

Volunteer Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in The Elizabeth Foundation (TEF). 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 Board of Trustees and will be reviewed every two years to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of TEF and its volunteers.

Commitment

TEF acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways and that their contribution is unique and that volunteering can benefit users of services, staff, local communities and the volunteers themselves.

TEF 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.

TEF 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.

Aim

The aim of this volunteering policy is to provide overall cohesion to the various policies and procedures that affect volunteering, for example recruitment, expenses, health and safety and so on. It will also help define the role of volunteers within the organisation and how they can expect to be treated.

Everyone has a right to take part in volunteering and to have a fulfilling and productive experience.

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 TEF 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.

Our Trustees and senior management team will take appropriate steps to ensure that paid members of staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships for all.

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.

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. Volunteers will be informed of who to contact to receive support and supervision.

The nominated post holder with overall responsibility for the development of voluntary activities within the organisation is Fiona Heath, Fundraising Manager.

This person is responsible for the management and welfare of the organisation's volunteers.

Recruitment and Selection

TEF is committed to equal opportunities and believes 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 (References 1 & 2).

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.

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.

All volunteers will be asked to produce two references and will be invited to attend an informal interview.

If the volunteer will be carrying out activities with the education team and children there will be other safer recruitment procedures carried out including asking a volunteer to undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check (Reference 3).

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, which will be subsequently reviewed every year. The task description will be prepared in conjunction with the volunteer and Fiona Heath, TEF Fundraising Manager referred to above.

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 (Reference 4).

Training and 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 TEF in order to equip them with the necessary information and skills to carry out their tasks (Reference 5).

It will be the responsibility of Fiona Heath as the designated person responsible for volunteers, to see that this training is provided.

It is the responsibility of the volunteer to attend relevant training. Training in the supervision of volunteers will be provided for all those who have direct responsibility for volunteers.

Support, Supervision 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 supervision. This will enable both the volunteer and the supervisor 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.

The frequency, duration and format of these sessions will be negotiated between the volunteer and the designated officer referred to above.

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

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 relevant out of pocket 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

Expenses

TEF recognises that the reimbursement of expenses incurred in the course of volunteering is important from an equal opportunities point of view (Reference 6). This is necessary to ensure that all individuals have access to voluntary opportunities.

TEF volunteers are able to claim reasonable out of pocket expenses, subject to the production of receipts as evidence of the expenditure.

What can be reclaimed from the organisation and the calculation of expenses will be explained to the volunteer before they start any activity likely to give rise to expenses.

TEF has a consistent approach to the reimbursement of expenses which are the same for volunteers, staff, etc. and are as approved by the Inland Revenue.

It is the responsibility of the designated person responsible for volunteers, to make volunteers aware of the procedure for the reimbursement of expenses.

Insurance

TEF liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them.

TEF does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage.

Confidentiality

TEF will advise the volunteer on its confidentiality policy and procedures where relevant (Reference 7).



This would include those relating to data protection in respect of supporters and beneficiaries as well as personal information held by the organisation relating to staff and volunteers.

Settling Differences

TEF aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently.

TEF actively seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly and aim for a positive and amicable solution based on TEF guidelines for settling differences (Reference 8).

The designated officer responsible for volunteers is responsible for handling problems regarding volunteer complaints or conduct and these should be referred to her.

In the event of a problem, all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible.

Support will be provided by TEF to the volunteer while it endeavours to resolve the problem in an informal manner.

If a volunteer's behaviour is repeatedly or seriously unacceptable, they may be asked to change their role, or to leave TEF.

AUTHOR

ROLE

DATE RELEASED

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW

Karen Vaughan BEM

Deputy Chief Executive Officer

April 2018

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