

Volunteer Policy

Introduction

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.

Appendix One: Pages 5-14 contains our volunteer application form

Appendix Two: Pages 15-17 contains our volunteer agreement

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.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers. Volunteers will not be used to replace staff.

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. This is different from our work experience and assisted internship placements.

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 within our charity shops or any other trading initiative.
- supporting the activity at our head office.
- on our board of management as Trustees.
- in community engagement to raise awareness of LFLC's work
- in one off events and promotional activities

Volunteers are valued for:

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- 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.
- enhancing the quality of our work and the experiences of our young people.

Roles and responsibilities

A designated staff member has responsibility for the development and co-ordination of voluntary activity within the organisation, including volunteering policies and procedures and the welfare of volunteers.

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.

The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, for the volunteer to attend or to undertake particular tasks or for the organisation to provide continuing opportunities for voluntary involvement, provision of training or benefits.

However, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the organisation.

The organisation expects volunteers:

- to have a commitment to the charity's aims and mission and be a positive advocate
- to be reliable and honest
- to uphold the organisation's values and comply with organisational policies
- to make the most of opportunities given, eg for training
- to contribute positively to the aims of the organisation and avoid bringing the organisation into disrepute
- to carry out task 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 treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner
- to receive out of pocket expenses
- to be recognised and appreciated
- to be able to say 'no' to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable
- to know what to do if something goes wrong
- Match your skills and experience with the right role for you wherever possible, listening to your motivations and aspirations
- Offer appropriate training and support and encourage you to develop in your role
- Celebrate success and recognise your contribution
- Respect all volunteers and listen to what you have to say
- Make necessary arrangements to ensure your health, safety and welfare as a volunteer
- Encourage a positive working atmosphere to enable you to have the best volunteering experience possible
- Listen to and act on your concerns if expectations are not met

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Recruitment

We will use appropriate means to advertise for volunteers locally that take into account the principles of our Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policies. The applicant will have to complete an application form, but help can be given with this if necessary. The applicant will be interviewed by a designated representative of the board and if this is successful the two references asked for will be taken up.

For roles, which involve 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 be given induction and training appropriate to the specific tasks to be undertaken. You will have access to training or information to help you successfully carry out your volunteering role. You will be offered an appropriate induction including information about the volunteering environment and any equipment you may be using in your role. If you choose to take on a volunteer role, your staff contact will be happy to help you widen or develop your skills and knowledge accordingly.

Support and supervision

Volunteers will be offered support and supervision as appropriate and this is discussed during induction. Arrangements vary according to the volunteer and the role undertaken, and may include telephone support, group meetings or one to one reviews.

Recognition

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

Formal recognition of the contribution of volunteers is expressed through annual reports, website articles, social media, and during Volunteers' Week award celebrations.

Insurance

The learning for life Charity has a valid insurance policy that covers our involvement of people on a volunteering basis. These include employer's liability insurance and public liability insurance which provide cover in the event of a volunteer being harmed due to the negligence of the charity, or a third party being injured as a result of the actions of the volunteer whilst performing Lflc duties. However, our insurance does not cover your personal belongings.

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.

Resolving problems

The relationship between the organisation and its volunteer workers is entirely voluntary and does not imply any contract. However, it is important that the organisation is able to maintain its agreed standards of service to the users who use it, and it is also important that volunteers should enjoy making their contribution to this service.

If your role as a volunteer does not meet with the organisation's standards, here is how it will be dealt with:

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1. Initially with a meeting with a designated representative of the board who will explain the concerns.
2. If this does not resolve the concern, then a meeting with the chair of the management committee will be convened.
3. If your work still does not meet with our standards, then we shall have to stop using your services.

At all times you will be able to freely state your case and can have a friend to accompany you.

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of your work you should:

1. Initially explain your dissatisfaction with your line manager
2. If that does not resolve the concern, then a meeting with a designated representative of the board should be convened
3. If that does not resolve the issue then a formal meeting with the Chair of the Management Committee should follow.
4. If after this, your dissatisfaction remains unresolved, and we are unable to resolve your grievance, then it would be inappropriate for you to continue to be a volunteer.

At all times you will be freely able to state your case and can have a friend to accompany you.

This Volunteer policy is freely accessible to all. It will be reviewed on a yearly basis to adapt or improve it.

Expenses

Volunteers may request reimbursement of reasonable out of pocket expenses such as travel costs and, if devoting a full day to the charity, a sandwich lunch or equivalent. Payment of reasonable expenses may be authorised by your staff contact in advance and receipts and tickets will be required.

Safeguarding

We are committed to safeguarding the well-being of all staff, volunteers and service users who are involved in or are affected by our work. If you have any concerns regarding a child (i.e. anyone under the age of 18) or an adult in the course of you volunteering, please report your concerns to your staff contact.

Health and Safety

We are committed to ensuring your well-being and safety whilst you are volunteering. We expect our volunteers to contribute to maintaining a safe working environment.

Whilst volunteering you must:

- Take responsible care of the health and safety of yourself and other people who may be affected by your actions or omissions.
- Cooperate with staff by helping them to fulfil their statutory duties
- Follow the health and safety policy and measure put in place by LFLC or any organisations whose premises you may be working on
- Report any accidents/incidents or dangerous circumstances to a member of staff, whether or not anyone has been injured.
- Be sure of actions to take when an emergency situation arises and who to contact for support
- Undertake health and safety training as requested by LFLC and appropriate for your role and duties.

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- Moving on

When volunteers move on from volunteering with us they will be asked to provide feedback on their volunteering experience.

Volunteers who have remained with the organisation for at least 6 months will have the right to request a reference.

Other relevant documents

Organisational policies relevant to volunteers include

Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities, Volunteer Complaints and Safeguarding

Date approved _____

Date of next review _____

Person responsible _____

Appendix One

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

Please contact us if you need this application form in an alternative format or if you need any adjustment for any potential interview.

Personal Details

Title:	Forenames:	Surname:
Address		Telephone numbers:
		Landline:
		Mobile:

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Email address:	Have you a current driving licence? YES / NO* If YES give details, including any endorsements, eg car, HGV, PSC etc
Date of birth (please only fill this in if you are under 18)	
Do you automatically have the right to work in the UK? Yes/No If not, do you have a visa? (Please give details)	

Role

Which role are you interested in?

1. Retail Shop Volunteer ENFIELD EDMONTON
2. Volunteering in LFLC's office

When are you available to volunteer? Please select your availability

	Mon	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
AM						
PM						

On a weekly basis

During school holidays only

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During term time only

Other

Please specify

Experience and skills

Please use this section to tell us about your employment and voluntary experience. You may also include education qualifications, skills, training and languages

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Why would you like to volunteer for Learning for Life Charity?

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<p>Email:</p> <p>Telephone Number (work):</p> <p>Telephone Number (other):</p> <p>Relationship to you:</p>	<p>Email:</p> <p>Telephone Number (work):</p> <p>Telephone Number (other):</p> <p>Relationship to you:</p>
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Volunteers under 18, please complete the following box

<p>Parental Consent (this is required for volunteers under 18)</p>	
<p>I give consent for (print name) Learning for Life Charity.</p>	<p>to volunteer at</p>
<p>Signed</p> <p>Date</p> <p>Relationship to Volunteer:</p>	

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DECLARATION OF UNSPENT AND RELEVANT SPENT CRIMINAL OFFENCES

Before completing this form please read the following notes carefully.

It is the policy of this charity to require successful applicants for certain posts to disclose certain information on previous criminal records they may hold. This does not mean that possession of a criminal record will automatically prevent you from working for the charity, rather, as part of the recruitment process such information will only be considered in the light of its relevance to the post for which you are applying. In many cases, a particular conviction will be of no relevance and so can be discounted for the purposes of your application. In assessing your suitability for a post, the Council and the School comply with the Code of Practice recommended by the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Because of the nature of the work for which you are applying, this post is exempt from the provisions of Section 4 (2) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 by virtue of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975. Therefore you must give details on this form of relevant convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings that you have and any court cases that you have pending.

The charity will use information provided by the Disclosure and Barring Service when assessing your suitability for such jobs. In the event of employment, any failure to disclose such convictions could result in dismissal or disciplinary action by the Council or the School. Any information you give us about convictions will be kept confidential and will only be considered in relation to the job for which you are applying.

DECLARATION OF CRIMINAL OFFENCES

Using the guidelines below please list all your unspent, and relevant spent, convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings, including any convictions in a

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Court of Law outside Great Britain. Do not forget to include any pending convictions and indicate that they are pending.

You must provide details of the following:

Cautions relating to an offence from a list (see below) agreed by Parliament

Cautions given less than 6 years ago (where you were over 18 years old at the time of the caution)

Cautions given less than 2 years ago (where you were under 18 years old at the time of the caution)

Convictions relating to an offence from a prescribed list (see below)

Convictions that resulted in a custodial sentence (regardless of whether served)

Convictions given less than 11 years ago (where you were over 18 years old at the time of the conviction)

Convictions given less than 5.5 years ago (where you were under 18 years old at the time of the conviction)

Irrespective of the above list, if you have more than one conviction then ALL convictions must be declared.

The list referred to above includes a range of offences which are serious and which relate to sexual offending, violent offending and/or safeguarding. It would never be appropriate to withhold details of offences on this list. A list of offences, which must always be declared, has been derived from the legislation and can be accessed using the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-list-of-offences-that-will-never-be-filtered-from-a-criminal-record-check>

If you have no unspent, and no relevant spent, convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings please write 'none' and sign the form. If you have any queries about the completion of the form, please contact Learning For Life Charity.

Nature of Offence(s)	Name of Court and Date of Conviction(s) and/or Date of Caution(s), Reprimand(s) or Warning(s)	Sentence(s)
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All information given will be treated in the strictest confidence. Following receipt of this form you may be contacted to discuss the information you have given.

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the information on this form is true and accurate. I understand that if the information I have supplied is false, misleading or incomplete in any way, I may be disqualified from future engagement with the Learning for Life and that any current engagement may be terminated with immediate effect.

Signed

Name (please print name)

Position Applied for

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Date

DECLARATION

I confirm that I am not barred, either totally or to a limited extent, from work involving regular contact with children, young persons or other vulnerable people, nor subject to any prohibitions, sanctions, conditions, restrictions or disqualifications in relation to my employment/work imposed by the Secretary of State or a regulatory body.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, I agree that information I have provided may be held and used for personnel reasons.

I understand that failure to disclose any relevant information, or the provision of false information, could result in the withdrawal of any offer of appointment, or my dismissal without notice at any time in the future, and possible criminal prosecution.

I hereby declare that information given on this form is complete and accurate.

Signed:

Dated:

Please return completed form to: Learning For Life Charity, West Lea School, Haselbury Road, London N9 9TU or email jcarolineburns@gmail.com

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Appendix Two

Volunteer Agreement

Who we are

Learning for Life Charity (LFLC)

Our Vision

At LFLC we work towards a world where children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, or those who have been affected by illness, disability or poverty, are able to play their full part and have the best possible chances and choices to life full lives.

A world where they are valued for what they can do, rather than disregarded because of what they cannot.

Our Mission

At LFLC, we work towards this Vision by providing children, young people and disadvantage individuals within our local community with:

- chances to work
- chances to make friends
- chances to explore
- chances to learn
- chances to make a difference in our community

Our Values

Our values - respectful, relentless, resourceful, reliable and responsible – point the way to how we should behave in our daily work.

Who we need to help us

To maintain our reputation and continue helping people, LFLC need volunteers from all walks of life and communities, who can bring different skills and experiences to help our work.

A LFLC volunteer is...

Someone who chooses freely to commit their time and energy to support our objectives without material gain. This may be on a regular basis or occasional basis, for a short or long period of time. People can volunteer for us from the age of 16.

Why we need volunteers

We can only achieve our goals- in delivering services, raising funds and managing resources, through people giving up their time to help us. Our volunteer support is one of LFLC's greatest assets, of which we are extremely proud.

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Volunteering is integral to LFLC's work, from the volunteers at Board level to the volunteers in our charity shops and as an organisation we wish to keep it that way. We know from our experience that:

- beneficiaries place a special value on the care our volunteers can give, which they give willingly, in their own time and without expectations of material gain
- volunteers enable us to draw a very wide pool of skills, gain from their own professional and personal experience, which enriches the services LFLC's offers
- local volunteers provide an invaluable insight into the needs of the communities in which they live, better informing our work and service design.

Mutual expectation

LFLC makes every effort to ensure you receive the appropriate support and feel valued, so you can realise your full potential in helping others as a volunteer.

What you can expect from us

- To be valued and respected, who ever you are and whatever your background.
- A clear expectation of what your role involves, as well as information on standards and relevant training opportunities.
- An identified line manager responsible for providing guidance and support.
- An induction to LFLC.
- Recognition of the relevant skills and experiences you can bring to LFLC.
- Opportunities to expand your skills and experience in relation to your role.
- Appropriate resources and equipment to carry out your role.
- Agreed out of pocket expenses reimbursed in accordance with LFLC's policy.
- The opportunity to have your views heard on service and organisational issues.
- The opportunity to decline or change your mind about voluntary activity, without pressure

Our beneficiaries, staff, supporters and donors have the right to expect the highest standards from LFLC and that includes all our volunteers.

What we expect from you

- To reflect LFLC's values in the work you do.
- To recognise the needs of our beneficiaries as our primary concern.
- To give the best skills and abilities to meet the required standards relating to your voluntary role.
- To take part in training and update sessions relevant to your role.
- To be accountable for your actions and accept constructive comments.
- To access support when needed.
- To support and act in accordance with LFLC's policies, practices, procedures and management decisions.
- To respect and maintain confidentiality.
- To keep in touch with LFLC, letting us know if your circumstances change or if you are unable to fulfil a commitment.
- Return any LFLC equipment when you leave LFLC.

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I have read and understood this volunteer agreement

.....(Volunteer) Date.....

..... (LFLC's representative) Date.....

This document is not intended to be a legally binding contract between us. Neither of us intends any employment relationship to be created, either now or anytime in the future.