

Rhose Community Library (RCL) Volunteering Policy

Introduction.

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in Rhose Community Library. It is of relevance to all within the organisation, including volunteers, staff, and those elected or appointed to positions of responsibility.

This policy is endorsed by Rhose Community Library Board of Trustees and will be reviewed regularly, to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of Rhose Community Library and its volunteers.

Definition

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship as well as an important component of democracy. Volunteers are people who are, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community.

Statement of values and principles

RCL is committed to equality and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs or offending background that does not create a risk to vulnerable groups including children.

RCL maintains an Equality Policy and volunteers should adhere to this policy

RCL also operates a Safeguarding Policy to protect children and vulnerable adults and all volunteers should abide by this policy.

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by RCL and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid Council support staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise, the organisation cannot be compelled to provide regular tasks or benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, 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.

Commitment

Rhose Community Library acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways. Their contribution is unique and volunteering can benefit users of services, local communities and the volunteers themselves. RCL values the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to involving them in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop the volunteering experience.

RCL recognises its responsibility to arrange its volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

Volunteer Coordination

The volunteer with overall responsibility for the development of voluntary activities within the organisation is the Volunteer Coordinator. This person is responsible for the management and welfare of the organisation's volunteers

The Volunteer Coordinator will offer guidance and advice to help volunteers carry out tasks effectively. Volunteers will be informed of who to contact for support and supervision.

Recruitment & Selection

The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out agreed tasks. Information about the volunteer not relevant to the performance of the volunteering tasks concerned will be disregarded by the organisation in terms of recruitment and selection.

Volunteering opportunities will be widely promoted in ways that makes them accessible to all members of the community.

Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task will either be offered alternative voluntary involvement within the organisation or referred to Glamorgan Volunteering Service (GVS).

All volunteers will be invited to attend an informal interview. If the volunteer will be carrying out activities with vulnerable groups (children and/or adults) there may be other safer recruitment procedures carried out including asking a volunteer to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check.

Volunteers will have a clear and concise task description, which will be reviewed regularly.

New volunteers will be properly inducted into the organisation.

Volunteers will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform with confidence, see Training below.

Volunteers will be provided with an Induction Pack that contains,

- RCL Volunteer Agreement & Volunteer Policy
- RCL Confidentiality Statement
- Vale of Glamorgan ICT Policy & Statement
- RCL Fire Safety Guidance Note
- RCL Volunteer Role Descriptions
- RCL Vision, Mission & Objectives
- RCL Volunteer Checklist

Training & Development

The development of training and support for volunteers is a high priority for the organisation in order to equip them with the necessary information and skills to carry out their tasks. It will be the responsibility of the designated person referred to above to see that this training is provided. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to attend relevant training.

All volunteers will be made aware of and have access to all the organisation's relevant policies, including those relating to; volunteering, health & safety, safeguarding vulnerable children & adults and equality.

RCL will endeavour to provide 'supervision of volunteer' training to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Support, Supervision and Recognition

Volunteers will have access to regular support and supervision. Regular volunteer reviews will enable both the volunteer and the Volunteer Coordinator to identify, monitor and evaluate the volunteer's involvement, recognise achievements and identify individual training needs. Reviews include issues that maybe relevant to their particular volunteering role and to their wider personal development. The frequency, duration and format of these sessions will vary according to need. Mentoring will be available as agreed with the individual volunteer.

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with other volunteers. There will be a regular (usually bi-monthly) group meeting of all volunteers with the Volunteer Coordinator.

Insurance

RCL's liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them.

The RCL's insurance is for Public Liability and does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage

Confidentiality & Data Protection

Volunteers should:

- hold in confidence all matters that come to their attention whilst volunteering with RCL, including information about any person or organisation using the services of RCL
- respect the privacy of clients, other volunteers and Vale of Glamorgan staff and confer appropriately with the Volunteer Coordinator
- use all information gained in the course of their service in a responsible manner.
- abide by the Vale of Glamorgan Council (VoG) ICT Code of Conduct & Statement in relation to the VoG IT systems and Data Protection

Misusing information will lead to suspension or dismissal.

Volunteers will be asked to sign a Confidentiality Statement and a VoG ICT Code of Conduct & Statement when they start volunteering.

Settling Differences

RCL aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. RCL seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly and aim for a positive and amicable solution based on the organisation's guidelines for settling differences.

The Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for handling problems regarding volunteer complaints or conduct and these should be referred to him/her in the first instance. In the event of a problem, all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible. Support will be provided by the Volunteer Coordinator to the volunteer while he/she endeavours to resolve the problem in an informal manner. If an informal resolution proves impossible the formal Complaint & Grievance Policy will be invoked and the issue will be referred to RCL Board of Trustees for resolution. If a volunteer's behaviour is repeatedly or seriously unacceptable, they may be asked to change their role, or to leave RCL

Rights and Responsibilities

RCL recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- know what is (and what is not) expected of them
- have adequate support in their volunteering
- receive appreciation
- volunteer in a safe environment
- be insured
- know their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong
- receive approved & relevant out-of-pocket expenses
- receive appropriate training
- be free from discrimination
- be offered the opportunity for personal development

RCL expects volunteers to:

- be honest
- be reliable
- respect confidentiality
- carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of the organisation
- comply with the organisation's policies, which are available on the RCL website www.rhooselibrary.org.uk
- carry out tasks within agreed guidelines
- respect the work of the organisation and not bring it into disrepute
- make the most of training and support opportunities

Volunteers will be asked to sign the following documents at induction:

- RCL Volunteer Agreement
- RCL Confidentiality Statement
- Vale of Glamorgan ICT Policy & Statement