



Exeter Community Initiatives

Policy Name:	Volunteer Policy
Adopted by Council:	March 2017
Last Review:	February 2017
Next Review:	February 2020

The Trustees in adopting this policy fully understand their legal obligations and the importance of monitoring and implementing the policy within ECI.

Exeter Community Initiatives Volunteer Policy

Introduction

ECI values the benefits and contributions which volunteers bring to the organisation in carrying out its work. Volunteers may be involved throughout ECI in a range of different ways, depending on the needs of the individual projects. We recognise that volunteers bring a wide range of skills, experience and expertise that is invaluable to ECI. In return volunteers may gain new experience and maintain existing skills. This document, the ECI volunteer policy, defines the terms and sets out the principles, practices and procedures which ECI will follow in the appointment, management and supervision of volunteers.

Definition

Volunteers may be described as individuals who put their experience, knowledge and skills at the disposal of an organisation, free of charge, with the primary aim of helping the organisation to achieve its service objectives and or with the primary aim of bringing some benefit to individuals or to the local community. In this sense, volunteers are to be distinguished from students, other work placements, and secondi's, where the primary aim is usually for the student or secondi to obtain certain work experience or to carry out work or research in certain areas. However, there are particular projects where we recruit volunteers who we train.

Principles

In appointing volunteers ECI will adhere to the following principles:

- Volunteers will not be engaged in a role which facilitates the loss of an existing employee's post;
- ECI employees may not undertake 'formal' volunteering in other ECI projects to avoid any potential 'conflict of interest', or confusion about boundaries and roles;
- Staff may volunteer to help at one-off events and activities provided that they have the prior agreement of both their line manager and the member of staff responsible for organising the event/activity. Judgements about this will be made by the line manager on a case-by-case basis;
- Bank workers may undertake volunteering roles by agreement of the relevant line manager.

Recruitment

ECI will use appropriate means to advertise for volunteers locally that take into account the principles of our Equality and Diversity Policy. The applicant will have to complete an application form, but help can be given with this if necessary. The applicant will be interviewed by no more than 2 people which will include the person who will supervise them. If the interview is successful the two references asked for will be taken up. A criminal records check with the Disclosure & Barring Service will be made (if relevant) for every volunteer.

Training

ECI recognises that our volunteers will require training and development. We will provide an induction to ECI, including our policies and procedures, as well as essential role-specific training.

Expenses

We value our volunteers and want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. ECI will reimburse reasonable out-of-pocket expenses including travel and meals (if volunteering for over 4 hours). All expenses must be cleared by the Volunteer Supervisor beforehand. Receipts must accompany any expenses submitted, other than mileage. Volunteers are encouraged to submit an expenses claim form to their supervisor on a monthly basis. ECI will pay travel to and from home to the place of volunteering. Allowances will be paid as follows:

	For the first 50 miles	For the part over 50 miles
Car:	45p per mile	25p per mile
Motor Cycle:	25p per mile	20p per mile
Bike:	20p per mile	20p per mile

- **Public Transport**

Volunteers and participants are encouraged to use public transport where possible unless there are good reasons for not doing so. When using public transport, volunteers and participants are generally expected to use the most economic means of transport available. Expenses incurred can be claimed provided a receipt is provided.

- **Other Expenses**

If you volunteer for at least 4 hours a day then you can claim a meal allowance to the maximum of £3.50* with a receipt.

We will also pay other legitimate expenses incurred during the course of your volunteering / involvement in activities e.g. car parking, home or telephone costs (itemised bills will be needed) providing that you have prior approval from the overall project manager. Once again, receipts are needed for all claims.

**Based on the cost of a meal deal*

Recognition and motivation

All volunteers with ECI will have a named supervisor and receive on-going support. Volunteers will be included in celebrations and we will ensure contributions are publicised wherever possible.

Support

Named supervisors will support volunteers and will have regular meetings with the volunteers to review how it is going and to discuss any problems or issues that may arise. Depending on the tasks support sessions will be held every six to eight weeks.

Resolving problems

ECI are committed to resolving all issues or disputes fairly and consistently according to the procedures laid out in our Complaints Policy or Grievance Procedure.

Moving On

ECI recognises that volunteers may choose to cease volunteering at any time. We will offer volunteers the opportunity to feed back on their experience via an informal meeting or telephone call. Any recommendations will be taken into account so that improvements can be made where necessary. ECI also has a duty to care for our volunteers. If a volunteer's role becomes detrimental to their own or other people's health or safety ECI has the right to decide that it is appropriate for a volunteer to reduce or cease their volunteer contribution.

Health & Safety

ECI are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all volunteers whilst volunteering with us and to giving appropriate instruction, training and supervision. Volunteers organising or taking part in public events (such as fundraising events or awareness events) must take all necessary steps to ensure their own and the public's safety at any event they organise or attend. Advice is available from your named supervisor. Volunteers must report any accident/incident or dangerous circumstances that occur in the course of their volunteering to their supervisor.

Safeguarding

In accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Order 1975), applicants who are offered a volunteer role at ECI may be subject to a criminal record check (DBS) before their appointment is confirmed, depending on the role applied for. This will include details of cautions, reprimands or final warnings as well as convictions. Any information given, either when returning the application form or during a new volunteer meeting, will be entirely confidential and will be considered only in relation to the volunteer's application. ECI treat anyone with a criminal record with sensitivity. We will have an open discussion with you to identify any possible risks. It does not necessarily prohibit you from being offered a volunteer role with ECI.

Involving Volunteers from overseas

ECI welcomes all members of the Exeter community as volunteers regardless of their nationality. However, if the volunteer role requires a UK DBS check, then it will also require the potential volunteer to request an extra check in their country of origin. The types of checks & costs of these checks varies greatly depending on the country. ECI will endeavour to support any potential volunteer in this process but volunteers should be aware that it is their responsibility to approach the relevant embassy/country. ECI are committed to paying the first £20 of any fees involved with this type of enquiry.

Volunteers that have worked outside the UK for over 6 months in last 5 years

Some potential Volunteers may have worked abroad in their lifetime. If the role requires a UK DBS then the potential volunteer will need to request an extra security check from the embassy of said countries. The types of checks & costs of these checks varies greatly depending on the country. ECI will endeavour to support any potential volunteer in this process but volunteers should be aware that it is their responsibility to approach the relevant embassy. ECI are committed to paying the first £20 of any fees involved with this type of enquiry.

Insurance

ECI hold the following insurance policies that cover volunteers:

- Public Liability Insurance
- Employers Liability Insurance

ECI does not provide motor insurance for volunteers using their own vehicle. It is the responsibility of the volunteers to inform their motor insurance company that they are using their car in the act of volunteering. Charitable work is normally classed as social domestic pleasure use and not business use.

Confidentiality

During the course of your involvement with ECI, volunteers may have access to confidential information regarding staff, clients and other volunteers. Our Data Protection policy aims to safeguard privacy and ensure appropriate access to information. Breaches of confidentiality can occur through thoughtlessness or a lack of awareness of the consequences to an individual when disclosing confidential information. Volunteers with ECI should regard all information they have access to or are given as a result of their volunteering as confidential unless advised otherwise.

Data Protection

Personal information recorded about volunteers is stored and maintained with appropriate safeguards for confidentiality. ECI abides by all provisions of the Data Protection Act of 1998. Volunteers who collect or administer any personal data on our supporters or clients will also be required by law to comply with the provisions of that Act.

Our Code of Conduct

ECI is working to create an atmosphere of respect and understanding in which everyone is valued and we strongly believe in working co-operatively together and learning from our shared experience. ECI is an inclusive, safe space for all, where everyone will be treated with equal respect and worth and we ask that all people entering this space respect these goals and treat each other accordingly.

We will not tolerate any form of discrimination, or any behaviour which makes other people feel vulnerable or threatened. This includes, but is not limited to, discrimination based on race, gender, sexuality, faith, disability, and social background. You will be asked to leave the premises if it is felt that you are violating this safe space.

If you encounter such behaviour, Please SPEAK UP! It is our responsibility to keep this space safe and welcoming to all. If you don't feel comfortable challenging abusive behaviour, ask a member of staff for support.