



VOLUNTEERING POLICY

Introduction

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This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in Excel Church and Bilston People's Centre. It is of relevance to all within the organisation, including volunteers, staff, members, and those elected or appointed to positions of responsibility.

This policy is endorsed by the Trustees and will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of Excel Church, Bilston People's Centre and its volunteers.

Commitment

Excel Church and Bilston People's Centre acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways, that their contribution is unique and that volunteering can benefit users of services, staff, local communities and the volunteers themselves. Excel Church and Bilston People's Centre values the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering.

Excel Church and Bilston People's Centre recognises its responsibility to arrange its volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

Definition

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship as well as an important component of democracy. Volunteers are people who are, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community.

Statement of values and principles

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by Excel Church and Bilston People's Centre and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment. The role of volunteers complements but does not replace the role of paid staff.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

Volunteers will not be used during times of industrial action to do the work of paid staff.

The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise the organisation cannot be compelled to provide either regular tasks, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the organisation.

Volunteer Co-ordination

All volunteers will have a nominated member of staff or volunteer to offer guidance and advice to help the volunteer carry out tasks effectively. The nominated lead will normally be the department lead for the area in which they are volunteering. Volunteers will be informed of who to contact to receive support and guidance.

The nominated post holders with overall responsibility for the development of voluntary activities within the organisation are Derek Dudfield Senior Pastor and Trisha Gallardo, Centre Development Manager. They are responsible for the management and welfare of the organisation's volunteers.

Recruitment & Selection

Excel Church and Bilston People's Centre are committed to equal opportunities and believe that volunteering should be open to all regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs or offending background that does not create a risk to vulnerable groups including children. However there will be some volunteering positions within Excel Church and Bilston People's Centre that can only be filled by a Christian due to the nature of the service/activities being provided.

The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out agreed tasks. Information about the volunteer not relevant to the performance of the volunteering tasks concerned will be disregarded by the organisation in terms of recruitment and selection.

Volunteering opportunities will be widely promoted in ways that makes them accessible to all members of the community.

Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task will either be offered alternative voluntary involvement with the organisation or referred to the nearest Volunteer Centre.

To determine suitability where appropriate volunteers will be invited to attend an informal interview and may be asked to provide a reference. If the volunteer will be carrying out activities with vulnerable groups (children and/or adults) the volunteer may be asked to undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check. More detailed information will be made available specific to legislative requirements and to the particular volunteer position. More detailed information will be made available specific to legislative requirements and to the particular volunteer position.

Volunteers will have a clear and concise task description and will be made aware of the expectations linked to the volunteering position. The task description and expectations will be reviewed annually or sooner if required. The task description will be prepared in conjunction with the volunteer and their department lead.

New volunteers will be properly inducted into the organisation.

Volunteers will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform with confidence.

Training & Development

All volunteers will be made aware of and have access to all the organisation's relevant policies, including those relating to volunteering, health & safety, safeguarding vulnerable groups and equal opportunities.

The development of training and support for volunteers is a high priority for the organisation in order to equip them with the necessary information and skills to carry out their tasks. It will be the responsibility of the designated person referred to above to see that this training is provided. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to attend relevant training.

Support, Guidance and Recognition

Volunteers will have a named person to whom they can take their volunteering concerns and seek guidance and support.

Volunteers will have access to regular support and guidance. This will enable both the volunteer and the department lead to identify, monitor and evaluate the volunteer's involvement, recognise achievements and identify individual training needs, including that relevant to their particular volunteering role and to their wider personal development.

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with the organisation's wider staff, at departmental meetings etc.

Excel Church and Bilston People's Centre will seek to give formal recognition of the contribution of the organisation's volunteers including public notes of thanks and celebration events.

Expenses

Excel Church and Bilston People's Centre have a significant number of volunteers and are therefore unable to routinely reimburse expenses incurred in travelling to and from the place of volunteering. Volunteers can submit a written request to Derek Dudfield for travelling expenses to be reimbursed if the lack of travelling expenses prevents them from volunteering.

Expenditure incurred as part of the volunteering role e.g. equipment required to fulfil the role will be reimbursed on the production of receipts.

Insurance

The organisation's liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them.

The organisation does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage

Confidentiality

The organisation will advise the volunteer on its confidentiality policy and procedures, where relevant. This would include those relating to personal information held by the organisation relating to the volunteer.

Settling Differences

The organisation aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. The organisation seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly and aim for a positive and amicable solution based on the organisation's guidelines for settling differences.

The designated officers referred to above are responsible for handling problems regarding volunteer complaints or conduct and these should be referred to them. In the event of a problem, all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible. Support will be provided by the organisation to the volunteer while it endeavours to resolve the problem in an informal manner. If an informal resolution proves impossible, the organisation's wider grievance or complaints policies and procedures (which include volunteers) will be referred to. If a volunteer's behaviour is repeatedly or seriously unacceptable, they may be asked to change their role, or to cease volunteering.

Rights and Responsibilities

The organisation recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- know what is (and what is not) expected of them
- have adequate support in their volunteering
- receive appreciation
- volunteer in a safe environment
- be insured
- know their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong
- receive reimbursement for expenditure incurred whilst fulfilling their volunteering role excluding travelling expenses
- receive appropriate training
- be free from discrimination
- be offered the opportunity for personal development

The organisation expects volunteers to:

- be reliable
- be honest
- respect confidentiality
- make the most of training and support opportunities

- carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of the organisation
- carry out tasks within agreed guidelines
- respect the work of the organisation and not bring it into disrepute
- comply with the organisation's policies

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