

## **VOLUNTEERS POLICY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This policy has been prepared for the benefit of members of the public who may volunteer their time for The Ernest Foundation. This policy does not apply to the Foundation's relationship with other voluntary organisations where other arrangements could apply.

The Ernest Foundation appreciates that volunteers contribute valuable assistance and experience that would otherwise not be available and in turn can themselves gain valuable working experience that can enhance their skills and enable self-fulfilment. It is therefore important that the Ernest Foundation encourages the participation of volunteers under supervision, whilst ensuring the safety and security of all parties.

The Management Committee is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

### **DEFINITION OF VOLUNTEER**

A volunteer is a person who freely undertakes to perform a service task or function that is not normally or traditionally performed as a full job and who does so without financial reward.

A clear distinction exists between volunteers and those who are given a financial reward, eg wage or allowances at special rates in return for casual services.

### **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

Whatever tasks are identified for voluntary work, it is important to match the volunteer to the work. In order to achieve this, prospective volunteers should be subject to references and an interview in all cases. Where the volunteer is going to be in contact with vulnerable groups or individuals, it will be necessary to obtain a Criminal Records Bureau disclosure. Care should be taken to consider all equality issues when recruiting volunteers.

### **AGREEMENT**

All volunteers should be issued with a role description and a written agreement, which clarifies the intentions and expectations of both parties in order to avoid subsequent disputes and which uses terminology like "hopes and expectations" instead of "requirements." Without a clear understanding of what is expected of the volunteer confusion and misunderstanding is likely to arise.

## **TRAINING**

Volunteers should receive training directly related to the tasks they undertake.

An induction process, including health and safety, should be followed in every case to ensure volunteers understand the environment they are to work in. Training will help clarify how the volunteer is expected to carry out his or her tasks.

## **EXPENSES**

The foundation is to reimburse necessary additional expenses that would have been incurred by the volunteer. The amount should be proportionate to the activities carried out. Any necessary protective clothing should be provided for the volunteer.

## **LIABILITY**

For any Organisation activity undertaken by a volunteer the foundation's public liability insurance will apply. Volunteers should be aware that this insurance does not cover them for loss of earnings should they sustain an injury. Any queries should be addressed to the Risk Manager.

## **EQUALITY**

The Foundation's commitment to diversity and equality applies equally to volunteers. The Ernest Foundation values the contribution made by everyone and especially that made by unpaid volunteers.

## **SUPERVISION**

Every volunteer should have a supervisor who they can go to with queries or problems. This is also important for feedback so volunteers know how they are performing. Should volunteers' performance fall below the required level steps should be taken to remedy this. Standards need to be established and maintained regardless of the status of the individual.

Situations of misconduct need to be similarly managed. Being a volunteer does not excuse poor behaviour.

However, it must be remembered that volunteers are not bound by contractual obligations.