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## Volunteer Policy

### Introduction

This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practice by which Link UP London involves 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.

### Our commitments

We recognise volunteers as an integral part of the organisation. Their contribution supports our mission and strategic aims, and compliments 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 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.

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.

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 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 tasks 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 insured and to volunteer in a safe environment
- to be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner
- to receive out of pocket expenses
- to have opportunities for personal development
- 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

### **Recruitment and selection**

Equal opportunities principles will be adhered to in recruiting volunteers. Opportunities will be widely promoted so as to attract interest from different sectors of the community. Information will be made available to those enquiring about volunteering, including written role descriptions which set out the nature and purpose of the volunteering role, key tasks, skills required and benefits. A work activity risk assessment will be conducted on all voluntary roles.

Recruitment will usually involve an informal interview. Depending on the role, references may be sought. Where applicants are not able to be placed in their preferred role, they will be provided with feedback and given the opportunity to discuss alternative volunteering roles.

### **Induction and training**

Volunteers will be given induction and training, as necessary, appropriate to the specific tasks to be undertaken.

### **Support and supervision**

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

### **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.

We will attempt to deal with any problems informally and at the earliest opportunity. All volunteers will have a named person to whom they can turn in the case of any difficulty. Where informal resolution is not possible, the organisations will be adhered to the procedure set out in the Volunteer Agreement.

## **Expenses**

Details of how to claim expenses are found in the Volunteer Agreement.

## **Moving on**

When volunteers move on from volunteering with us they will be asked to provide feedback on the volunteering experience by way of an exit questionnaire.

Volunteers who have remained with the organisation for at least 3 months will have the right to request a reference.