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Volunteering Policy

This policy sets out the broad principles for volunteering at the Community Centre @ Christ Church. It is of relevance to everyone in the organisation and has been agreed by the Community Centre Advisory Group on 4th March 2014. The policy will be reviewed every 2 years to ensure that it remains up-to-date and relevant to the volunteering needs of our organisation.

Our Commitment

The Community Centre @ Christ Church acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many different ways, and that volunteering can benefit users of our services, paid staff, other volunteers and the wider community. We value the contributions made by volunteers and we are committed to involving volunteers in appropriate roles, and in ways which are supportive of the volunteers and beneficial to our organisation.

We see volunteers as people who, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy, skills and experience to benefit our organisation and the wider community. We also acknowledge the unique contribution that volunteers make and the importance of a mutually beneficial relationship where the volunteer also gets something from the volunteering role as well.

Our Values

The Community Centre @ Christ Church is committed to volunteering and we will:

- **not** introduce volunteers to replace paid staff. Their role will complement the role of paid staff, be beneficial to the organisation and the volunteers (this

includes ensuring that volunteers are not used during any times of industrial action to do the work of paid staff);

- ensure volunteers have a defined place in the structure of the organisation;
- take appropriate steps to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers;
- recognise that the volunteer role is a 'gift relationship' – 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 volunteering role. Likewise our organisation is not compelled to provide regular work or payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer;
- acknowledge mutual support and reliability – our expectations of volunteers and volunteers' expectations of our organisation.
- acknowledge and value the individual skills, knowledge and experience that each volunteer brings to our organisation;

Coordination of Volunteering

All volunteers will have a nominated paid member of staff or a volunteer from the Management Committee to offer guidance and advice to help the volunteer carry out their role effectively.

'Volunteer coordination' will be explicitly mentioned in all relevant paid job descriptions within our organisation.

The nominated post holder/person with overall responsibility for the development of volunteering within our organisation is Chris Smith – Community Centre Development Manager. This person is responsible for the management and welfare of our volunteers.

Recruitment

- Our organisation is committed to equal opportunities and seeks to recruit volunteers from a diverse range of backgrounds that reflects the makeup of the local community (see Equal Opportunity Policy).
- Volunteering opportunities will be widely promoted in ways that makes them accessible to all members of the community.
- Each potential volunteer will be asked to complete a short application form and be invited for an informal interview meeting.

- Each person who volunteers will be asked for two references that identify their suitability and done in a way that recognises equal opportunity and confidentiality. (See Confidentiality Policy)
- Wherever possible we will try and match the need of our organisation and the volunteer and at times this may mean not being able to take on the volunteer but this will only be done on the basis of their suitability to the task(s).
- Each person who volunteers and who will be involved with regulated activities will need to produce or undergo a DBS check. This check will be carried out before a volunteer begins work. (See Safeguarding Policy) However, if a volunteer has a criminal record this does not necessarily stop them from volunteering for our organisation.
- Volunteers will have a clear and concise volunteer role description, which will be reviewed yearly. The role description will outline the volunteering tasks and will be prepared with the volunteer and the designated person referred to above.
- New volunteers will be supported in their role through a comprehensive induction process.
- Volunteers will be briefed about the different tasks to be undertaken and will be given the necessary information and equipment to enable them to carry them out efficiently.

Induction and Training

- Each volunteer will receive information, written and verbal about our organisation: the work we do, our structure and key policies and procedures such as health and safety, equal opportunities, safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection. This will include any personal information held by us relating to the volunteer.
- Each volunteer will receive information about the volunteer's role and the named manager/supervisor.
- The named manager/supervisor will discuss with the volunteer any other training needs in supervision.
- Each volunteer will act as a volunteer on a trial basis of three months to ensure that we and each volunteer is happy with the role.
- We will encourage volunteers to develop and build on existing skills and knowledge through sharing good practice and learning and training opportunities. The designated person mentioned above will be responsible for ensuring that where possible relevant training is provided. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to attend the identified relevant training.

- Training in the management of volunteers will be provided for those staff with direct responsibility for volunteers.

Support and Supervision

- The Community Centre Development Manager will be the main point of contact to whom volunteers can seek guidance and support and take their concerns to.
- Volunteers will have supervision on a one to one basis. This will enable the volunteer and supervisor to identify, monitor and evaluate the volunteer's involvement, recognise achievements and identify individual training needs. The frequency, duration and format of these sessions will be negotiated between the volunteer and the designated person mentioned above.
- Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with our organisation's wider staff by being invited to staff/team meetings.
- Formal recognition of the contribution of our volunteers will be made in newsletters, annual reports, articles in newspapers and a 'thank you letter'.

Expenses

The Community Centre @ Christ Church as a charity is unable to pay any expense for volunteers.

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

Insurance

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

We do not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage.

It is the responsibility of the volunteers to inform their motor insurance company that they are using their car in the act of volunteering.

Problem-solving

The Community Centre @ Christ Church aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively, and consistently. Service users and other agencies are able to complain about paid staff, volunteers or the service.

The designated person mentioned above is responsible for handling volunteer complaints or conduct and any complaints should be referred to her/him. In the event of a complaint all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible and

attempts will be made to try to solve any problems informally at the earliest possible stage. If this is not possible then our formal complaints policy and procedures will be referred to. We will support the volunteer during the complaints process. If volunteers wish to make a complaint about their treatment by us they should speak to the Community Centre Development Manager or the Advisory Group. (See complaints procedure)

Rights and Responsibilities

The Community Centre @ Christ Church recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- Know what is and is not expected of them
- Have adequate support in their volunteering role
- Know what to do if anything goes wrong
- Be free from discrimination
- Have safe conditions for carrying out their volunteering activities
- Be insured
- Receive an induction programme and training opportunities

We expect volunteers to:

- Be reliable and honest
- Respect confidentiality
- Comply with our policies and procedures
- Make the most of training and support opportunities
- Carry out their volunteering tasks as agreed and in a way that reflects our values and aims
- Respect the work of our organisation and not bring it into disrepute