

Volunteer Policy

Mission statement

The Dalgarno Trust seeks to promote volunteering within the Dalgarno and North Kensington area for the benefit of the local community and the volunteer.

The purpose of volunteer recruitment is:

- To recruit and maintain a committed group of volunteers to assist with the work of the Dalgarno Trust
- To attempt to provide volunteers with the level of responsibilities and involvement that meets their expectations
- To help the Dalgarno Trust to achieve its goals in the local community

What is volunteering?

The 1997 National Survey of Volunteering defines volunteering as 'any activity which involves spending time, unpaid, doing something which aims to benefit someone (individuals or groups) other than or in addition to close relatives, or to benefit the environment'.

The Home Office defines volunteering as follows:

'Anyone who, without compensation or expectation of compensation beyond reimbursement of expenses incurred in the course of his or her volunteer duties, performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the organisation. A "volunteer" must be officially accepted by the organisation prior to performance of the task. Volunteers are not considered as "employees" of the organisation.'

Volunteering England defines volunteering as follows:

'Formal volunteering is an activity which always takes place through a not-for-profit or for-profit organisation and is of benefit to the community and the volunteer; it is undertaken of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion, and for no financial payment (a position is not designated as paid). It is underpinned by the Volunteering England code of practice.'

Management of Volunteers

Overall management for volunteers is undertaken by the Volunteer Manager. Volunteers are to report directly to the volunteer manager and or in her/his absence the Chief Executive. One to one supervision sessions for volunteers will be carried out by the Volunteer Manager.

Volunteer's expenses

Volunteers are entitled to up to £5 to cover expenses on each occasion they attend the centre as a volunteer. This will be issued to the volunteer by the Administrator from petty cash in return for a receipt. This is for a session of 3.5 hours at least.

Best practice

Ensuring that the Volunteers' Project is up to date in terms of best practice involves being a member of Volunteering England, the mentoring and befriending foundation. We are not members at present but would like to be in the future. It also includes altering policy and practice as appropriate, and keeping abreast of information gathered from government agencies, key boroughs, and volunteer centres.

Overall policy on the use of volunteers

The Dalgarno Trust recognises that volunteers are a valuable resource and that they can make an important contribution to the organisation's work. The Dalgarno Trust actively encourages the involvement of volunteers at all levels in the organisation and within all appropriate activities.

Volunteers will not be used to displace any paid employees from their positions or to replace the work of social services. Volunteers make a unique contribution and enhance the services provided by paid staff.

Volunteer rights and responsibilities

Volunteers shall be extended the right to be given meaningful assignments with a role profile, the right to be treated as equal co-workers, the right to effective supervision, the right to full involvement and participation and the right to recognition for work done. In return, volunteers shall agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and to remain loyal to the values, goals, and procedures of The Dalgarno Trust.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves a single member of staff, volunteer, client, or other person, or involves the overall business of the organisation. Refer to The Dalgarno Trust Confidentiality Policy.

Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination of the volunteer's relationship with the organisation or other corrective action.

Service at the discretion of the organisation

The Dalgarno Trust accepts the service of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the organisation. Volunteers agree that the organisation may at any time, for any reason, decide to terminate the volunteer's relationship with the organisation. Likewise, a volunteer may at any time, for any reason, decide to sever their relationship with the organisation.

Conflict of interest

No one who has a conflict of interest with any activity or programme of The Dalgarno Trust— whether personal, philosophical, or financial — shall be accepted as a volunteer.

Volunteer recruitment and selection

At The Dalgarno Trust we are committed to recruiting, training, and supporting volunteers for the benefit of the local community and the individual volunteer. We also aim for fair representation at all levels of responsibility – from both sexes and all sections of the community. We are committed to recruiting volunteers from all sections of the community, ensuring that volunteers are representative of the communities in which we work and of the people whom we serve.

Our recruitment policy is driven by our purpose, which is to meet the needs of our organisation and the expectations of our volunteers.

Equal opportunities and diversity

The Dalgarno Trust's equal opportunities policy states that no one involved in the organisation will be treated less favourably than another on grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, sex, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, or religious belief.

We aim to select volunteers on their ability to meet essential task requirements and their motivation for volunteering. All volunteers must be committed to our equal opportunities policy.

Interviews

Prior to being assigned or appointed to a position, all volunteers will be interviewed to ascertain their suitability. The interview should also determine the volunteer's commitment to fulfil the requirements of the position. All interviews will take place within a month of receipt of a volunteer's application.

A senior member of staff who will be supervising the volunteer will conduct the interview. Wherever possible, staff who will be collaborating with the volunteer should participate in designing and conducting the interview, following the internal guidelines appropriate for the volunteer role.

Criminal records check

For the protection of clients, certain volunteers (such as those working with under 18 year olds or with people who are vulnerable) will be required to undergo an enhanced police check (DBS). Volunteers who do not agree to the background check may be refused the assignment. This will be reviewed in line with best practice guidelines issued by the government or Volunteering England.

Where a period of volunteering has formally ended and the volunteer subsequently wants to offer their help again, the volunteer may need to undergo another DBS check.

References

References may be obtained before volunteers are placed within the organisation. At least one (but normally two) references should be obtained for all new volunteers. If references are required, they should be written.

At least one of the references should be from an independent referee – not from a friend or family member. However, the member of staff recruiting can use their discretion to accept the most appropriate referees given the volunteer's circumstances. This is in order to give everyone an opportunity to volunteer. The referees' responses will be obtained within a month of the interview date.

Certificate of ability

Any prospective volunteer who indicates that they are under the care of a doctor for physical or psychological treatment may be asked to present a certificate from the doctor to vouch for their ability to perform their volunteer duties satisfactorily and safely. Any volunteer who (after acceptance and assignment by The Dalgarno Trust) begins a course of treatment that might adversely impact their performance should consult a senior member of staff.

Placement

Placements will match the volunteer's skills, talents, and interests with the organisation's needs. Final assignment of a prospective volunteer should not take place without the approval of the staff or clients with whom the volunteer will be placed.

No volunteer will begin any position until they have completed all the necessary screening and paperwork. Each volunteer will receive a copy of the task brief (where one exists) and a copy of their rights and responsibilities as a volunteer.

On occasions where unsuitable volunteers are refused, they will be given obvious reasons for this, as well as information about other more suitable volunteering opportunities for example a local volunteer centre or a member of volunteering England.

Managing volunteers

Induction

Inductions of volunteers are to be conducted in accordance with the induction check list notes (in volunteer file).

Probationary period

All volunteers will be assessed (at an interval agreed with the supervisor) to determine whether the placement is proving to be a success and whether the arrangement should be continued. The probationary period will be complete within two months of the volunteer's start date.

If it is clear after this period of probation that the placement is not working (for whatever reason), the relationship should be terminated. If problems arise before the end of the review period, the relationship may of course need to be terminated at that time – rather than waiting until the end of the period.

The length of the review period should be agreed with the volunteer at the outset. The length and format of the review period will vary according to the role of the volunteer and the regularity of their volunteering.

Recognition

The Dalgarno Trust recognises that volunteers contribute a vast wealth of skills, knowledge, and support to the organisation. In return, all The Dalgarno Trust staff are to treat volunteers with respect and offer support. Staffs are accountable for volunteers under their supervision.

Where possible, volunteers are to be included in all relevant meetings, discussions, and celebrations. Volunteers should be given every opportunity to develop their skills. If appropriate, long-term volunteers (those who have provided regular voluntary assistance for more than six months) will be asked to represent the organisation as volunteer ambassador. This means that they will be available for events and encourage word of mouth recruitment of volunteers.

Informal recognition

All staff and volunteers responsible for volunteer supervision are encouraged to informally recognise volunteer service on a regular basis throughout the year. This should range from a simple 'thank you' to a concerted effort to include volunteers as full participants in decision-making and implementation for projects that involve that volunteer.

Reimbursement of expenses

Volunteers are eligible to be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses incurred while volunteering for the organisation. Receipts should be presented to the financial manager for reimbursement.

Evaluations

Volunteers shall receive periodic evaluation of their work via supervision as appropriate. The evaluation session will review the performance of the volunteer, suggest any changes in work style, seek suggestions from the volunteer on how to enhance their relationship with the organisation, convey appreciation to the volunteer, and ascertain the continued interest of the volunteer in serving in that position.

The evaluation session is an opportunity for both the volunteer and the organisation to examine and improve their relationship, and to explore the opportunity for personal development. The supervisor will undertake the evaluation.

Resignation

Volunteers may resign from their volunteer service with the organisation at any time. Where appropriate, it is requested that volunteers who intend to resign provide advance notice of their departure.

Exit Interviews

Where possible, exit interviews should be conducted with volunteers who are leaving their positions. The supervisor should conduct the interview, which should ascertain why the volunteer is leaving the position. The volunteer should be asked for their suggestions for how to improve the position, and the possibility should be discussed of involving the volunteer with the organisation in some other capacity in the future. All the information gleaned during the interview will be kept in their HR file.

References

A placement will need to have been at least three months in length (or an alternative timescale must have been agreed at the beginning of the placement) for a reference request from a volunteer to be considered. If appropriate, references will be provided if they are needed to obtain paid work, study, or another voluntary position. The direct supervisor of a volunteer placement should provide the reference. Volunteers should let their supervisors know that they need a reference when they leave their placement.

Complaint's procedure

Volunteers should take any complaint concerning their volunteering to the supervisor. If the matter needs to be pursued further, or if the volunteer has a complaint about their supervisor, the Chief Executive should be contacted. Any complaint will be investigated thoroughly with prompt feedback.

Reasons for dismissal

Grounds for dismissal may include – but are not limited to – the following: gross misconduct or insubordination, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, theft of property or misuse of organisation equipment or materials, abuse or mistreatment of clients or co-workers, failure to abide by organisation policies and procedures and failure to perform assigned volunteer tasks satisfactorily.

Training and supervision

Volunteers will receive specific on-the-job training to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their assignment. The timing and methods of the delivery of such training should

be appropriate to the complexity and demands of the position and the capabilities of the volunteer. Where possible, volunteers should attend relevant in-house training.

Commitment to personal development

The Dalgarno Trust is committed to providing appropriate training to enable a volunteer to fulfil their role and enhance their skills.

Staff involvement in orientation and training

Staff members with responsibility for delivery of services should have an active role in the design and delivery of both the orientation and the training of volunteers. Staff who will be in a supervisory capacity to volunteers shall have primary responsibility for the design and delivery of on-the-job training for those volunteers who are assigned to them.

Volunteer involvement in orientation and training

Experienced volunteers should be included in the design and delivery of volunteer orientation and training where possible.

Requirement of a supervisor

Each volunteer who is accepted to a position with the organisation must have a clearly identified contact person who is responsible for their direct management. The contact person must be a core member of staff who is able to support a volunteer.

It is not the responsibility of any staff other than the contact person or the relevant manager/s to dictate the work of the volunteer. However, in some cases it may be necessary for a member of staff to tell the volunteer if they are behaving inappropriately and to remove the volunteer from the workplace without consulting anyone else.

Role of the supervisor

The supervisor shall be responsible for day-to-day management, regular feedback sessions and guidance of the volunteer's work, and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance.

It is the role of the supervisor to regularly review the volunteer's performance. Where performance is not considered acceptable this must be brought to the attention of the relevant manager.

Health and safety

The Dalgarno Trust recognises that it has a moral and legal duty to provide a safe working environment for all our employees and volunteers, as well as anyone else involved in (or who could be affected by) our community activities. As far as is reasonably practicable, The Dalgarno Trust will safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of employees at work, as well as those of our volunteers, customers, contractors, and others who may be affected by our business activities.

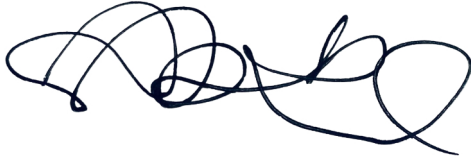
The Chief Executive or the Operations Manager is responsible for advising volunteers of fire procedures and of any health and safety issues that are relevant to the voluntary work.

The Chief Executive or other core member of the Dalgarno Trust staff team will take every precaution to ensure that volunteers are not exposed to unnecessary risks while volunteering.

Volunteers have a duty of care to look after their own health and safety and those of those around them.

Insurance

Liability and accident insurance is provided by the Dalgarno Trust for all volunteers engaged in the organisation's business.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Signed

Esma Dukali – Chief Executive, The Dalgarno Trust

Date July 2023

Review Date July 2024