

Harlesden, 16th September 2024

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Volunteering Policy

Introduction

The Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum (HNF) is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. The HNF has the following objectives:

The prevention or relief of poverty in Harlesden.

To develop the capacity and skills of the members of the socially and economically disadvantaged community of Harlesden so that they can better identify and help meet their needs and participate more fully in society.

To promote for the benefit of the inhabitants of the area of benefit the provision of facilities and activities in the interest of social welfare for recreation and leisure time occupation with the object of improving their conditions of life.

To promote high planning standards or architecture in or affecting the area of benefit.

To secure the preservation, protection, development, and improvement of historic or public interest features and public amenities in the area of benefit.

In furtherance of the above objectives but not otherwise, the trustees shall have the power to establish and/or maintain a neighbourhood forum for the benefit area to promote and/or improve the region's social, economic and environmental well-being.

In line with this mission, HNF seeks to involve volunteers to:

- contribute to the delivery of our services
- ensure our services meet the needs of our members
- provide new skills and perspectives
- increase our contact with the local community we serve

Principles

The following principles underpin this Volunteering Policy:

- HNF will ensure that volunteers are appropriately integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to the work of HNF
- HNF expects staff at all levels to work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, actively seek to involve them in their work.
- HNF recognises that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help them meet these needs and provide the training to do their jobs effectively.
- We will endeavour to involve volunteers from various backgrounds and abilities and ensure our volunteering opportunities are as accessible.

Practical guidelines

The following guidelines deal with practical aspects of the involvement of volunteers:

1. Recruitment

Volunteers will generally be recruited from all community sections and will be in line with the HNF Equality and Diversity Policy. Positive action in recruitment may be used where appropriate.

All prospective volunteers will be asked to complete a simple registration form appropriate to the role they are applying for. They will be interviewed to find out what they would like to do, their skills and suitability, and how their potential might be best realised.

Every volunteer role will undergo a risk assessment. Volunteer roles that involve 'regulated work' such as caregiving and/or sustained and direct contact with children or vulnerable adults will be subject to an Enhanced DBS Check. HNF is legally obligated to ensure that volunteers are not barred from working with children or vulnerable groups. This information will be dealt with in the strictest confidence and will not necessarily prejudice the person being accepted for voluntary work.

2. Volunteer agreements and voluntary work outlines

Each volunteer will have a volunteer agreement establishing what HNF undertakes to provide them. In addition, they will agree to a written outline of the specific work they will be undertaking. Neither of these documents is a contract; HNF has no intention of creating a contract with any volunteers.

3. Induction and training

All volunteers will receive an induction into HNF and their area of work. Training will be provided as appropriate. Where possible, volunteers will be entitled to additional training on the same basis as paid staff.

4. Support

All volunteers will have a named person as their main point of contact. They will be provided with regular supervision to give feedback, discuss possible future involvement, and express themselves freely about any problems.

5. The volunteer's voice

Volunteers are encouraged to express their views concerning HNF and its work.

6. Insurance

All volunteers are covered by HNF insurance whilst on the premises or engaged in any work on HNF's behalf.

7. Expenses

We value our volunteers and want to ensure no barriers to volunteer involvement. Out-of-pocket expenses, if required, will be reimbursed, including costs for travel. An expense form must be completed and submitted to the Treasurer to claim the costs.

8. Health and safety

Volunteers are covered by and subject to the HNF Health and Safety Policy, a copy of which is on Little Village's website.

9. Equal opportunities

HNF operates an equality and diversity policy concerning both paid staff and volunteers. A copy is available for everyone. Volunteers must understand and commit to our Equality and Diversity policy.

10. Complaints

HNF will help deal with grievances that volunteers may have in line with its published Complaints Procedure. In line with this policy, volunteers can discuss any concerns with their named contact at any time.

11. Confidentiality

The exact requirements for confidentiality as paid staff will bind volunteers.

12. Data Protection

All information in the conflict of interest forms will be processed and observed according to the principles and guidelines in the General Data Protection Regulation.