

Leatherhead Community Association

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Policy for Recruitment, Induction and Support of Volunteers

Approved by Council: June 2024

Next Review: June 2027

This policy sets out the broad principles for volunteering in the LCA. It is of relevance to everyone in the organisation and has been adopted by the Trustee Board. The policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if necessary to ensure that it remains up-to-date and relevant to the volunteering needs of our organisation.

LCA Commitment

Volunteers are vital to the Association, and share some legislative equality with employees, (such as Health and Safety), but are generally independent of the LCA, and this is emphasised in their engagement.

The LCA acknowledges and values the contribution made by volunteers. We are committed to involving and supporting them in roles beneficial to the organisation and recognise the unique contribution volunteers make and the importance of a mutually beneficial relationship where the volunteer also benefits from the volunteering role.

LCA Values

The LCA is committed to using volunteers and we will:

- **not** introduce volunteers to replace paid staff. Their role will complement the role of paid staff, be beneficial to the organisation and the volunteers which includes ensuring that volunteers are not used during any times of industrial action to do the work of paid staff.
- ensure volunteers have a defined place in the structure of the organisation.
- take appropriate steps to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.
- recognise that the volunteer role is a 'gift relationship' – 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 volunteering role. Equally our organisation is not compelled to provide regular work or payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.
- acknowledge mutual support and reliability – our expectations of volunteers and volunteers' expectations of our organisation.
- acknowledge and value the individual skills, knowledge and experience that each volunteer brings to our organisation.

Rights and Responsibilities

The LCA recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- Know what is and is not expected of them.
- Have adequate support in their volunteering role.
- Know what to do if anything goes wrong.
- Be free from discrimination.
- Have safe conditions for carrying out their volunteering activities.
- Be insured.
- Receive relevant out of pocket expenses.
- Receive an induction programme and training opportunities.

The LCA expect volunteers to:

- Be reliable and honest.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Comply with our policies and procedures.
- Make the most of training and support opportunities.
- Carry out their volunteering tasks as agreed and in a way that reflects our values and aims.
- Respect the work of our organisation and not bring it into disrepute.

Coordination of Volunteering

- All volunteers will have the Administrator to offer guidance and advice to help the volunteer carry out their role effectively.
- 'Volunteer coordination' will be explicitly mentioned in all relevant paid job descriptions within our organisation.
- The designated Trustee with overall responsibility for the development of volunteering within our organisation is the Secretary. This person is responsible for the management and welfare of our volunteers.

Recruitment

- The LCA is committed to equal opportunities and seeks to recruit volunteers from a diverse range of backgrounds that reflects the makeup of the local community (see Equal Opportunity Policy). Volunteering opportunities will be widely promoted in ways that makes them accessible to all members of the community.
- Many volunteers come forward without being sought, having heard of the Association or themselves being members. Others may be sought by personal introduction by an existing volunteer or member. Opportunities for volunteering are advertised to all members in the Association's regular Newsletter and with most members having e-mail addresses, opportunities for volunteering can be offered as they arise.

- Failing these sources, the Association will contact the local Volunteer Service which knows of people who are seeking voluntary work.
- A clear and concise job description (to be reviewed at regular intervals) will be available for specific volunteer job vacancies or the role may be agreed and prepared with the volunteer and designated person referred to above.
- If necessary, volunteers will need to produce or undergo a DBS check. This check will be carried out before a volunteer begins work. (See Safeguarding Policy) However, if a volunteer has a criminal record this does not necessarily stop them from volunteering for our organisation.
- Volunteers will be briefed about the different tasks to be undertaken and will be given the necessary information and equipment to enable them to carry them out efficiently.
- The Objects of the Association in Article 4 specify that the activities of the Association must be carried out “without distinction of gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, nationality, race or of political, religious or other opinions”. These Objects, reinforced by the provisions of The Equality Act 2010, are applied in the recruitment of volunteers.

Induction, Training and ongoing Support

- An Induction Session will be arranged by the Administrator with the designated Trustee present if required. Each volunteer will receive information, written and verbal about our organisation: the work we do, our structure and key policies and procedures such as health and safety, equal opportunities, safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection. This will include any personal information held by us relating to the volunteer.
- The Administrator will provide support, encouraging the volunteer, advising of changes in policy and reasons, discuss with the volunteer any other training needs in supervision and be the main point of contact from whom volunteers can seek guidance and support and to whom they take any concerns. Additional support will be provided by the designated Trustee.
- We will encourage volunteers to develop and build on existing skills and knowledge through sharing good practice and learning and training opportunities. The designated person mentioned above will be responsible for ensuring that where possible relevant training is provided. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to attend the identified relevant training.
- Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with our organisation’s wider staff by being invited to staff/team meetings.
- Formal recognition of the contribution of our volunteers will be made in newsletters, annual reports, articles in newspapers and ‘thank you events’.

Expenses

- LCA volunteers can claim reasonable out of pocket expenses whilst on essential LCA volunteer duty, subject to the production of receipts as evidence of the expenditure e.g. car parking fees. The LCA expense claim form (copy attached) must be completed and handed in with receipts to the Treasurers

for reimbursement. Copies of this form can be obtained from the LCA office and the Administrator is happy to explain the procedure to any volunteer who is unclear on how and what they can claim.

- The LCA has a consistent approach to the reimbursement of expenses which is the same for volunteers and paid staff and approved by the Inland Revenue.

Insurance

- Our liability insurance policies cover the activities of volunteers and liability towards them.
- We do not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage.
- It is the responsibility of the volunteers to inform their motor insurance company that they are using their car in the act of volunteering.

Problem-solving

- The LCA aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively, and consistently. Service users and other agencies are able to raise concerns about paid staff, volunteers or the service.
- The designated Trustee mentioned above is responsible for handling volunteer complaints or conduct and any complaints should be referred to her/him. In the event of a complaint all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible and attempts will be made to try to solve any problems informally at the earliest possible stage. If this is not possible then our formal complaints policy and procedures will be referred to. We will support the volunteer during the complaints process. If volunteers wish to make a complaint about their treatment by us they should speak to the designated Trustee. If it is about their supervisor they should speak to the Chairman. (See complaints procedure)
- Occasionally it may be necessary to ask a volunteer to leave, for many possible reasons. Apart from a request for summary departure, for example for gross bad behaviour or a financial irregularity, there should be at least one interview to see if the problem can be remedied. A disgruntled and discharged volunteer will not be a good advertisement for the Association.

Summary

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Association; they must be recruited with care, valued while present, and given a grateful and sincere farewell when they leave.