

## 1. Introduction

Abbey People CIO aims to involve people more effectively in volunteering to help solve real problems and enrich communities within the Abbey ward of Cambridge.

It does this by: -

- Working with outside organisations to improve the diversity and quality of their volunteer placements.
- Providing potential volunteers from the local community with the means to access volunteering opportunities.
- Supporting people from the local community who might otherwise have found themselves excluded, to take part in volunteering within their communities.

Abbey People CIO is committed to involving volunteers directly within the organisation to: -

- Contribute to the delivery of our services through defined volunteer roles,
- Form our Board of Trustees,
- Mutually share different skills, knowledge and new perspectives.

This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers.

## 2. Principles

Abbey People CIO: -

- Recognises that voluntary work should bring benefit to volunteers as well as to the charity and its objectives
- Will strive to provide an environment which is supportive, friendly and inclusive
- Will ensure that volunteer roles are clearly defined within the overall activities of the charity
- Will not introduce volunteers to replace paid staff
- Recognises that volunteers are an integral part of Abbey People and their voices are valued and will be listened to
- Recognises that volunteering can be a rewarding and satisfying pastime which can also help people in their personal development i.e. acquiring new skills, knowledge and training
- Will cover all pre-agreed volunteer expenses, as defined in each volunteer role agreement
- Will endeavour to involve volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities and ensure our volunteering opportunities are as accessible as possible

## 3. Recruitment

Abbey People CIO will aim to recruit volunteers who are representative of the community, and in line with the Abbey People CIO Equal Opportunities Policy. Positive action in recruitment may be used where appropriate.

People interested in becoming volunteers with Abbey People CIO will be invited for an informal talk with the appropriate contact person. They will be given an information pack including general information about the organisation and specific information on the volunteer post in which they are interested. Volunteer Trustees will be given a role specific induction and information pack.

As appropriate to the role, all volunteers will be asked to complete a simple registration form. Prospective volunteers will be supported through this process in line with their needs.

Volunteers will be supported to find an available volunteering role within Abbey People CIO or other partner organisations.

Every volunteer role will undergo a risk assessment by a person nominated by the trustees. For volunteer roles which involve 'regulated work' such as care giving and/or sustained and direct contact with children or vulnerable adults, Abbey People CIO has a legal obligation to ensure that volunteers are not barred from working with children or vulnerable groups. Potential volunteers for such roles will be required to undertake a Disclosure Barring Service check. This information will be dealt with in the strictest confidence and will not necessarily prejudice the person being accepted for voluntary work. Abbey People CIO undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

The administration and all costs of this DBS process will be borne by Abbey People.

#### **4. Volunteer Agreements and Voluntary Role Outlines**

Volunteers will receive a role description and volunteer agreement containing full information about their chosen area of work and a clear idea of their responsibilities and the charity's responsibilities to them.

These agreements are not intended to be a legally binding contract and may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. Neither of us intend any employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future.

#### **5. Induction and Training**

Volunteers will be given induction and training appropriate to the specific tasks to be undertaken.

#### **6. Support**

Volunteers will be assigned a named contact person who will provide regular support. This will provide the opportunity for ongoing dialogue about the development of the volunteering role and any advice and guidance as needed. Where the volunteering role is emotionally demanding the named contact can also signpost the volunteer to access emotional support.

## **7. The Volunteer's Voice**

Volunteers will be consulted in decisions which affect them. Abbey People CIO is committed to developing consultation and representational procedures for volunteers.

A volunteer representative will be on the Operations Group to give a volunteer voice in the running of the organisation.

Abbey People CIO will aim to hold an annual volunteer forum and celebration, either as a stand-alone event or as part of the charity Annual General Meeting.

## **8. Records**

Minimum details will be kept on volunteers. This will include the registration form, references (where required by the role), placement details, crisis contact, correspondence and any other relevant information in accordance with Abbey People CIO's confidentiality policy.

## **9. Expenses**

Abbey People CIO will ensure that there is a clear and accessible system to enable volunteers to claim agreed out of pocket expenses.

## **10. Insurance**

Volunteers will be covered by Public Liability Insurance while carrying out Abbey People CIO approved activities.

## **11. Health and Safety**

Abbey People CIO will take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the volunteers' health, safety, and welfare while at work in accordance with the organisation's Health and Safety policy.

## **12. Equal Opportunities**

Volunteers and staff will work in accordance with Abbey People CIO's Equal Opportunities policy and will prevent discrimination on any grounds.

### **13. Safeguarding**

Volunteers are covered by & should be aware of their responsibilities under Abbey People CIO Safeguarding Policy. The policy is available on the charity's website at [www.abbeypeople.org.uk](http://www.abbeypeople.org.uk).

### **14. Problems**

Abbey People CIO has a policy to help deal with grievances that volunteers may have. In line with this policy volunteers have the right to discuss any concerns they may have with their named contact at any time. Should the volunteer feel unable to raise the concern with their named contact, the concerns should then be brought to the CEO. Abbey People CIO has a whistleblowing policy in place which can be accessed on the charity's website.

Abbey People CIO has a policy on how it will deal with any disciplinary issue regarding a volunteer.

### **15. Moving on**

When volunteers move on from their role at Abbey People CIO, they will be asked to provide feedback on the volunteering experience by way of an exit questionnaire. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss their responses to the questionnaire more fully with a member of the Board of Trustees or a person designated to conduct this on behalf of the Trustees.

Based on their voluntary work, volunteers will have the right to request a reference. Volunteers will be supported to move on to other options.

### **16. Monitoring and Evaluation**

Abbey People CIO will systematically monitor and evaluate its use of volunteers with reference to this Volunteer Policy.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.