

Leeds Museums & Galleries Volunteer Policy

1. Introduction

Leeds Museums and Galleries (LM&G) exists to collect, preserve and interpret historic, cultural and scientific collections and historic sites and use them as inspiration for educating, entertaining and inspiring the people of Leeds as well as visitors to the city. We provide unique learning environments through the maintenance of these sites, their collections and through the operation of high quality, welcoming visitor attractions with associated commercial activity.

2. Volunteers

2.1.

LM&G has a commitment to the involvement of volunteers and believes that volunteers play a vital role in extending the scope of our work allowing us to add value to our services and helping to meet service need or demand and achieve our goals, which would not otherwise be possible. LM&G recognises that volunteers may be different from paid staff in terms of age, race, cultural background, socio-economic background and educational level and will help to diversify and strengthen the workforce as well as offer a wide range of skills and enthusiasm.

2.2.

LM&G undertakes to increase volunteer opportunities by giving consideration to the potential for volunteer roles in all project planning and including volunteer cost in funding applications for new projects.

2.3.

The aim of the volunteer programme is to provide opportunities for a diverse range of people who wish to give their time to work with staff, collections and sites of LM&G to enable them to share their skills, learn new ones and contribute to the aims of our service.

3. Role of the volunteer

3.1.

Volunteering is defined as “unpaid activity where someone gives their time to help an organisation or an individual who they are not related to” (Volunteering England).

3.2.

Volunteers are distinct from work placements; curatorial work placements (formerly interns) and trainees.

3.3.

The volunteer role is on the basis of a mutual agreement between LM&G and the volunteer and is binding in honour only. There is no enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time or carry out the tasks provided. LM&G is under no obligation to provide regular work or provide payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken.

3.4.

Volunteer roles play an important role in the operation of LM&G and volunteers will, in all roles and at all sites, be representatives of LM&G and should at all times conduct themselves in an appropriate manner.

3.5.

LM&G will not introduce any volunteer role where this would replace or substitute a paid employment opportunity or affect the content of an existing paid job description. Volunteers will not in any circumstance be required to carry out the duties which are currently or have in the past been carried out by a paid member of staff, cover a vacant post, cover for sick or annual leave or substitute in any other way the work of paid staff.

3.6.

Volunteer roles will supplement and support the work of paid staff adding value to existing services.

3.7.

LM&G will fully consult with Trade Union Officials on the volunteer policy and programme and any subsequent changes to it.

4. Recruitment and Selection

4.1.

Volunteers at all sites will follow the same recruitment and selection procedure.

4.2.

All volunteer roles will be advertised by us on the website and other relevant sites. We will not engage in speculative recruitment.

4.3.

All volunteer roles advertised will specify the required skills, knowledge and experience required to undertake the role. It will also specify where possible the location and frequency required of the role.

4.4.

We will direct all prospective volunteers to the Museums and Galleries website where there will be a role description and application form to complete and return.

4.5.

When a completed form is received the prospective short listed volunteer/s will be contacted by the member of staff responsible for the role and an informal interview will be arranged to discuss skills, role and expectations and may or may not include a presentation to demonstrate skills.

4.6.

Following a successful interview for certain roles the person responsible for the role will request references (at least one) from the details given on the application form. A Disclosure and Barring Service check DBS (formerly known as Criminal Record Bureau Check - CRB) will be requested at this stage if applicable.

4.7.

LM&G reserves the right to determine that a prospective volunteer may not be appropriate for the role. However, every effort will be made to signpost unsuccessful applicants to other local volunteering opportunities.

4.8.

We will ask all successful applicants to agree to the terms of the Volunteer Agreement. The Volunteer Agreement is a document setting out the guidelines on mutually agreed undertakings between the Volunteer and LM&G. This agreement can be terminated by either party at any time and is not intended to be a contract nor is it legally binding.

4.9.

We will contact all unsuccessful applicants by letter and we will retain their applications on file for three months.

4.10.

Targeted volunteer projects may operate differently at the discretion of the management where a prospective volunteer is not short listed for an advertised role but is found to have skills which could be used, short term, within the project to enhance it or where prospective volunteers have health issues which could prevent them from applying through the more formal process.

5. Equality and Diversity

5.1.

We will not pay volunteers for the work they carry out. However, in all other respects volunteers are entitled to be treated on an equal basis with paid staff.

5.2.

Volunteering opportunities are open to everyone regardless of gender, ethnic origin, cultural background, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief, age. LM&G will seek to make volunteer roles accessible to as wide an audience as possible and will consider the profile of the Leeds communities in its

volunteer recruitment process. In addition we will seek to consult with a range of communities, groups and individuals in order to develop the volunteer programme.

5.3.

LM&G has a commitment to equality and diversity principles and will seek to challenge all forms of prejudice and discrimination.

6. Management of Volunteers

6.1.

It is the role of the Volunteer Coordinator to coordinate and provide regular support to volunteers volunteering with LM&G. Supervision sessions will be offered to volunteers by the supervisor. The Volunteer Coordinator will be available to deal with any questions or problems that volunteers within the service may have. There will also be a representative on each site to assist.

6.2.

It is also the role of the Volunteer Coordinator to develop the volunteer programme and promote its sustainable and successful future through the assessment of volunteer needs at the sites, devising new projects for volunteers and developing relationships with various internal and external partners, colleagues, team members, organisations and groups.

6.3.

We will undertake an induction with all volunteers into the service and the role they will carry out. This will include a general induction to the volunteer role followed by an induction training session which will offer more in-depth information on volunteering with LM&G.

6.4.

We will ensure all volunteers receive the training required to carry out their role. Other additional training needs that may arise during the course of volunteer roles can be discussed with the supervisor. It is not the policy of LM&G to provide training to volunteers in areas which do not directly relate to the volunteer role.

7. Policies and Procedures

7.1.

We will expect all volunteers to carry out their role in accordance with the Equality and Diversity Policy, Health & Safety Policy, Confidentiality Policy and Problem Solving Process. Further information can be found in the volunteer handbook.

7.2.

All volunteers will be covered by Leeds City Council's employee liability insurance.

8. Expenses

8.1.

Where volunteers are entitled to claim out of pocket expenses they will be informed of this by the Volunteer Coordinator.

8.2.

Volunteer expenses will cover out of pocket expenses for travel to and from the place of volunteering only and will only be paid on production of a valid ticket for travel or fuel receipt.

8.3.

We ask volunteers to use the cheapest form of public transport available unless they are working at a rural location where there is no public transport. The maximum reimbursement payable for a return journey is £6.00. However, if volunteers wish to use their own vehicle, this will be reimbursed at 45p per mile as advised by Inland Revenue, up to the maximum of £6.00. In exceptional cases, for example where the volunteer has a disability and needs to use a taxi, or would otherwise be prevented from volunteering by this limit, additional amounts may be reimbursed but volunteers will be expected to seek authorisation from the Volunteer Coordinator in advance of travel.

8.4.

The £6.00 sum represents the cost of an unlimited day ticket on the bus within the Leeds Metropolitan District. This figure will be reviewed annually to ensure alignment with the cost of public transport in the region.

8.5.

Claims must be submitted within one month of the expenditure, claims submitted after this time will not be accepted unless failure to claim is due to mitigating circumstance.

9. Time Off

9.1.

It is understood that volunteers will have to take time off for holidays, sickness and emergencies. It is requested that whenever possible, advance notification of time off for holidays will be given to the supervisor.

9.2.

As volunteers are not paid members of staff, they will not be required to complete a self-certification sickness form or provide GP sickness certificates for periods of sickness. It is requested that whenever possible, volunteers advise their supervisor if they are unable to attend due to sickness. Expenses cannot be paid for the time period of the volunteer's absence.

10. Confidentiality

10.1.

LM&G will take appropriate measures to maintain confidentiality concerning the personal details of all volunteers and will do so in accordance with Data Protection principles.

10.2.

In return volunteers are required to respect the confidentiality of LM&G staff, sites, service users and data.

11. Health and Safety

11.1.

Volunteers must work safely and not put themselves or others at risk. All health and safety policies and procedures apply equally to staff and volunteers. Guidance on the Health and Safety Policy can be found in the Volunteer Handbook.

11.2.

Everyone has a legal obligation to protect others from harm or risk. LM&G does work with vulnerable adults and children. Any concerns a volunteer has about a child or vulnerable adult should be raised with their supervisor, however if the concern is about them or they are not happy to discuss it with the supervisor, the volunteer should contact the Site Development Officer or the Keeper for the site or the Volunteer Coordinator.

11.3.

Volunteers should not use their car during the course of volunteer duties without discussion and agreement from their supervisor. If agreed, volunteers must inform their insurance company that they intend to use their car for the purpose of volunteering. Use of a personal vehicle in the course of a volunteer role will not be covered by Leeds City Council's insurance policy and would therefore be used at their own risk.

12. Young Volunteers

12.1.

LM&G does work with young volunteers under the age of eighteen. We will take appropriate measures to safeguard young people in voluntary activity in line with Leeds City Council 'Procedures for Safeguarding and Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults'. We also have a supervisor safeguarding champion for the service.

12.2.

All staff who are responsible for young volunteers should be checked by Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS - formerly known as the Criminal Record Bureau - CRB). We are unable to carry out these checks on volunteers under the age of eighteen however we shall follow up two references for volunteers between the ages of sixteen and eighteen.

12.3.

We will seek parental consent for voluntary activity from the parent/legal guardian of all volunteers under the age of sixteen and where possible for volunteers between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. Details of the voluntary role, location and times of participation will be provided to parent/legal guardian.

12.4.

Young volunteers will not be placed in any unsupervised voluntary roles either at or away from Leeds Museums and Galleries sites and will not be left to supervise other young people or be responsible in any capacity for members of the public including children visiting our sites.

13. Problem solving process

13.1.

Any volunteer has the right to complain if they are unhappy or feel that they have not been treated fairly. The problem solving process can be found in the Volunteer Handbook.

14. Gifts

14.1.

It is the policy of LM&G that neither members of staff nor volunteers should accept any offers of gifts, money, favours, discounts, loans, legacies (things you are left in wills) or hospitality. Hospitality includes things like meals, refreshments and offers of transport. The list is not exhaustive which means that something which is not mentioned may still be considered a gift or hospitality.

14.2.

Neither members of staff or volunteers should solicit gifts or hospitality (other than modest refreshments such as a cup of tea at a meeting)

14.3.

This is legislated under The Bribery Act 2012; section 117 of the Local Government Act and section 2 of the Prevention of Corruption Act 1916.

14.4.

The policy and procedure helps to protect the council's reputation; people's confidence in our staff and services, staff and volunteers by ensure you avoid behaviour which could leave you open to prosecution and the council from potential prosecution.

14.5.

There are exceptions but you may still need to declare them:

- Gifts and hospitality of minimal value, for example a small box of chocolates from a service user; a branded pen from a company; tea or coffee from a business or client when you visit them. Reasonable offers of transport if it is linked to the business in hand.
- Discounts of a modest nature offered to all employees or volunteers as long as the total discount over twelve months is less than £250 and the individual discount is no more than £50.
- Gifts and hospitality from other employees, volunteers or the council itself.
- Promotional offers, such as “free gifts” from suppliers which should be used in the course of your volunteering.

14.6.

If an offer is made in person, you should politely but firmly decline it or seek permission to accept it.

14.7.

The form for declaring gifts and hospitality is available on request from the Volunteer Coordinator.

15. Resolution Process

15.1.

It is recognised that it is very rare that volunteer's behaviour will result in disciplinary action and that most instances of inappropriate behaviour will be of a minor or passing nature which can be dealt with orally and informally. It is also recognised that such instances may indicate that there is a need for the volunteer to undertake training and Leeds Museums & Galleries is committed to continually developing volunteers to ensure that they are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to perform their task well and appropriately.