



The Trust for Developing Communities

Volunteer Policy

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1. Introduction

What the Trust for Developing Communities does and why we involve volunteers.

The Trust for Developing Communities (TDC) delivers community development work across Brighton & Hove and Sussex, devises work-led training schemes in community development and provides consultancy and research services. In summary:

“Community development training, work and support”

2. Why we involve volunteers

As a community development organisation we believe in developing informal learning opportunities within communities and the city we work in. Supporting volunteer placements is one way we can contribute to this goal. TDC's volunteering opportunities are offered to local people as a way of developing their experience, skills and career prospects. This includes; providing a stepping stone for women to return to work, skills for post-work older people, and providing positive experiences to build confidence for all.

It also offers TDC's neighbourhood based staff, who are often lone working, some peer support and an opportunity to develop mentoring and supervisory skills. We do not use volunteers to replace paid staff.

There are many benefits to TDC in involving volunteers. These include:

- Volunteers can bring a different perspective to our work, often one that better reflects the views of the local community
- They bring credibility to TDC – giving their time for free suggests that the work we do is of value to the local population

- Members of the public are more likely to identify with members of their own community, particularly if those communities are seldom heard

3. How we involve volunteers

TDC is a charitable company made up of voluntary members that elect a trustee board of volunteers.

TDC employees work mostly within neighbourhoods supporting community activists and volunteers within their own communities.

We also support volunteer placements within our organisation. These placements may either be based at our central office contributing to administrative tasks or they may be based at a neighbourhood office, supporting a Community Development Worker or Community Worker with Young People and therefore also include engagement tasks, such as leafleting or supporting a local group activity.

It is people in these placements that we refer to as **volunteers** in the procedures outlined below.

TDC values the work of its volunteers and intends to continue offering opportunities for individuals to contribute to the work of TDC through volunteering. To ensure that volunteers receive the right levels of support procedures are in place to ensure that volunteers are:

- Recruited fairly
- Properly inducted
- Have clearly defined role descriptions
- Are treated with respect
- Have a clearly agreed duration and pattern of volunteering when recruited.
- Have clear lines of support and adequate supervision.
- Are given support towards eventually finding employment, if that is their aim

4. Recruitment Procedure

We will advertise volunteering opportunities through local volunteer bureaux and community and voluntary sector e-lists and where appropriate local press.

Potential volunteers will be sent a role description of the volunteer placement along with the TDC Annual Report and a copy of this policy along with a form for them to express their interest, relevant experience and availability. This form will be available with stamped addressed envelope or via email.

The member of staff who would be responsible for the volunteer placement will respond to any expressions of interest and invite in to meet anyone considered eligible for the placement to discuss suitability and potential arrangements.

As our main office base is within supported housing and many of our neighbourhood offices involve contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults we usually request DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks and references for anyone taking up a volunteer placement.

If at this point, or any subsequent point, the volunteer or their supervisor feel they are unable to meet this agreement they will call a meeting to review the situation.

5. Induction and training procedures

TDC aims to ensure that volunteers are able to contribute as effectively as possible to its work, are safe in their dealings with children, young people and vulnerable adults and have the necessary skills to perform their role. Therefore each volunteer will have appropriate induction, training and ongoing support. The TDC volunteers will have:

- An identified person to whom they are responsible who will carry out their induction and ongoing supervision and support.
- A physical tour of their base and a guided discussion through TDC organisational structure and appropriate policies and procedures.
- The opportunity to share peer learning and support with other volunteers and TDC staff at internal practice meetings (6 weekly)
- Their training needs assessed and where appropriate training to be offered through TDC or partner organisations.

6. The Volunteer Placement

Expenses

Only out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed. This will usually be travel costs incurred and in agreed situations subsistence. Other petty cash expenses for consumables and equipment activities should remain the remit of the employed worker overseeing the volunteer placement.

Supervision

The volunteer will be given regular supervision meetings, at least monthly with their named support within the organization. All TDC employees receive supervision and there is a confidential hierarchical structure through which any issues can be fed up or down. Therefore the worker supporting the volunteer would take any concerns and feed it in through their supervision structure.

Holidays and other absences

Once TDC volunteers have agreed the duration of their placement they would be expected to inform TDC as soon as possible of any periods they will be unable to fulfil their role. If the frequency, or length of, these absences is considered to limit their capacity to carry out the role; the placement will be reviewed.

Insurance

TDC volunteers are covered under the general TDC insurance for all TDC premises and tasks they would be asked to do.

Health and Safety

All TDC premises are appropriately risk assessed and TDC volunteers will get an opportunity to discuss the Health and Safety Policy during their induction.

Equal Opportunities

The TDC volunteers are covered by the organisation's Equal Opportunities Policy and again will have an opportunity to discuss what this means for their role, during their induction.

Problem Solving

If there are concerns about a TDC volunteer having the capacity to carry out their role or fulfil their training requirement, or indeed, if they have breached a core TDC policy then their placement would need to be reviewed. This would involve the worker supporting them and other management staff, if necessary.

If the volunteer themselves has concerns; or feels TDC is acting inappropriately or providing insufficient support they may also request a three way meeting to review the situation.

Should a situation prove irresolvable it may result in the termination of the placement. If a complaint is brought to TDC by or regarding the volunteer it will invoke the standard complaints procedure. This procedure and related policy will also be shared during the volunteer's induction.

Confidentiality

All TDC volunteers are expected to respect the confidential nature of the organisation and agree not to share information outside of TDC.

TDC also respects the confidentiality of information on the volunteer and will not share any personal information on them outside of their supervision structure.

Rights to Information

Unless agreed in writing by TDC, the volunteer shall not acquire any rights to copyright, designs, data, photos, film and all information in any way relating to TDC and its activities, which may arise in the course of volunteering with TDC. The volunteer agrees to assign to TDC rights to copyright, designs, data, photos, film and all information during volunteering with TDC.

Exiting Placement

On completion of a volunteer placement the volunteer will be offered an exit interview and asked to complete an evaluation of the placement which will be fed back in to the management team to inform future placements.

Volunteers who have satisfactorily completed their placement will be offered a reference, which they will be entitled to see.