



Queen's Park Community Council Volunteer Policy

1. Introduction

The Queen's Park Community Council aims to promote a strong sense of community and increase the quality of life for people of all ages, cultures, religious and social backgrounds living and working in Queen's Park.

Our volunteers are instrumental in helping to achieve our vision for Queens Park. A volunteer is someone who, without expectation of financial compensation, beyond reimbursement of expenses, performs a task at the request of and on behalf of the Queen's Park Community Council.

2. Our Commitment

We value the diversity of volunteers and the experiences they bring, and acknowledge that volunteers create a diverse and dynamic organisation which enhance what QPCC delivers. QPCC also recognise that volunteering is a two-way exchange of skills and are committed to supporting and developing our volunteers. We see volunteers as complementing not replacing staff and will work to ensure our volunteers benefit from the time they spend volunteering, either through learning new skills, gaining experience, giving back to the community, meeting new people, or generally having a good time.

3. Volunteers Principles

This Volunteer Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- QPCC is committed to providing good volunteer management to volunteers within the office and those who volunteer off-site
- QPCC strives to improve and revise good practice in volunteer management
- QPCC will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to QPCC's work
- QPCC does not aim to introduce volunteers to replace paid staff
- QPCC expects that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work
- QPCC recognises that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training for them to do their work effectively.
- Volunteering should be an enjoyable activity that meets the individual's as well as QPCC's needs.

4. Volunteers Rights

Volunteers at QPCC have a right to:

- Equal treatment as outlined in our equal opportunities policy
- Adequate information, training and support for the tasks they are to undertake
- On-going support and supervision in line with all QPCC employees
- Health and Safety information to maximise their safety and welfare
- Reimbursement of reasonable, agreed out of pocket expenses
- Be valued by everyone within QPCC
- Be treated sympathetically and fairly if faced by problems relating to volunteer conduct or complaints. Efforts will always be made to reach a mutually acceptable solution.
- Be consulted if changes are to be introduced that affect their role.

5. Volunteer Responsibilities

All volunteers have a responsibility to:

- Agree to and abide by QPCC's policy on volunteering
- Volunteer within QPCC's mission, aims and objectives
- Treat everyone they meet when representing QPCC with courtesy and respect
- Be reliable, honest and mindful of QPCC's good name
- Agree their tasks with their supervisor
- Report back as required and keep in regular contact with designated staff and / or councillors
- Respect all information regarding QPCC's operations or any employee affairs as confidential
- Treat with confidence any information made available to them as a result of their relationship with QPCC, whether of an individual or commercial nature
- Take individual responsibility for their personal belongings
- As a volunteer, it is your responsibility to ensure that your car insurance covers volunteer activities that includes car travel whilst undertaking QPCC businesses.

6. Volunteer Recruitment

Volunteer opportunities will be advertised on the QPCC noticeboard, website, social media pages and, where possible, in the next available Queen's Park Voice.

Opportunities may also be promoted via promotional material distributed to local community locations and / or at community events. Applicants will be asked how they heard about the volunteering opportunities as part of their initial meeting.

Recruitment of volunteers is based solely on a merit and suitability for the role. We recruit volunteers seasonally as well as on a rolling basis. If a role has very limited

spaces, such as a short internship, a deadline will be given and a standard set of questions and assessment criteria will be devised by the Officers in advance. Recruitment involves completing an application form and a face to face meeting ideally with the Community Development Officer.

The aims of the recruitment process are:

- To provide volunteers with sufficient information on both QPCC and specific volunteering opportunities in order for them to make an informed decision on whether or not to pursue their application
- To allow applicants and the QPCC staff member / Councillor to assess whether or not the applicant has the requisite skills, or potential skills after training, to fulfill the role's requirements
- To agree upon a probationary period acceptable to both the applicant and QPCC

7. Equal opportunities

QPCC operates an equal opportunities policy in respect of both paid staff and volunteers. Volunteers will be expected to have an understanding of and state their commitment to our equal opportunities policy.

8. Risk Assessment

Volunteering roles may be ongoing or time-limited, and each role will have a risk assessment that outlines potential risks associated with the role and how QPCC and the volunteer should seek to minimise these risks. The risk assessment will be shared with the volunteer as part of their induction.

9. Checks and Screening

Many of our roles are informal and do not require checks and screening. Depending on the nature of the work being undertaken QPCC may need to take a copy of a volunteer's photo ID (driving license or passport) and references. If a role requires this, it will be included in the role profile. Checks or screening may seem intrusive but are necessary for the following reasons:

- The public need to know that they and public money are in safe hands
- They provide the volunteer with a degree of credibility
- They act as a basis of trust for volunteers and their colleagues

If a role requires references this will be included in the work outline. If the reference provided suggests caution the reference will be presented to the HR Committee for consideration.

All adults 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 QPCC. If something comes up on a DBS, the volunteer will be provided the opportunity to disclose this to the Chief Officer who will present this to the HR Committee for consideration.

10. Induction, Training and Support

All volunteers will receive an induction into QPCC and their own area of work. In their induction the applicant will be asked to state that they have read and understand the Council's policies and procedures and the specific risk assessment for the role. Training will be provided as appropriate for the role. Where possible, volunteers will be entitled to receive additional training on the same basis as paid staff. All volunteers will have a named person as their main point of contact. This may be a designated officer, councillor or a partner organisation of the Council. All volunteers will also be given the name of the Community Development Officer as the overall volunteer coordinator for the council. Volunteers will be offered regular supervision to feed-back on progress, discuss their future development and air any problems, as agreed with the volunteer. Volunteers may opt to set their own personal and professional development goals which they want to achieve throughout their volunteering which the Community Development Officer will strive to help them obtain where possible.

11. Expenses

The Council appreciates the work of volunteers 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
- Volunteers working a minimum of five hours per day will be able to claim expenses for lunch of up to £5
- Access to use the Council's phone and photocopier for the purposes of a volunteering activity (this is only allowed under an Officer'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.

12. Recognising volunteers

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 the Local Hero award to those who volunteer forty or more hours a year, certificates, celebration events, lunches or small gifts.

13. Grievances

We aim to identify and solve problems at the earliest possible stage. You will be asked to read and agree to the grievance policy during your induction.

14. The Volunteers' Voice

Volunteers are encouraged to express their views about matters concerning QPCC and its work. They can either do this by speaking directly with a Council Officer, or by completing the annual volunteer survey, published in February each year.

15. Age

QPCC welcomes volunteers of all ages. Children under the age of 14 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian and young people aged 14 - 17 will be asked to provide a signed consent form in line with the Council's safeguarding policy. Regardless of age all volunteers and supervising parents or guardians must take care of their own safety in line with the Health and Safety responsibilities below.

16. Health and safety

The Council recognises its responsibility for volunteer's health and safety, and a volunteer's responsibility to their own and other's health and safety while working for the Community Council. Volunteers will be provided with a copy of the health and safety policy upon induction.

17. Insurance

All volunteers are covered by the Council's insurance in respect of public liability and personal accident whilst they are on the premises or engaged in any work on QPCC's behalf.

18. GDPR

A copy of the Council's privacy policy is included in the volunteer handbook. Volunteers will be expected to have an understanding of and state their commitment to our privacy policy.

19. Confidentiality

Volunteers will be bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff.

20. Volunteering whilst claiming benefits

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 full time as long as you are still actively seeking employment.

21. End of volunteering

All volunteers leaving the Community Council will:

- Be offered an exit interview to discuss what went well and what did not go so well
- Be able to request a reference from the Community Council for prospective employers or education institution after they have left
- Be asked whether they would like to continue receiving information about the Council and whether they would like to be invited to future events.

22. Review

All of the Community Council's policies are reviewed annually at the Annual Meeting of Council

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Next Review Due: May 2022