



Volunteer Centre Greenwich Membership Services

Information and Guidance Booklet



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Volunteer Centre Greenwich exists to:

‘Enriching the lives of individuals and communities by enhancing the value of volunteering, through supporting and creating opportunities for all’.

‘Volunteer Centre Greenwich aims to do this by:

- Promoting volunteering to disadvantaged groups and individuals
- Providing information and support to all people seeking volunteering opportunities
- Providing information and support to organisations seeking volunteers
- Providing support and training to volunteers and those who work with volunteers
- Promoting good practice around volunteering

Core Functions

VCG offers a quality signposting service for people in Greenwich wishing to undertake volunteering, through maintaining a database of voluntary opportunities with organisations wishing to recruit volunteers.

Signposting is carried out through a unique network of “outreach posts” which provide accessible information and interviews locally, for people interested in voluntary work.

VCG also offers a drop in service at its offices for the public to find out more about local volunteering. Volunteering opportunities may also be accessed through the new Greenwich Borough VCconnect volunteer matching online database.

VCG offers a range of Membership Services to organisations registering their voluntary opportunities with Volunteer Centre

Greenwich, including information, training and advice on involving volunteers.

VCG promotes volunteering in practical, innovative and accessible ways, to a wide range of voluntary, statutory and private sector organisations in the borough and working closely with the education service, social services and the youth service.

VCG promotes the benefits of volunteering both to local organisations and to residents in Greenwich through a range of activities and events, including taking part in National Volunteers' Week events.

Membership fees:

Organisation Status:	Annual Fee
Funded Groups or Organisations	£100
Unfunded Groups or Organisation	Free
Organisation, projects or Groups with an income of 10k or under	Fee

Fees can be paid as a one off payment or quarterly.

Payments can be made via BACs or cheque

If you have any concerns or queries about the membership fees please contact us we are happy to consider organisations, project or groups individual needs.

Benefits of membership

As an organisation / project member, you will be entitled to the following benefits:

Volunteering Opportunities Promoted

Roles will be prompted through our on line CRM system VC Connect
This system allows you to create and manage your own organisations profile and manage and promote your volunteering roles directly to people interested in volunteering.

Search the volunteer bank for people who have expressed interest or have the skills needed that match your opportunities criteria
One to one support to manage and develop your volunteering roles and ensure your account remains up to date and current

Targeted recruitment:

Struggling to fill a role or have a role with a short turnaround time? VCG will make a targeted promotion of your role through our networks
Promotion of your volunteering roles through our cross borough site with one to one appointments with local people interested in volunteering.

Promotion of your volunteering roles at borough events

Information and support centre

Volunteering best practice support on developing and managing your volunteering programme

One to one support visits provided, identifying your organisations individual support needs

Online self-assessment tool to self-assess your volunteering programme and request support if needed or Volunteering Programme one to one Health Check

Downloadable volunteering fact sheets and policy templates

Opportunity to attend volunteering best practice taster sessions to gain an overview of what is involved in managing and supporting volunteers

Online support request function

Select the support you need and receive personalised feedback via email or phone

Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) support

Advice provided on volunteering roles to see if they require a DBS check

Download template role risk assessments

Access to a DBS checking service (admin fee applies)

Forums

VCG will be providing an online forum

Post your issues and talk to other members – queries answered by the membership team on a daily basis

Topical quarterly Volunteer Manager Forum for managers who like to get together, network and share experiences

Volunteering news feed

Current news that is useful for all volunteer managers and volunteer involving organisations

Volunteer's newsletter

Need to promote something specific such as an event, course or role! Put an ad or information in the Volunteers by-monthly e - newsletter

Volunteer Management Best Practice Workshops

One workshop of your choice free included in your membership fee

Subsidised rates for VCG Best Practice Workshops

Consultancy rates

Special consultancy rates for members

Registering with Volunteer Centre Greenwich

Becoming a member of VCG costs £100 for a yearly membership, and entitles you to all of the benefits listed above, as well as access to a number of further VCG services at special rates.

VCG aims to make registering with us as simple and straightforward process as possible. We therefore ask you to complete the registration process on line, if this is not possible please call or email us to request a registration form.

You will need to supplying us with your contact information and the nature of your organisation or project.

As part of your registration process, we will also ask you to email us with confirmation that you are a charitable, community or public benefit focused organisation by supplying us with either:

- Your charity number (if you are a charity)
- Your CIC number (if you are a registered Community Interest Company)
- Your constitution or governing document (if you have neither of the above)

VCG is also committed to signposting volunteers to safe and inclusive volunteering opportunities. To help us do this, we ask all our members to have in place three policy statements. There are:

- Equal opportunities policy or statement of intent
- Health and safety policy or statement of intent
- Volunteering policy

As part of the registration process, we ask all new members to supply us with a copy of their policies. VCG does, however recognise that not all organisations may have these in place and if this is the case, any new member of VCG has the option to adopt VCG's policies for these three areas, until they have developed

their own. Copies of these policies are held in the appendix at the back of this information and guidance.

Versions of these documents are also available on request for organisations to adapt to their own needs.

Following receipt of your membership information, VCG will send you a welcome pack, confirming your membership with VCG.

Registering your opportunities with Volunteer Centre Greenwich

VCG received thousands of enquiries for volunteering opportunities each year. People who are interested in volunteering can contact VCG either by telephone, by email, through our website, or via our online database on our website VCconnect.

Potential volunteers can:

Read about your volunteering opportunities on VCconnect online matching database managed by VCG.
Talk to our Membership Team about your volunteering opportunities at local events
Read about your volunteering opportunities and events in the volunteering e-newsletter
Arrange a one-to-one appointment at multiple locations though out Greenwich to discuss their volunteering needs and receive support in finding an opportunity
Use VCG's computers to look though our volunteering database and VCconnect by coming to one of our drop in sessions.
Receive support from one of VCG's projects specialising in a particular area or type of volunteering

When your organisation registers your opportunities with us, the information you provide on your volunteer opportunities will be available to potential volunteers through all of these means.

Registering a new opportunity:

You can register as many volunteering opportunities as you need with VCG.

Each time you want to register a new volunteering opportunity, log into your profile on VCconnect and complete a new opportunity form. Once you have completed the form it will come to us for approval, once the opportunity form has been approved by the VCG Membership Team your opportunity will go live.

We are also able to set opportunities up for you, if this is your preferred method, please contact the VCG Membership Team (membership@volunteersgreenwich.co.uk).

Please remember, the information on our database is seen by many people who are looking to volunteer and is only as good as the information you provide, the more appealing your roles sound the more interest you role will get.

You will also be able to look at the people who have registered to look for volunteering roles. You will be able to read their profiles and invite them to apply for your role/s.

This can be done in the Volunteer Bank. Full instruction will be sent to you once your registration with VCG has been confirmed.

Amending opportunities:

If you fill your volunteering opportunity, please deactivate it on the database or please let us know as soon as possible, so we can deactivate it and stop referring volunteers to you.

We can easily 'activate' and 'deactivate' opportunities as you need, so your opportunity will not be lost.

The information on our database is only as good as the information you provide, so please tell us if you would like any changes made to your opportunities that you are not able to make yourself.

To help make sure our information is accurate, we will also contact you from time to time to check our records.

Please note that VCG will *only* signpost volunteers to member organisations which are not-for-profit (voluntary or statutory) organisations, projects or registered charities.

Completing the 'New Volunteering Opportunity' form

Please give as much information as is possible to enable potential volunteers to make an informed choice. Please note that it is not sufficient just to send your organisation's promotional leaflets.

Designing and writing a volunteering role description can be a complicated matter. A good role description will be appealing, informative and legal, helping you attract the volunteers you want and discourage volunteers you may not want.

VCG offers a range of training, information and guidance on writing volunteering role descriptions.

Below are some things to consider when completing your new volunteering opportunity form. For further information, please contact VCG's Membership Services.

Role Description. *A good role description not only leaves a volunteer knowing what you want them to do, it also leaves them feeling inspired to volunteer with you. Remember to keep role descriptions appealing as well as honest.*

The short role description will be used on websites and mobile phone apps.

Skills Required. *Being honest about the skills you need will help to attract the right calibre of volunteer, however being too prescriptive means you may not get many applications. Consider what you would be willing to train a volunteer on.*

Screening. *It is always good practice to screen potential volunteers to ensure that your organisation and your users are not put at risk. This may only involve obtaining references, but in some cases a DBS check may be required if the volunteer is working closely with children or vulnerable adults. Please note that VCG does not take up references or screen volunteers, as we consider it important that the selection process is carried out by the volunteer involving organisation themselves.*

Expenses. *VCG encourages all organisations to reimburse volunteers all out-of-pocket expenses wherever possible. If you are unable to do this, it may exclude many people from volunteering with you. Please ensure you include the details of what you will reimburse e.g. travel, childcare, lunch etc*

Induction, Supervision and Support. *Explaining what induction, support and supervision is on offer will help volunteers feel more certain and secure about the organisations they are entering.*

Insurance. *Like anything else, volunteering may involve risks and organisations recruiting volunteers have a duty to protect the volunteers working with them. It is important to find out whether your insurance policy covers liability and accident insurance for all*

volunteers and that you have Health and Safety procedures in place.

Training. *Offering training will help to both attract new recruits and retain your volunteers once you have recruited them. If you do not already offer training to volunteers but think it would be useful, please contact us for advice.*

When using our services you can expect:

A response to your initial enquiry within two working days. If you request a membership/ registration pack, this will be sent to you within seven working days.

To receive with your membership/registration pack, a copy of our Registration of Organisations Policy.

Confirmation of your membership/registration status, and a draft details of your volunteer opportunity record for your approval, to be sent to you within 20 working days of our receiving your completed registration pack

Your 'live' volunteer opportunity will be activated on our VCconnect network database within a further 10 working days.

To be treated politely and with respect. Our *Equal Opportunities Statement of Intent* is on display at each of our centres, and a copy of our full *Equal Opportunities Policy* is available upon request.

Any complaint you may have about our services to be dealt with promptly. Anyone wishing to make an informal or formal complaint will be issued with a copy of our written *Complaints Procedure*.

When using our services we expect you to:

Have filled in the relevant membership registration form and be a full member of VCG

To be up to date with any payment of any fees for courses or other services

Have read our Registration of Organisations Policy and checked that your organisation meets the criteria for acceptance

Register your organisation and volunteer opportunities with us by completing the relevant forms or online forms

Inform us of any changes to your volunteering opportunities
Notify us if you are no longer recruiting volunteers or make the necessary changes on your online profile on VCconnect. We will indicate this on your database entry until you inform us otherwise, or you request that your entry is permanently deleted

Treat staff politely and with respect. All our staff are given a written *Code of Practice*. This explains in detail how they are expected to behave, and how they can expect to be treated. Please ask any member of staff if you would like more information about this.

VCG registration of organisations policy

The purpose of this policy statement is to clearly state the terms and conditions by which Volunteer Centre Greenwich will accept the registration of groups wishing to recruit volunteers through its services.

The information provided by the member organisation (hereafter the 'organisation') on the registration and volunteer recruitment forms will be held on VCG's database and will be used in referring potential volunteers to appropriate voluntary roles.

If volunteers express an interest, VCG will ask the volunteer to contact the organisation directly.

Information provided by the organisation will be available to potential volunteers other than:

Where the organisation has notified VCG of the need for details to remain confidential

The organisation is no longer a full member of VCG

The organisation informs VCG it no longer wishes VCG to promote its information

Unless the organisation indicates otherwise, information obtained about the organisation may be shared with other agencies' databases. Information may also be included in a directory of voluntary organisations for public distribution.

VCG prefers organisation's to have developed and adopted their own equal opportunities, health and safety and volunteering policy or statements of intent.

Organisations that are in the process of developing the above mentioned policies will be expected to follow the practices of VCG's policies until such time as their own policy is adopted.

In the event of any organisation being found to be operating in ways that discriminate against certain groups or individuals, or acting in an unsafe manner, VCG reserves the right to refuse or withdraw their membership and registration at the discretion of the Trustees.

VCG will only signpost volunteers to not for profit (voluntary and statutory) organisations and registered charities. It is the organisation's responsibility to ensure that appropriate recruitment, selection and management programmes for volunteers are in place. VCG will not screen or vet potential volunteers in the referral process.

VCG will only actively recruit member organisations working within the Borough of Greenwich. VCG will hold information on member organisations wishing to register whose volunteers work in any geographical area. Inclusion will be at the discretion of the Trustees.

By registering with VCG organisations are agreeing to operate within the terms and conditions set out in this policy statement.

Policy on complaints Received

If a concern is raised to VCG from a volunteer about a registered organisation, VCG will encourage and support the volunteer to raise the issue either informally or formally with that organisation.

VCG will support registered organisations in the development of appropriate policies and procedures with regards to best practice. Procedure when a complaint is received about a registered organisation.

VCG will encourage all organisations to ensure they have their own complaints procedure and to deal with complaints from volunteers internally.

Any complaint received by VCG from a volunteer about a member organisation will be handled by the Volunteering Services Manager.

In the first instance, the Volunteering Services Manager will encourage the complainant to raise the issue with the organisation concerned, either informally or through the organisations formal complaints procedure.

VCG will only directly investigate complaints regarding the VCG signposting service offered.

The Volunteering Services Manager will inform the Membership Services Manager of all concerns raised so that the complaint can be recorded in a confidential manner.

Should the complainant be dissatisfied with the response received from the organisation, the Volunteering Services Manager will advise the complainant of further bodies which their concerns may be raised with, depending on the nature of the complaint. Should an organisation request assistance from VCG in handling concerns, the Membership Services Manager will offer appropriate advice, support and guidance in the usual way in the form of:

- Reviewing existing policies and procedures with the organisation involved in the recruitment, managing and supporting of volunteers.
- Making any relevant or necessary recommendations to these procedures which would improve or stop a similar situation occurring again.
- Advising if new policies or procedures need to be put in place and offer support to the organisation to develop these.
- Offering any relevant and appropriate training to the organisation, its staff and volunteers.
- Arranging follow up meetings to discuss how effective the review has been and when and if any recommendations have been actioned.

The Membership Services Manager will not intervene with the internal complaints process of an organisation, however we recognise in some situations there is a need to be proactive in how VCG responds to certain information. This includes:

- If VCG becomes aware of a safeguarding issue.
- If VCG becomes aware of an illegal activity, or activity which exposes member organisations to legal risk.
- Where the health and safety of signposted volunteers could be at risk.
- If the actions of a member organisation have a negative impact on the reputation or services of VCG.
- If VCG receives information about member organisations regarding the above, VCG will evaluate this information and offer support to the member organisation to rectify the issue.

VCG retains the right to cease publicising opportunities or withdraw registration, at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.

Appendix A – Example Equal Opportunities Statement of Intent Statement of Intent

This Statement of Intent sets out [Organisation]'s commitment to combat all forms of direct and indirect discrimination. Where discrimination exists, it directly opposes our primary function, which is to make volunteering as widely accessible as possible.

[Organisation] recognises that everyone has a contribution to make to our society, and a right to equal treatment
We aim to ensure that no staff member, volunteer or organisation/individual to whom we provide services will be discriminated against by us, on the grounds of :

Age, class, employment status or trade union membership, physical or sensory disability or mental ill health, HIV status, political or religious belief, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, marital status or caring responsibilities, sexual orientation, unrelated criminal convictions, other areas of social exclusion.

We aim to ensure that all volunteers working in organisations that use the services of [Organisation] are not discriminated against.

[Organisation] will take positive action to counter this.

[Organisation] is committed to ensuring that our policies and practices relating to all aspects of management, staffing, service delivery and development are accessible to, and reflect the needs of, groups and individuals within the Borough of Greenwich.

[Organisation] therefore, positively welcomes and actively seeks the involvement and participation of all the community.

This Equal Opportunities policy states the positive action that [Organisation] will take to help remove discrimination. The policy affects all aspects of [Organisation]'s procedures and operations and all of the people who work for or with [Organisation].

Appendix B – Example Health and Safety Statement of Intent Statement of Intent (for organisations with less than 5 staff members)

The employer recognises its statutory responsibilities as an employer for the health and safety of all its staff/volunteers while at work, and to provide so far as is reasonably practicable a safe and healthy workplace and working environment for employees, volunteers and non-employees who may visit the premises and/or travel in vehicles.

The employer will promote so far as is reasonably practicable the highest possible standards of health, safety and welfare and the involvement of staff and volunteers in the development, implementation and maintenance of health and safety procedures.

All staff, volunteers and visitors are expected to take reasonable care of their own and other's health and safety and also to immediately report any serious hazards to the appropriate manager.

Staff (at all levels) are expected to demonstrate a positive attitude and commitment to health and safety.

The employer will promote effective joint consultation between the employer and the safety representative to ensure the provision and maintenance of good health and safety practices.

Appendix C – Example Problem Solving Policy and Procedure Introduction

The aim of this procedure is to ensure that if someone (client, staff, member of the public) has any concerns regarding the way in which a volunteer performs their voluntary placement, the volunteer will be treated in a fair and consistent manner, and that both staff and the volunteer will know what to do if such an instance arises.

It is hoped that most problems will be sorted out satisfactorily through informal discussion, but if that is not possible the procedure below, is available to ensure volunteers have their case heard.

The Procedure

If [Organisation] has an issue with a volunteer, the Volunteer Manager will meet with them to raise this with them informally.

Notes will be made of this meeting, including a time scale within which improvement will be monitored. This is an informal stage and does not form part of the raising concerns procedure.

At the end of this time the Volunteer Manager will meet the volunteer again. At the end of this meeting, if there has not been sufficient improvement the volunteer will be given an oral warning, which will include an appropriate time limit within which improvement should occur. This will be noted on the volunteer's file. This forms part of the raising concerns procedure.

At the end of this time the Volunteer Manager will meet the volunteer again. If at the end of this meeting the Volunteer Manager is satisfied that improvement has occurred, the raising concerns procedure will not continue.

However, if there has not been sufficient improvement the volunteer will be given a written warning, which will include an appropriate time limit within which improvements should occur. This will be noted on the volunteer's file. This is the second stage of the raising concerns procedure.

At the end of this time the Volunteer Manager will meet the volunteer again. If at the end of the meeting following the written warning the Volunteer Manager is satisfied that improvement has occurred, the raising concerns procedure will not continue but a plan of regular individual supervision will be implemented to support the volunteer in the continuation of their voluntary placement.

However, if there has not been sufficient improvement, the volunteer will be given written notice terminating their voluntary placement from [Organisation].

At this stage the volunteer has a right to appeal to the Director of [Organisation] who will meet with the volunteer and the Volunteer Manager. The Director's decision is final

If a volunteer is found to have committed serious misconduct then we reserve the right to suspend them from their voluntary placement at [Organisation] immediately while the case is being investigated.

The volunteer will have the right to put his/her case to the Volunteer Manager and the Director of [Organisation] and to be accompanied by a colleague or friend.

The volunteer will be informed of [Organisation]'s decision within 14 days of suspension and has the right of appeal against the exclusion to the Director of [Organisation] whose decision is final.

Examples of offences which will be regarded as serious misconduct are as follows:

- Gross insubordination
- Gross negligence
- Blatant and persistent refusal to obey a reasonable and proper instruction
- Serious or wilful breaches of safety rules in such a way that the individual endangers himself/herself or others.
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs to such a degree that the individual is a danger to himself/herself or to others.

- Theft of, or malicious damage to, property belonging to [Organisation], members of staff, service users or the public.
- Accepting or seeking to obtain loans of any kind (monies or articles) from service users
- Sexual offences or sexual misconduct
- Physical assault or fighting
- Serious breach of equal opportunities practice

PROCEDURE FOR VOLUNTEERS WHO WISH TO RAISE A CONCERN

If you are not happy about a part of the procedure and have an issue you would like to raise, we want to hear from you. We try to give the best possible service, but there is always room for improvement and it is important for us to know what can be improved.

If you do want to raise an issue we will ensure:

- you have the right to be treated equally and not to suffer discrimination as a result of raising the concern;
- that you know you can ask someone to support you when raising your concern, it could be a friend, family member or an advocate;
- that your concern will be treated seriously and dealt with in good time;
- that such issues are treated with an open mind, and will be investigated without prejudice.

How do I raise a concern?

Firstly talk to the Volunteer Manager, either on the telephone or, if you prefer, make an appointment to meet with him/her. He/she may be able to resolve the matter straight away.

However, if you do not feel completely satisfied after this put your concern in writing and be sent to [Organisation] Chief Executive.

Your correspondence will be acknowledged within three days of receipt. Your concern will be investigated and you will receive a reply within 14 days.

If the matter is still unresolved at this stage please write to the Chief Executive, Volunteer Centre Greenwich, Equitable House, Suite 205 & 206, 2nd Floor, 10 Woolwich New Road, London, SE18 6AB.

Your correspondence will be acknowledged within three days of receipt.

Your concern will be investigated and you will receive a reply within 14 days.

