



Volunteer Policy

Introduction

The Springfield Project is a registered charity born out of the community work of St. Christopher's Church. Providing volunteering opportunities is a key aspect the Springfield Project's aim to empower, enable and enrich the lives of individuals and the wider community.

This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers and is relevant to staff, volunteers and trustees within the organisation. It aims to create a common understanding and to clarify roles and responsibilities to ensure the highest standards are maintained in relation to the management of volunteers.

Our commitments

We recognise volunteers as an integral part of the organisation. Their contribution supports our mission and strategic aims, and complements the role of paid staff. We aim to encourage and support volunteer involvement to ensure that volunteering benefits the organisation, its clients and the volunteers themselves.

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

We are committed to offering a flexible range of opportunities and to encouraging a diversity of people to volunteer with us, including those from under-represented groups such as youth, people with a disability, older people and people from black and minority ethnic communities.

We recognise that there are costs associated with volunteer involvement and will seek to ensure adequate financial and staffing resources are available for the development and support of volunteering. We recognise that people have a right to participate in the life of their communities through volunteering and can contribute in many ways. We recognise our responsibility to organise volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

Who is a volunteer?

Volunteers are individuals who undertake activity on behalf of our organisation, unpaid and of their own free choice.

Volunteering is activity which

- is undertaken freely, by choice
- is undertaken to be of public/ community benefit
- is not undertaken for financial gain

Work experience placements and internships are not the same as volunteering. Please refer to HR for further information about these. Trustees are volunteers with responsibility for governance of the organisation.

Volunteers may be involved on a one – off, short term or on a longer term, regular basis. They may be involved:

- in the direct delivery of our services
- on our board of management as trustees
- in community engagement to raise awareness of our work
- in one off events and promotional activities
- in our offices or in community venues

Volunteers are valued for:

- bringing additional skills and new perspectives to the organisations
- enabling us to be more responsive and flexible in our approach
- championing our cause within the wider community
- welfare of volunteers.

All volunteers will have a designated staff member/volunteer for guidance, support and supervision. Staff responsibilities for volunteers will be explicitly referred to in their job/role description.

There is no obligation on volunteers and no contract between the Springfield Project and the volunteer.

The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. For this relationship between the volunteer and the organization to work well for both, there are expectations on both sides. This is both what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers can expect of the organisation.

The organisation expects volunteers:

- to be on site when they say they will be or contact the organization in cases of sickness or family emergency.
- to uphold the organisation's values and comply with organisational policies
- to make the most of opportunities given, eg for training
- to contribute positively to the aims of the organisation and avoid bringing the organisation into disrepute
- to carry out tasks within agreed guidelines

Volunteers can expect:

- to have clear information about what is and is not expected of them
- to receive adequate support and training
- to be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment
- to be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner
- to receive out of pocket expenses
- to have opportunities for personal development
- to be recognised and appreciated
- to be able to say 'no' to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable

Recruitment and selection

Equal opportunities principles will be adhered to in recruiting volunteers. Opportunities will be widely promoted so as to attract interest from different sectors of the community. Positive action to target recruitment may be used where appropriate. Online application is encouraged, but non-digital methods of application are also available.

Information will be made available to those enquiring about volunteering, including written role descriptions which set out the nature and purpose of the volunteering role, key tasks, skills required and benefits. A risk assessment will be undertaken on all volunteer roles.

In most cases, volunteer roles are identified by staff members in conversation with the Volunteer Coordinator. These roles are advertised after drawing up a written role description and safer recruitment guidelines are followed. In some cases a prospective volunteer offers their skills and a new role is identified in conversation with staff members. In this case a written role description would be drawn up after the volunteer interview and safer recruitment guidelines followed.

Recruitment will involve an informal interview, application form and the taking of references; the process will be defined and consistent for any given role - for example the recruitment process for trustees, regular volunteers and for volunteers for one off events will be tailored in each case and may differ from one another. As an organisation working with children, recruitment practices are in line with Safer Recruitment Guidance.

Not all prospective volunteers have gifts and talents which are compatible with the mission of the Springfield Project. In addition, some have lifestyles which are too busy to allow regular and reliable volunteering. Where a prospective volunteer is unsuitable for volunteering at the Project then they will be assisted to find a volunteering role with another organisation.

Where applicants are not able to be placed in their preferred role, they will be provided with feedback and given the opportunity to discuss alternative volunteering roles. For roles which involve care giving and/or sustained and direct contact with young people or adults at risk, volunteers will be required to have a full DBS disclosure check which will be arranged by the organisation. DBS disclosures are dealt with in the strictest confidence. A criminal record is not necessarily a bar to volunteering.

Induction and training

Volunteers will receive an induction to the organisation by the Volunteer Coordinator. Volunteers will also be given induction and training appropriate to the specific tasks to be undertaken.

Support and supervision

The day to day support and supervision is provided by the staff member and the volunteer coordinator is available to facilitate this and to offer other support when needed.

Recognition

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with the organisation's wider staff. Where appropriate they will be invited to team meetings.

Formal recognition of the contribution of volunteers is expressed through annual reports, away days, website articles, social media, and during Volunteers' Week award celebrations. The Springfield Project recognizes the huge value that volunteers offer. The volunteer Coordinators provide reports to the management committee on a regular basis and these are shared with the Board of Trustees.

Dealing with problems

The organisation aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. It seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly.

We will attempt to deal with any problems informally and at the earliest opportunity. All volunteers will have a named member of staff and the volunteer coordinator, to whom they can turn in the case of any difficulty. Where informal resolution is not possible, the organisation's 'Settling differences' policy will be adhered to.

Volunteers will be made aware of the organisation's complaints policy and how to use it. They will also be made aware of how inappropriate behaviour by volunteers will be addressed by the organisation.

Expenses

Volunteers will be given clear information about what expenses can be claimed and how to make a claim.

Moving on

When volunteers move on from volunteering with us they will be asked to provide feedback on the volunteering experience by way of an exit questionnaire. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss their responses to the questionnaire more fully.

Volunteers who have remained with the organisation for at least 6 months will have the right to request a reference. Volunteers will be supported to move on to other options.

Other relevant documents

Organisational policies relevant to volunteers include Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities, Confidentiality, Social media, Safeguarding, Complaints.

Policy implementation and review	Responsible Officer: Sue Round
This procedure was approved by the Senior Leadership Team May 2020	
Policy review	This policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier as required. Policy review date: June 2023