



THE BIRMINGHAM & MIDLAND INSTITUTE

9 Margaret Street
Birmingham
B3 3BS

Charity No. 522852

VOLUNTEER POLICY

1. Introduction

The Birmingham & Midland Institute (hereinafter referred to as 'the Institute') 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 Committees. Volunteers help enhance the range and quality of services provided by the Institute by putting their time, skills, knowledge or experience at its disposal. They help keep the Institute's work relevant to the community 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 Institute'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 Operations Manager 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 Institute should be distinct. Staff should not be involved in working for the Institute 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 role for volunteers is identified and approved a role description outlining the general tasks, required skills or qualities, and conditions of service (i.e. expenses, insurance) should be available in writing.

3. Recruitment and Selection

- 3.1** Nominated 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 (verbally and in writing) of the volunteer's role will be given.
- 3.4 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 member of staff should be nominated to provide support to individual volunteers. Clear lines of communication should be identified.
- 4.2 Staff 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, newsletters, or other tokens of appreciation.
- 4.4 Note should be taken of individual volunteers needs for support.

5. Induction and Training

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

6. Role in Decision Making

- 6.1 Volunteers will be consulted on any major policy or operational changes in The Institute that will affect them.
- 6.2 Volunteers will be encouraged to express their opinions on the work of The Institute and to develop their role within The Institute.
- 6.3 Volunteers may be invited to attend and to speak at committee 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 Institute.
- 7.3 Out of pocket expenses may be reimbursed, including travel to and from the institute, up to an agreed amount. Guidelines on acceptable expenses and rates will be available from the Finance Officer
- 7.4 Where work is carried out over 5 hours and over a meal-time, a subsistence allowance may be paid or a meal provided. Tea, coffee or cold drinks will be freely available to volunteers as for paid staff.

- 7.5 If a grievance arises for a volunteer which cannot satisfactorily be resolved by their supervisor, it should be brought to the Chief Officer. If it cannot be resolved, it will be referred to the Trustee Board.
- 7.6 All volunteers should 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 Institute 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 Institute operates an Equal Opportunities Policy. It should 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 or marital status
 - sexual orientation
 - unrelated criminal record.
- 8.3 Each volunteer job specification should make clear the requirement that volunteers adhere to The Institute's Diversity and Equal Opportunities 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 policy:

- Equal Opportunities Policy

Approved by the Board of Trustees: 23rd March 2020

Revision to Section 7 to be approved
by Board of Trustees 1st June 2020

Next Review Date: March 2021