



Volunteer Policy

Introduction

Our Volunteer Policy aims to clearly define the relationship that The Lantern Community wishes to develop with volunteers, the support and guidance available to them, and the broad principles for volunteering.

All members of the Community acknowledge the valuable life experience and skills that each volunteer offers, along with loyalty, friendship and the commitment required to freely give of personal time.

The Lantern Community recognises that volunteering must benefit the individual as well as ourselves, and aims to provide an environment that is inclusive, stimulating, friendly and supportive. We wish to continually maintain and develop a creative and mutually beneficial relationship between volunteers and the Community, recognising that volunteers are a positive force in describing our work and engendering support and understanding in the wider community.

About the Lantern Community

The Lantern Community is a registered charity that also includes our further facility, Seahorses, on the Isle of Wight.

Our neighbours, also charities, are the Sheiling School for children and adolescents with a learning disability and the Ringwood Waldorf School providing mainstream education.

The Lantern Community offers adults with a learning disability (Companions) the possibility to contribute and partake in a mutually supportive environment, where there are opportunities for meaningful work suited to each individual's needs, interest and choice. There are over 40 Companions living in The Lantern Community each living in equal relationship with others within our eight households.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity

The Lantern Community operates an Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy for all and believes that no one should be treated less favourably than anyone else because of their gender, marital status, sexual orientation, social class, race, ethnic origin, religious belief or disability.

We are committed to diversity in all areas of our work and believe that we can learn from diverse cultures and perspectives.

Who is a Volunteer?

A volunteer is someone who does not receive financial compensation beyond the reimbursement of expenses and who performs tasks at the request of, or on behalf of, the Lantern Community.

The volunteer relationship is binding in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers. The Lantern Community does not undertake to provide regular volunteering opportunities, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken.

The Lantern Community Responsibility to Volunteers

- To match the needs of the Lantern Community with the skills, knowledge, experience and motivation of the volunteer.
- To recognise that successful volunteering involvement incorporates the individual's motivations, aspirations and choices.
- To ensure volunteers receive appropriate training and support
- To recognise that volunteers are members of the Lantern Community, and are invited to appropriate cultural events.
- To encourage two way communications with volunteers, and ensure that they are aware to whom they can turn for guidance and support.
- To provide timely information that affects volunteers in their work or relationship.

The Lantern Community Expectations of Volunteers

- To maintain and uphold the good name and reputation of the Lantern Community.
- To treat with patience, understanding, dignity and respect all those with whom you are involved in the Lantern Community, particularly those adults with a learning disability.
- To co-operate with all those with whom you work, accepting guidance and advice, directed to achieve the aims of the Lantern Community.
- To aim for high standards of reliability, quality and consistency in all aspects of their contribution.
- To accept that the responsibility for the affairs of the Lantern Community rests with the Management Group, and ultimately its Trustees.
- To respect the need for confidentiality should they have access to sensitive information.
- To take reasonable care of their own, and others, Health and Safety.

Volunteer Recruitment

The Lantern Community welcomes volunteers from the age of 18 years and from all walks of life. We do not specify an upper age limit and recognise the valuable contribution that older volunteers make in terms of knowledge and experience.

Selection procedures for individual volunteers involve an application form and an informal interview. Because of the nature of the work, all applicants will be subject to the return of a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and two references.

The Lantern Community must be satisfied that the volunteer possesses the appropriate personal qualities for the tasks involved.

Training and Development

New volunteers will be provided with relevant information, training and induction appropriate to their role. Volunteers may wish to develop their skills and after discussion and agreement may take on new roles and become more involved.

The Lantern Community recommends that a regular discussion with each volunteer takes place to consider progress and the contribution that they make.

Grievances and Conduct

Every effort will be made to settle any volunteer dispute or grievance fairly and amicably. In the first instance, a volunteer should take their concern to their main contact. Where an issue cannot be resolved at this level it will be referred to the Lantern Management Group.

Where there are concerns around a volunteer's behaviour or contribution, the matter will be discussed amicably and steps agreed to address it. These may include additional training or mentoring. However, if these concerns cannot be resolved after more formal discussions, then their volunteering relationship may need to cease.

Health and Safety

All volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a safe and responsible manner and not to act in a way that may put themselves or others at risk of injury. All accidents or incidents should be reported, irrespective of whether any person has suffered direct injury. The Lantern Community Health and Safety Policy is available from the Office.

Data Protection

Personal information recorded is stored and maintained with appropriate safeguards, and we abide by all provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998