



QUEEN'S PARK COMMUNITY COUNCIL VOLUNTEER POLICY

The role of volunteers at QPCC

People volunteer for many different reasons. They may choose to volunteer to develop skills or gain experience, to socialise or to give something back to society. They may also volunteer because they feel a moral duty or have compelling reasons to take part in voluntary action, or support a particular cause. The key element is that it is freely undertaken.

A volunteer is NOT

- an employee or a substitute for one
- someone who has a role created to suit their skills or needs e.g. work experience a general 'helper' with no clear role or responsibilities
- someone who is instructed or obliged to give their time without payment in order to meet the requirements of other individuals or organisations e.g. placements required to keep receiving government benefits or activities pressed upon someone by family members or social workers

Volunteers play an important role in helping the Council to deliver its events and services and we hope that volunteers benefit from working with the Council. The Council appreciates this work and will seek to ensure that financial barriers to volunteer involvement are overcome. Nobody who volunteers with the Council should be left out of pocket. Therefore, the Council will offer volunteers the following financial assistance:

- Standard rate public transport travel expenses to and from the place of voluntary work or other journeys necessary to fulfil your role
- Subsistence (meal/refreshments of up to £5 for any session you work in excess of 3 hours)
- Access to use the Council's phone and photocopier for the purposes of a volunteering activity (this is only allowed under the Director's supervision)

We are legally bound by benefits, tax and employment laws to pay only the exact amount incurred. You must provide receipts for all expenditure where relevant. If you normally use an Oystercard you may get a short journey statement itemising the last 8 journeys at a station or a full statement itemising the last 8 week's journeys by ordering on-line or printing from Transport for London's website www.tfl.gov.uk/oyster

In some circumstances we may pay car, motorbike or cycle mileage at rates set by HMRC

(Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs). If you want to travel by any of these methods and claim mileage expenses, you must have the agreement from the Council before incurring the expense.

All Council volunteers are covered by the Council's insurance in respect of public liability and personal accident. This should be covered in your induction, but please ask your volunteer co-coordinator/line manager to clarify this policy if necessary e.g. carrying passengers in personal cars. As a volunteer, it is your responsibility to ensure that your car insurance covers volunteer activities that includes car travel.

Volunteer responsibilities

Employees have a duty under the HASAW Act to take care of their own safety and that of others and to cooperate with their host organisations to enable us to carry out our responsibilities successfully. Volunteers have similar responsibilities as paid staff for your own and other's health and safety while working for the Community Council. We expect volunteers to:

- Work safely, efficiently and without endangering the health and safety of themselves, colleagues, service users or members of the general public
- Adhere to the safety procedures laid down and comply with any instructions given by staff with responsibility for health & safety
- Do all you reasonably can to avoid being exposed to a situation that may result in an accident or incident
- If you find yourself in situations you do not feel safe in seek assistance from relevant staff member/s or other volunteers as soon as practicably possible
- Report all accidents, near misses and hazardous situations to the relevant staff member as soon as practicably possible

Volunteer Health

The Community Council cares about the health and wellbeing of all its volunteers. Please inform the Council of any relevant condition or treatment that may affect your ability to undertake your volunteer duties. This is for your own health and safety so we know how best to support and protect you and ensure volunteer duties are carried out safely and satisfactorily. If we think it's necessary, on rare occasions, we may ask you to get a letter from your doctor to confirm you are well enough to take up volunteering duties.

Recognition of volunteers

It is important that all volunteers feel valued for their contribution in providing services. We will always show our appreciation to volunteers by saying thank you and will recognise contributions and achievements regularly in a number of ways such as certificates, celebration events, lunches or small gifts. We are unable to offer rewards in the form of vouchers or cash as this may contravene benefits and employment law; but in the future we hope to join a time credits reward scheme where volunteers can be rewarded for their time through access to local and London-wide visitor attractions, entertainment and sports facilities and more.

All adults, whether volunteers or paid, who are working in situations where they may come in to contact with children and vulnerable adults or in health care settings in regulated activities are required by law to undertake enhanced DBS (previously CRB) checks.

Disclosing a criminal conviction will not necessarily prevent you from becoming a volunteer with the Community Council.

The Community Council welcomes volunteers who are claiming benefits of any sort. You may do voluntary work while receiving benefits. The only requirement in law is that you continue to meet the conditions of the benefit or tax credit you are receiving. If you receive Jobseekers' Allowance you must be available for work. You can volunteer fulltime as long as you are still actively seeking employment