



# **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.

## **Springfield vision, mission and values**

Our vision is to show God's love in our community. Every child, adult and family in our community will have the opportunity to live life in all its fullness.

Our mission is to help others live life to the full. Our mission is to meet people at their point of need and work with them to identify a pathway which will enable, empower or enrich them.

## **Our values**

**Welcoming and inclusive:** We seek to provide a safe space for our community where all are welcome. We embrace diversity, celebrating the way in which people of different faiths or no faith can work together to bring about positive change in the lives of individuals and the community. We treat all who come to the Project with respect and warmth and recognise each person as an individual.

**Listening:** We recognise and value the unique insights and experiences of members of our community. We seek to ensure that the views of all those who have an interest in the Project inform the continuous development of our services.

**Serving:** We seek to contribute to the transformation of the lives of individuals, families and the wider community. We show compassion in our work and strive to meet people at their point of need. We seek to get alongside people to share their stories and offer support.

**Professional:** Our community deserves the best we can give them; therefore we recruit professionally qualified staff on the basis of their skills, knowledge and experience. We welcome and value the contribution of our trained volunteers who greatly enhance our services. We have policies and procedures in place to help us achieve our aims and objectives.

**Growing:** We look for the best in people and seek to empower them to use their strengths to take charge of their own lives and to support others. We are all on a journey of life-long learning.

We learn through our daily life and work, as well as through discussion, reflection, practice and education. We accept mistakes and apologies and encourage others by showing change and growth in ourselves.

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 different from 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

The Springfield Project values volunteers 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

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 organisation 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 organisation in cases of sickness or family emergency.
- .to uphold the organisation's values
- .to read and comply with organisational policies

- .To have read the child and adult safeguarding policies before starting to volunteer
- .To have attended safeguarding training either online or in person before starting to volunteer
- .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.

Some volunteers have current or recent involvement with the Freedom Programme or Family Support. In these cases an internal reference will be sought from the staff member.

Generally starting volunteering will be delayed until Family Support involvement has been completed. In some cases the Family Support worker may consider that volunteering will take away attention from the prospective volunteer's family. In these circumstances the Family Support worker or volunteer coordinator will explain to the prospective volunteer that this is not a good time for volunteering.

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 are provided by the staff member with whom the volunteer works and the volunteer coordinator is available to facilitate this and to offer other support when needed. The 'line manager' for the volunteer is the head of the relevant service.

Where staff have family members who are employed or volunteer at the Project, the staff member must inform their line manager. The staff member should not be given the role of the line manager. The Project recognises that on occasion a staff member's family or friends may volunteer at the Project. There are no problems with this provided that professional boundaries are maintained by the staff member, the volunteer and the Volunteering Manager. In many cases working on separate areas of the organisation or separate sites will be recommended.

If the volunteer has any issues regarding their volunteering, they should raise this directly with the Volunteering Manager rather than via the member of staff. Staff must respect the structures that are in place to manage volunteers and failure to do so may lead to the volunteer being asked to stop their work with the Project.

## **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 recognises the huge value that volunteers offer. The volunteer coordinator provides reports to the Executive on a quarterly basis, and these are shared with the Board of Trustees through the Performance and Impact Committee.

## **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 the problem relates to the volunteer coordinator, volunteers can approach another member of the-

volunteering team or another manager. Where informal resolution is not possible, the process outlined in the organisation's Complaints Policy will be followed

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.

### **Driving and mileage expenses**

The Springfield Project promotes safe driving. All volunteers should ensure that they drive with their safety and that of other road users in mind.

Volunteers are encouraged to ensure that vehicles used for Project purposes are adequately maintained, road worthy-

and serviced as recommend by their car manufacturer.

Volunteers are encouraged to inform their insurers that they use their car for volunteering purposes.

Volunteers need to complete a Driving Agreement if they

a) claim expenses for mileage

OR

b) use their car for volunteering purposes, for example driving to different family homes for home visits, or giving a lift to a staff member or service user.

‘Volunteering purposes’ does not include commuting.

For volunteers who need to drive for volunteering purposes, the Springfield Project will ask to see the following:

- Valid, full driving licence.
- Valid Certificate of Insurance
- Valid MOT certificate if the vehicle is over 3 years old.

Volunteers do not need to complete a Driving Agreement if they use their car just for commuting, for example from home to the place they volunteer

AND-

They do not claim expenses for mileage

The current rates of mileage reimbursed are 45p a mile up to the first 10,000 miles and 25p thereafter.

## **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 volunteered 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 – Rosalyn Clare
This procedure was approved by the Senior Leadership Team September 2023	
Policy review	This policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier as required. Policy review date: June 2026