

Brighton & Hove Museums Trust Policy

Context

Brighton & Hove Museums recognises the invaluable contribution that volunteering makes to our organisation. Volunteers bring added value to our activities through their skills and life experiences, they improve the offer that our organisation can make to the city, local communities, and visitors.

This policy sets out the principles for volunteering with Brighton & Hove Museums to provide a consistent approach for volunteers. The Policy aims to support to support and encourage volunteering across all departments and contribute to the aims and values of our organisation.

Introduction

For many people, volunteering is a good way to try out different roles, to share and gain skills and experience, to build confidence, and meet new people. For some, it can be extremely beneficial in developing skills for future employment.

It is important that all staff understand both the good practice and legal implications of volunteer involvement to ensure that volunteering remains a positive experience for all. The policy is designed to reflect the current law as it relates to volunteers. It describes the relationship between Brighton & Hove Museums and those who choose to volunteer their time and skills on an unpaid basis without entering into a legally binding contract.

Why do Brighton & Hove Museums involve volunteers?

- Volunteers have valuable time, skills, and experience that they can use to support our activities.
- Working with volunteers allows Brighton & Hove Museums to expand and enhance our performance, creative and heritage offer and better understand our communities.
- Volunteering offers people the opportunity to gain experience, confidence and practical skills, the opportunity to 'try something new' as well as improving mental and physical health and to meet a wide range of people.
- Volunteering enables people to engage with, influence and contribute to the activities of our organisation.

Key Principles

In applying this policy, we:

- Recognise and reward the invaluable contribution of volunteers to Brighton & Hove Museums.
- Encourage voluntary participation by people from all sections of the community.
- Foster teamwork between volunteers and staff.
- Try to ensure a positive volunteering experience for all those involved.
- Ensure that the involvement of volunteers complements the work of paid staff.

Brighton & Hove Museums: commitment to volunteers

1. **Choice** - Volunteering is undertaken as a matter of free choice. Volunteers are not obliged to undertake tasks they are not comfortable with.
2. **Inclusion** - Volunteering opportunities will be diverse and wide ranging to support and encourage participation from all residents and communities. Volunteering will have simple and consistent processes.
3. **Support and development** - Volunteers have a role description and are properly introduced to their role and provided with ongoing support and training appropriate to their individual needs, abilities, and skills.
4. **Safety** - The safety and wellbeing of all volunteers is paramount and appropriate insurance is in place. Volunteers are aware of how to raise concerns and how they will be handled.
5. **Reimbursement** - Where agreed and relevant, volunteers will have reimbursement for their receipted out of pocket expenses incurred whilst carrying out their role.

Who does it apply to and when?

A volunteer is a person who donates their time, skills, and experience to carry out agreed roles within Brighton & Hove Museums without financial reward. This policy applies only to volunteers who are acting on an unpaid, receipted expenses-only, basis.

We recognise that:

- There is a wide variety of voluntary roles, varying in formality, location, and time commitment.
 - Voluntary roles may be carried out by individuals and/or large groups of volunteers.
 - Volunteers may come from other organisations.
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- It applies in situations where a member of the public is looking for a volunteering opportunity with Brighton & Hove Museums.

When does it not apply?

- In their volunteering role, a volunteer is not an employee of Brighton & Hove Museums, and there is no legally binding contractual relationship between Brighton & Hove Museums and the volunteer in their volunteering capacity.
- This policy does not apply to people employed by Brighton & Hove Museums either directly or through an agency on any contractual basis, whether permanent, temporary, short-or long-term.

The volunteering relationship

This policy intends to clarify the following nature of engagement that underpin the volunteering relationship:

1. A volunteer is not an employee of Brighton & Hove Museums and there is no legally binding contractual relationship between Brighton & Hove Museums and the volunteer.
2. An employee of Brighton & Hove Museums may volunteer in a separate role and in a different capacity to their paid employment for Brighton & Hove Museums, but the volunteer role is separate to their contractual employment. In their volunteer capacity they are **not** an employee of Brighton & Hove Museums and there is no legally binding contractual relationship between Brighton & Hove Museums and the volunteer.

While volunteers must be treated fairly and in accordance with the expectations which have been agreed at the outset, they are not legally bound to work for Brighton & Hove Museums and are not subject to the obligations imposed on employees and workers.

Brighton & Hove Museums will strive to:

- Match the time, skills, and experience of potential volunteers to a suitable opportunity when one is available.
- Ensure each volunteer receives appropriate training, support, and tools to perform their role where appropriate.
- Resolve any complaints raised by a volunteer in a timely fashion.

- Ensure that each volunteer has a named person (host) who will support them and provide advice and guidance.
- Foster a friendly and supportive atmosphere for volunteers and make volunteering a positive experience.
- Reimburse reasonable expenses incurred. These expenses must be agreed in advance with the host person and are payable against a valid receipt.
- All volunteering opportunities will be time limited when they commence, and any continuation of the role will be decided by their host person and Brighton & Hove Museums.

Each volunteer will be hosted by named person who will:

- Agree expectations with the volunteer.
- Arrange a personal induction plan and any additional training or checks needed.
- Share all the relevant organisation policies if required, including those relating to confidentiality, safeguarding and the Code of Conduct for Volunteers and support the volunteer to understand and apply them.
- Make sure that there are no barriers which would make it difficult for a volunteer to undertake the agreed activity. This should be done before volunteers start.
- Support volunteers to positively represent the Brighton & Hove Museums.
- Make sure volunteers understand the Brighton & Hove Museums accident and incident reporting procedures.
- Agree any out-of-pocket expenses at the start of the relationship and make sure these are paid promptly.
- Offer ongoing support, guidance and advice where needed.

The volunteering relationship

All volunteers will be asked to sign up to the requests below:

- Ensure you have a clear understanding of the volunteering role and responsibilities.
- Treat the people you work with (other volunteers, staff, and service users) respectfully and fairly.
- Be honest about the level of your volunteering commitment, it may be better to start small and build up to more.
- Attend induction to ensure you are safe and informed.
- Treat any information obtained while volunteering as confidential and don't disclose it to any third party.

- Always represent Brighton & Hove Museums positively/appropriately.
- Try to be reliable as people may be depending on you.
- Adhere to Brighton & Hove Museums health and safety policy and raise any concerns with the named host immediately.
- Report any accidents or incidents, whether it concerns yourself or another person.
- Ask for help if there is anything you are unsure about.
- Notify the host person of any health issues that impact on your volunteering role so that reasonable adjustments may be considered.
- Agree any out-of-pocket expenses prior to any activities with the contact person in order that reimburses may be made in an appropriate timeframe.

Finding a volunteer placement

- Available volunteering opportunities will be advertised through Brighton & Hove Museums website and will list a named host for each opportunity, brightonmuseums.org.uk
- Volunteering opportunities may also be advertised in the community and on community websites. Brighton & Hove Museums does not guarantee to provide volunteering opportunities and reserves its right to withdraw a volunteering opportunity at any time, where it considers that doing so is necessary for safeguarding purposes or for any other reason.
- Brighton and Hove Museums Trust retains the contact information of those potential volunteers who request it and contact that person if a suitable volunteering opportunity becomes available to notify them that they may express an interest in the volunteering role if they wish to. The contact information is deleted in compliance with legislation and our General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Policy after a suitable amount of time unless the potential volunteer requests that we retain that contact information.

Equality and diversity

- Brighton & Hove Museums promotes the development of diverse volunteering opportunities that encourage participation from residents and communities, bringing numerous benefits to volunteers, the organisation, staff, and services.

- Brighton & Hove Museums values inclusiveness and fairness in all its work, including offering volunteering opportunities, and is committed to equality and diversity.
- If any volunteer for Brighton & Hove Museums experiences discrimination, harassment, bullying or abuse of any kind, it will be investigated fully, and once reported all appropriate action taken.

References and other checks

- To ensure everyone is safe, where the volunteering opportunity involves contact with children or vulnerable adults, an enhanced disclosure and barring service (DBS) check **may** be required.
- On occasion a volunteer may be asked to provide the name or names of a referee(s) who have agreed to provide a reference on behalf of the volunteer.
- To support volunteers, Brighton & Hove Museums may need to understand any impairment or health condition.
- All references and checks considered necessary must be completed before the volunteer commences any induction, training, or activity.

Induction and training

- Brighton & Hove Museums will provide all volunteers with an introduction to the organisation as well as an induction and any specific training needed for the volunteering opportunity.

Ongoing support

- Each volunteer will be supported by a named host and the volunteer coordinator.
- Brighton & Hove Museums acknowledges the importance of volunteers and will provide appropriate supervision and support.

Health and safety

- Brighton & Hove Museums is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all volunteers and has a health and safety policy in place.
- Volunteers will be made aware of this policy during their induction and must be supported to understand it before undertaking any volunteering activity.

- Volunteers must report any accidents, incidents or other dangerous circumstances immediately using the appropriate process.

Insurance

- Volunteers are covered by Brighton & Hove Museums insurance cover when undertaking voluntary activities which have been approved and authorised by us.

Complaints

- Should a volunteer wish to make a complaint this should be made to their named host or to the volunteer coordinator who will investigate the complaint or escalate it to their manager if necessary.

Benefits

- Volunteers who are in receipt of jobseeker's allowance (JSA) may be entitled to undertake voluntary work if they meet the conditions for eligibility for JSA, namely being available for work and actively seeking work.

Legislation

- This policy has been reviewed by HR to ensure compliance with our statutory duties.