



THE ELDERS COUNCIL OF NEWCASTLE

Volunteer Policy

1. Introduction

The Elders Council places great value on the involvement of volunteers in its work in various ways ranging from office and clerical tasks to decision- and policy-making in working groups. Volunteers help enhance the range and quality of services provided by the Elders Council by putting their time, skills, knowledge or experience at its disposal. They help keep the Elders Council's work relevant to the community in by bringing a range of personalities, backgrounds and experience into the organisation.

This policy is intended to ensure good practice in the involvement of volunteers in the Elders Council's work, and promote understanding of the respective roles of staff and volunteers in the organisation.

2. Role of volunteers and task specification

Before recruiting volunteers, the co-ordinator/officer concerned and/or the Executive Officer will have considered the appropriateness of the role envisaged, bearing in mind the following points:

- 2.1** The roles of volunteers and those of staff in the Elders Council should be distinct. Staff should not be involved in working for the Elders Council in a voluntary and a salaried capacity.
- 2.2** Work carried out by volunteers should not be such that might jeopardise paid posts.
- 2.3** The voluntary role must allow for job satisfaction on the part of the volunteer, as well as meeting a need.

- 2.4** Existing staff and volunteers should be consulted on the creation of new roles for volunteers which are likely to affect them and, if appropriate, a relevant trade union should be consulted.
- 2.5** When a major role for volunteers is identified and approved, a role description outlining the general tasks, required skills or qualities, and conditions of service (e.g., expenses, insurance) will be available in writing.

3. Recruitment and selection

- 3.1** Nominated trustees and/or members of staff with the appropriate skills will be responsible for the selection of volunteers who would be working under their supervision.
- 3.2** Volunteers will be recruited from the widest possible base and selected accordingly to their own individual ability to perform the required tasks.
- 3.3** A clear description (orally or in writing, depending upon the significance of the role) of the volunteer's role will be given. This could be for a time-limited task or for a longer-term commitment.
- 3.4** For major roles, a volunteer will be invited to commence working for a trial period prior to either side agreeing to a longer-term arrangement.
- 3.5** If unable to involve a particular volunteer, the staff responsible for the selection must make the reasons clear in a sensitive manner.

4. Support

- 4.1** An individual trustee or member of staff should be nominated to provide support to individual volunteers. Clear lines of communication should be identified.
- 4.2** These mentors need to devote time to support volunteers, and if necessary be provided with training in relevant skills.
- 4.3** Where appropriate, additional methods of support will be used (e.g., volunteer meetings or other tokens of appreciation).
- 4.4** Note will be taken of individual volunteers' needs for support.

5. Induction and training

- 5.1** All volunteers will be given an induction to the Elders Council and its work, including an information pack.
- 5.2** Any training required to enable volunteers to fulfil their roles will be arranged and paid for by the Elders Council.
- 5.3** Volunteers will be encouraged to take additional training that will enhance their role within the Elders Council, to be paid for by the Elders Council.

6. Role in decision-making

- 6.1** Volunteers will be consulted on any major policy or operational changes in the Elders Council that will affect them in their volunteering role.
- 6.2** Volunteers will be encouraged to express their opinions on the work of the Elders Council and to develop their role within the Elders Council.
- 6.3** Volunteers may be invited to attend and to speak at Board and working-group meetings.

7. Conditions

- 7.1** Volunteers will not be asked to work in conditions considered unsuitable for paid staff and will have the same provisions made regarding Health and Safety.
- 7.2** Insurance arrangements will be made for volunteers to cover them whilst undertaking duties on behalf of the Elders Council.
- 7.3** Out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed including travel to and from the project, and the cost of childminding or other care arrangements up to an agreed amount. Guidelines on acceptable expenses and rates will be available from the Executive Officer.
- 7.4** Where work is carried out over a meal time, a subsistence allowance may be paid or a meal provided. Refreshments etc. will be available to volunteers as for paid staff.
- 7.5** If a grievance arises for a volunteer which cannot satisfactorily be resolved by their mentor, it should be brought to the Executive Officer. If it cannot be resolved, it will be referred to the Board of Trustees.
- 7.6** All volunteers will be made aware of the above rights and conditions without having to ask. Details of current rates

for expenses, how to claim, and the nature and extent of insurance cover must be readily available.

- 7.7** Conditions such as rates for expenses, allowances, etc. will be reviewed periodically.

8. Equal opportunities

8.1 The Elders Council relies on volunteer involvement to keep it relevant to the community it serves and so encourages involvement from all sections of the community.

8.2 The Elders Council operates an Equalities policy. The charity will ensure that it does not unfairly exclude or discourage the involvement of potential volunteers because of:

- class
- race, colour, nationality or ethnic background
- disability
- sex, gender or marital status
- sexual orientation
- unrelated criminal record.

8.3 Each volunteer job specification should make clear the requirement that volunteers adhere to the Elders Council's agreed policies, including the Equalities policy.

8.4 If a volunteer has a special need or disability that makes their involvement difficult, every effort will be made to involve them. An explanation will be given if this is not possible.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Equalities
- Safeguarding adults
- Health and safety

Agreed by the Board of Trustees on 16 April 2019.

Review date: April 2022.