

Volunteering Policy

Introduction

Volunteer Centre Dacorum is concerned with the promotion, support and development of volunteer participation throughout the Borough of Dacorum.

Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community, and can take many forms. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain.

The Centre works within the principles of the Dacorum Compact, Volunteering Code of Good Practice, which sets out the undertakings of the organisation with respect to its management of volunteers.

Aims of the Volunteering Policy: -

- To set out the principles and working practices for voluntary involvement in Volunteer Centre Dacorum
- To provide a reference document for everyone who is concerned with recruiting, supporting, developing and managing volunteers and promoting voluntary activities

The Centre recognises the unique and special contribution that volunteers make to society and in particular to the work of this organisation. Volunteer involvement in appropriate tasks and projects is welcomed, and it is recognised that without this support we could not operate.

Core values

- Everyone has the right to volunteer without experiencing discrimination, and the Centre has a responsibility to treat volunteers appropriately and with sensitivity
- Volunteering is a matter of free choice and there can be no compulsion to become a volunteer
- Volunteering is a valuable and integral part of society and volunteers deserve support and recognition
- Volunteers assist in effecting social change and improving quality of life, and play an essential role in alleviating the effects of poverty, ignorance, inequality and injustice

Principles

This Volunteering Policy is underpinned by the following principles.

Volunteer Centre Dacorum:

- is committed to equal opportunities; in its services and in the recruitment of its volunteers
- will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to the Centre's work.
- does 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 tasks effectively.
- recognises that volunteering is a two way process, with volunteers giving their time to help with our work, and in return gaining some benefits themselves.

Volunteer Centre services are based on the corporate objects expressed in the Memorandum of Association and the 6 national strategic objectives of a Local Volunteering Development Agency (LVDA). Volunteers are involved in all these activities:-

1. **Brokerage**
The Centre's primary function is to match both individuals and groups interested in volunteering with appropriate opportunities in the local community.
2. **Marketing volunteering**
Local interest in volunteering is stimulated and encouraged. This includes promoting and marketing volunteering through events, web site, newspaper column, presentations and displays.
3. **Good practice development**
Using good practice in working with volunteers is promoted to all volunteer-involving organisations. Information, guidance and training are offered.
4. **Developing volunteering opportunities**
Local volunteering opportunities are developed in close partnership with other agencies. People who face barriers to volunteering are encouraged and supported.
5. **Policy response and campaigning**
The Centre identifies issues that may impact on volunteering and campaigns proactively for a more volunteer-literate and volunteer-friendly climate.
6. **Strategic development of volunteering**
As the local expert on volunteering, Volunteer Centre Dacorum informs strategic thinking and planning at a local, regional and national level.

Recruitment

- Task descriptions will be produced for all volunteer roles within the organisation
- Recruitment of volunteers will follow the guidelines in the "Involving Volunteers" booklet (attached)
- Volunteers will be recruited using an equal opportunities approach, using a variety of advertising methods across the Borough.
- Offers of help from potential volunteers will be followed up without delay by phone, letter or email.
- An information pack will be provided for all new volunteers.

Selection

- Volunteers will be required to complete a simple application form.
- All prospective volunteers will be interviewed to find out what they would like to do, their skills, suitability and how best their potential might be realised.
- All volunteers will be required to give names of 2 people who can be approached for personal references. Acceptable referees do not include family members, and should have known the potential volunteer for at least 1 year.
- Volunteers will be invited to attend a taster session to help them assess whether volunteering with the Centre is right for them
- If the volunteer, or the Centre, decides that the volunteer task is inappropriate / unsuitable for whatever reason, feedback and discussions will include the opportunity to explore other options.

Expenses

- The Centre will reimburse all reasonable expenses (travel costs, phone calls etc) incurred by volunteers in relation to their tasks for us. Volunteers not wishing to claim their expenses can donate them back to the organisation.
- Other expenses may be met, providing the Manager approves them in advance.
- All volunteers will be required to itemise and submit expense claims on a simple, standard form.
- In some circumstances, expenses will be paid in advance with the approval of the Manager.
- Rates of reimbursement (e.g. for mileage) will be set and reviewed regularly by the Board of Trustees

Induction and training

- All volunteers will receive an induction
- Training relevant to their role will be provided.

Support

All volunteers will have a named person as their main point of contact. They will be provided with appropriate support, which will offer opportunities for feedback on progress, discussion of future developments and the chance to air any problems.

Insurance

All volunteers are covered by the Centre's insurance policy whilst they are on the premises or engaged in any work on our behalf.

Health and Safety

Volunteers are covered by our Health and Safety Policy.

Problem solving

Volunteer Centre Dacorum will aim to identify and solve problems at the earliest possible stage. A procedure covers complaints either by or about volunteers.

Confidentiality

Volunteers will be bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff.