

Volunteering Policy

1. Introduction

Volunteer Edinburgh exists to involve more people more effectively in volunteering to help solve real problems and enrich communities.

It does this by:

- Working with volunteer involving organisations to improve the diversity and quality of volunteer placements.
- Providing potential volunteers with the means to access volunteering opportunities.
- Helping people who might otherwise have found themselves excluded to take part in their communities.

VE is committed to involving volunteers directly within the organisation to:

- Contribute to the delivery of our services
- Make sure we are responsive to the needs of our users.
- Provide different skills and perspectives.
- Offer opportunities for participation by people who might otherwise be excluded.

This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers in Volunteer Edinburgh.

2. Principles

Volunteer Edinburgh:

- Recognises that voluntary work brings benefits to volunteers themselves, to service users and to paid staff.
- Will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to the volunteer centre's work.
- Will not introduce volunteers to replace paid staff.
- Expects that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work.
- Recognises that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training for them to do their work effectively.
- Will endeavour to identify and cover the costs of involving volunteers.
- Recognises that the management of volunteers requires designated responsibilities within specific posts.
- Will endeavour to involve volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities and ensure our volunteering opportunities are as accessible as possible

3. Recruitment

Recruitment of volunteers will generally be from all sections of the community, and will be in line with the Volunteer Centre's Equal Opportunities Policy. Positive action in recruitment may be used where appropriate.

People interested in becoming volunteers with VE will be invited for an informal talk with the appropriate contact person. They will be given an information pack including general information about the centre and specific information on the volunteer post in which they are interested.

All volunteers will be asked to complete a simple registration form and to supply two references. Where applicants are not placed in the role applied for, they will be provided with feedback and given the opportunity to discuss alternative volunteering roles both with Volunteer Edinburgh and other volunteer involving organisations.

Volunteers with VCE are likely to come into contact with vulnerable people and/or be in a position of trust. They will therefore be asked to provide information about any criminal convictions via a self disclosure form that is completed prior to commencing volunteering. A risk assessment is carried out for each volunteering role and for some roles a Disclosure Check will be necessary. These checks will be arranged by Volunteer Edinburgh.

This information will be dealt with in the strictest confidence and will not necessarily prejudice the person being accepted for voluntary work.

4. Volunteer Role Descriptions and Volunteer Agreements

Volunteers will receive a role description and volunteer agreement containing full information about their chosen area of work, and a clear idea of their responsibilities and the volunteer's responsibilities to them.

5. Induction and Training

Volunteers will be given induction and training appropriate to the specific tasks to be undertaken.

6. Support

Volunteers will be assigned a named contact person who will provide regular support. Support sessions will provide the opportunity for ongoing dialogue about the development of the volunteering role and any advice and guidance as needed. Where the volunteering role is emotionally demanding these sessions also give volunteers the opportunity to access emotional support from the organisation.

7. The Volunteer's Voice

Volunteers will be consulted in decisions which affect them.

Volunteer Edinburgh is committed to developing consultation and representational procedures for volunteers.

8. Records

Minimum details will be kept on volunteers. This will include the registration form, references, placement details, crisis contact, correspondence and any other relevant information in accordance with VE confidentiality policy.

9. Expenses

VE will ensure that there is a clear and accessible system to enable volunteers to claim out of pocket expenses.

10. Insurance

Volunteers will be covered by insurance while carrying out agreed duties.

11. Health and Safety

The volunteer centre will take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the volunteers' health, safety and welfare while at work in accordance with the centre's Health and Safety policy.

12. Equal Opportunities

Volunteers and staff will work in accordance with the centre's equal opportunities policy and will prevent discrimination on any grounds.

13. Problems

Volunteer Edinburgh has a problem-solving policy to help deal with problems that volunteers may have concerning their volunteering with us. In line with this policy volunteers have the right to discuss any concerns they may have with their named contact at any time.

If the contact person is unable to resolve the problem they will refer the matter to the Director and ultimately the Board of Management, with the permission of the volunteer.

13. Endings

When volunteers move on from their role at Volunteer Edinburgh they will be asked to provide feedback on the volunteering experience by way of an exit questionnaire or interview. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss their responses to the questionnaire more fully with their Volunteer Support Worker or a member of the management team.

On the basis of their voluntary work, volunteers will have the right to request a reference. Volunteers will be supported to move on to other options.

14. Monitoring and Evaluation

VE will systematically monitor and evaluate its use of volunteers with reference to this Volunteer Policy.

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually.