTANT POLICIES

Safeguarding

TYM is committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Safeguarding Lead: Caroline Houghton (Bereavement Pastoral Worker)

Your responsibilities:

- Complete safeguarding training as part of your induction
- Be alert to signs of abuse, neglect, or harm
- Report any concerns immediately
- Follow our safeguarding policy at all times

If you have safeguarding concerns:

1. Contact Caroline Houghton immediately through email, WhatsApp or Teams
2. In an emergency, contact police (999) or local safeguarding teams
3. Do not investigate yourself or confront alleged abusers
4. Document your concerns factually

We have a comprehensive Safeguarding Policy available on request.

Data Protection & GDPR

We handle sensitive information about bereaved families with the utmost care.

Your responsibilities:

- Only access family information on a **need-to-know basis**
- Store sensitive data securely (password-protected files, encrypted emails)
- Delete family information after **6 months** (unless required for legal/archival purposes)
- Never share family details on social media or with third parties
- Obtain explicit consent before photographing memorial books or using testimonials

GDPR principles we follow:

- Minimal data collection (only what's necessary)
- Secure storage and transmission
- Limited retention periods
- Transparent use with family consent
- Respect for family privacy and dignity

If you're unsure whether you can share something, **ask your coordinator first.**

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is paramount in our work.

What you must keep confidential:

- Names and details of bereaved families
- Circumstances of deaths
- Family photos and personal information
- Conversations with families about their grief
- Any information shared in confidence

What you can share (with permission):

- Anonymous impact stories for grant applications
- General feedback about the service (no identifying details)
- Photos of memorial books (only with explicit family consent and faces obscured if needed)

When in doubt, keep it confidential and ask your coordinator.

Health & Safety

Most TYM volunteering is remote, so health and safety risks are minimal. However:

Working from home:

- Ensure your workspace is comfortable and ergonomic
- Take regular breaks, especially during intensive creative work
- Manage screen time to avoid eye strain

Emotional health & safety:

- Recognize when bereavement work is affecting your wellbeing
- Take breaks when needed
- Access support through coordinators or external helplines
- Don't carry the emotional weight alone

Raise any health and safety concerns with your coordinator.

Equal Opportunities

Tailored Yarn Memories is committed to equal opportunities for all volunteers regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/belief, sex, or sexual orientation. We welcome volunteers from all backgrounds and seek to create an inclusive, respectful team environment.

Complaints & Grievances

We hope you'll never need to make a complaint, but if you do:

Step 1: Raise your concern with your coordinator (Ken Izli or Peter Flexman)

Step 2: If unresolved, speak directly to Gillian Seale

Step 3: If still unresolved, submit a written complaint to our Board of Directors

We take all complaints seriously and will:

- Listen without judgment
- Investigate thoroughly and fairly
- Respond within a reasonable timeframe
- Take action to resolve the issue
- Learn from complaints to improve our practices

You will not be penalized for raising legitimate concerns.

Insurance

TYM has appropriate insurance coverage for volunteers, including public liability insurance.

[Specific policy details available on request from Gillian Seale]

8. IF YOU NEED TO LEAVE

We hope you'll volunteer with TYM for a long time, but we understand circumstances change.

Notice Period

We appreciate **two weeks' notice** if possible. This allows us to:

- Reassign any families or projects you're working with
- Complete handover to other volunteers
- Ensure nothing is left incomplete

However, we understand this isn't always possible. If you need to leave immediately due to personal circumstances, just let us know — we'll manage.

Handover Process

Your coordinator will work with you to:

- Transfer any active projects to other volunteers
- Share relevant documentation or resources
- Brief the incoming volunteer (if applicable)
- Return any TYM materials or equipment

Exit Interviews

We offer **optional exit interviews** to understand:

- What you enjoyed about volunteering with TYM
- What we could improve
- Why you're leaving
- Whether you'd recommend TYM to other volunteers

Your honest feedback helps us improve for future volunteers.

References

If you'd like a reference for future employment or volunteering, we're happy to provide one! Just ask your coordinator or Gillian, and we'll write one highlighting your skills and contributions.

Staying Connected

Even if you can't volunteer regularly, we'd love to stay connected:

- Join our mailing list for updates
- Follow us on social media
- Attend occasional team events
- Return as a volunteer when life allows

Once part of TYM, always part of our community!



9. KEY CONTACTS

Primary Contacts

Gillian Seale - Founder & CEO / Safeguarding Lead

gillianseale@tailoredyarn.com

07767 441391

Ken Izli - Volunteer Coordinator

Peter Flexman - Volunteer Coordinator

Organizational Details

Website: www.tailoredyarn.com

Legal Name: Tailored Yarn CIC

Operating Name: Tailored Yarn Memories (TYM)

Companies House Registration: 12586110

Board of Directors

- Paul McMichael
- Alan Ward
- Philippa Skinner
- Peter Jones

For board communications, contact Gillian Seale who will forward appropriately.

External Support Services

Bereavement Support:

- Cruse Bereavement Support: 0808 808 1677
- The Compassionate Friends: 0345 123 2304
- Child Bereavement UK: 0800 028 8840

Mental Health Support:

- Samaritans: 116 123 (24/7)
- Mind: 0300 123 3393
- NHS 111 Mental Health Crisis Line: Call 111

Safeguarding Concerns:

- NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000
- Childline: 0800 1111 (for children to call)
- Adult Safeguarding: Contact local authority

10) THANK YOU

Thank you for reading this handbook and for choosing to volunteer with Tailored Yarn Memories.

Your compassion, creativity, and commitment will help bereaved families across our communities remember and honor their loved ones.

If you have questions about anything in this handbook, please ask your coordinator or Gillian. We're here to support you.



Welcome to the team. Together, we'll make a difference.

Legal Name: Tailored Yarn CIC

Operating As: Tailored Yarn Memories (TYM)

Companies House Registration: 12586110

Structure: Community Interest Company (CIC)

Tailored Yarn Memories CIC | Volunteer Handbook

Version 1.0 | April 2026

Next review: April 2027

This handbook is subject to periodic review and update.

Volunteers will be notified of any significant changes.

Creating
Tailored Memories
for bereaved families