



VOLUNTEERING POLICY

Overview: The Trusts take the wellbeing of volunteers very seriously.

Volunteers are essential to the running of the West House and the Heath Robinson Museum and their commitment and enthusiasm is appreciated by the Trusts. The Trusts are committed to providing an enjoyable and safe environment for Volunteers and on-going support from the Management Board and the Trusts whether they are volunteering as front-of-house, directly with the collection, in marketing, facilities management or any other role.

The Trusts define volunteers as those who are under no obligation to perform duties and who have no expectation of, and do not receive any, remuneration for the time that they spend volunteering for the museum.

The relationship between volunteers and the organisation does not create a legally binding contract or a relationship of employment between the Museum and the volunteer.

The Trusts accept volunteers on the understanding that their services are received at its sole discretion, and that a volunteer's relationship with the organisation may be terminated by either side at any time without notice and for any reason.

Volunteers are not a substitute for employees and the Trusts do not recruit volunteers to displace them.

Recruitment: Volunteers are the face of the organisation and recruiting sufficient volunteers will be crucial to successful museum operations. The Trusts are committed to engaging and developing a diverse volunteer body, primarily from the local community.

Volunteer Role Descriptions: Each voluntary role is defined by a specific role description which should be made available to the volunteer. This clearly sets out what the role is and the range of tasks the volunteers will need to perform.

Specific roles for volunteers make it easier to manage volunteers and to plan what resources, training and supervision is required. Clear roles give volunteers status and a sense of responsibility.

When the organisation has opportunities for volunteers, these role descriptions will be advertised so volunteers can be aware of the opportunities available.

Application process: A formal application process is in place and all prospective volunteers will be required to fill in a Volunteering Application Form from which it will be determined

whether they are suitable to be interviewed, and if so, then be interviewed by the Volunteer Coordinator and/or another appropriate person. The museum's decision on suitability of a prospective volunteer is final.

Individuals from outside the European Economic Area must ensure that they have a visa which permits them to volunteer in the UK for the Museum before applying to be a volunteer.

All individuals will be required to undergo reference checks before they are formally accepted as volunteers.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks: All volunteers who require it will be DBS checked before the commencement of their volunteering relationship with the organisation; when advertising new volunteer roles, this should be clearly stated. Checks for eligible volunteers (students who require checks to carry out this role for their course are not eligible) are free of charge. The Trusts must tell the applicant why they are being DBS checked and where they can get independent advice should they wish to do so.

A DBS check has no official expiry date. Any information included will be accurate at the time the check was carried out. It is the decision of the Trusts to have all DBS checks renewed every 3 years utilising the online DBS update service.

Induction and training: Volunteers are provided with initial training appropriate to their volunteer role. This will always include a summary of the role, details of any space or equipment provision and relevant health and safety information. Further training can be arranged with and by the Museum Manager and/or the Learning Officer.

The training will be interactive and volunteers will be encouraged to work in groups to build teams. Role-play will help to build confidence in customer care and working with visitors. Each volunteer is to have induction training which will cover the museum's vision and values, knowledge of Heath Robinson, ethos of the Museum and West House, health and safety (including what to do in an emergency), safeguarding and working with young people and vulnerable adults, expenses, security, and structure of the Museum team. Additional specific training will be given for the different roles the volunteers will undertake.

Team training will be given in:

- Dealing with emergency situations
- Customer care and the visitor experience
- Retail and till operation
- Basic collections security & care
- Learning programme and working with schools
- Current and upcoming temporary exhibitions
- Health & Safety

Additional specific training will be given in the following for volunteers whose roles include:

- Exhibition installation
- Marketing and publicity
- Research
- Collection digitisation

- Advanced collections care

Expenses: The Trusts do not reimburse travel expenses between the volunteer's home and the Museum. The Trust will not pay expenses to any volunteers except in exceptional circumstance where transport or other costs are incurred beyond what is reasonably expected. For all expense claims the volunteers will need to have receipts for the full amount claimed. Decisions about expenses will be made by the Trusts.

Supervision and support: The Trusts are committed to ensuring that all volunteering experiences are enjoyable, rewarding and safe. All volunteers can (in the first instance) contact the Volunteer Coordinator with any queries or concerns.

Diversity and equality: The Trusts are committed to developing a diverse volunteer body and to making volunteering opportunities as accessible and responsive as possible to the different needs of its volunteers.

The Museum Manager, Learning Manager, and the Volunteer Coordinator will discuss any needs that prospective or existing volunteers may have in order to identify the best volunteering opportunities available and to support their full and safe involvement. When required, the Trusts will make reasonable adjustments to volunteering roles where possible.

Students: Students from Year 11, 12, and 13 at local schools will be encouraged to apply for student placements and work experience at the museum to gain general experience in visitor services and learning. They will be integrated into the volunteer programme but given a range of duties as agreed with their course leaders. This may include visitor services, exhibition, and curatorial work and research. There will also be opportunities for students who are exhibiting their work for Art and Design courses also to receive basic training in stewarding of their own exhibition including how to meet and greet visitors and talk about the purpose of the exhibition. These activities will be coordinated by the Learning Officer for Children and Young People, working with the Museum Manager and Volunteer Coordinator.

Health and safety and indemnity: The Trusts are committed to ensuring that all volunteering experiences are safe. Volunteers are asked to attend an induction and any additional training or support sessions necessary in order to meet health and safety requirements.

The Trusts will indemnify volunteers and hold them free from liability for civil liability to any person as the result of personal injury loss or damage arising from the execution or purported execution of tasks assigned to them on any museum premises. This indemnity will not apply where a volunteer acts negligently, recklessly or in bad faith.

Data Protection: All data relating to volunteers will be held securely, will be used only for the reasons for which it was collected, and will not be shared with third parties, in line with our policy on data protection.

Confidentiality: All volunteers are expected to observe confidentiality regarding any information that they receive whilst volunteering and must not pass confidential information on to other volunteers or outsiders nor exchange information that is detrimental to the organisation. Unless in the possession of written authorisation from the appropriate Trustee or the Museum Manager, no volunteer has authority to represent the organisation or commit the organisation in any way.

Volunteer retention: Retaining volunteers is much easier than recruiting new ones. In order to retain volunteers, the museum should make each volunteer feel useful and well-managed as well as having fun and being part of a good team environment.

Volunteer handbook: A handbook containing all pertinent policies and procedures as well as helpful details and advice for volunteers will be given to each volunteer during their induction.

Volunteers' comments/concerns: Retaining volunteers is vital and by listening to volunteers, problems can be halted before they take hold. A volunteer forum will be held on a regular basis to allow open discussion on problems and to receive suggestions on improvements. Private comments or concerns by volunteers can be raised with the Volunteer Coordinator in the first instance or alternatively the Museum Manager, Learning Officer, or the Management Board.

Volunteer agreement/What to do if things go wrong: These two documents are available separately and should be considered in conjunction with this policy. They are also included in the Volunteers' Handbook.