



## **VOLUNTEER POLICY**

### **1. Introduction**

Escape Arts welcomes volunteers in a range of roles within the organisation. We recognise the fantastic contribution volunteers make in helping us in our mission and objectives to provide high quality and high impact participatory arts opportunities for young people, adults and communities.

Escape seeks to involve volunteers to:

- ensure our services meet the needs of our participants
- provide new skills and perspectives
- increase our contact with the local communities we serve
- broaden experience of volunteers to enable them to move on into training, education and employment
- add value to project outcomes and increase the charity's fundraising capacity

### **2. Definition of Volunteer**

A volunteer is someone who spends time doing any non-compulsory, unpaid activity which is of benefit to others. Volunteers (casual or regular) shall not be considered employees of Escape Arts neither will they be required to take on responsibilities which should only be given to paid members of staff. Volunteers will be required to undertake duties in a range of areas to assist in their personal development. Volunteers are not contracted by Escape Arts, and never receive payment for their volunteering, be this in kind or monetary. Volunteers will be reimbursed any out of pocket expenses incurred through their volunteering activities.

### **3. Organisational Commitment**

The board of trustees of Escape Arts supports the use of volunteers and through its managers will ensure:

- That volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure enabling them to contribute effectively to its work; will not be used to replace and reduce the work of paid employees.
- That paid employees at all levels will work positively with volunteers in line with our Equal Opportunity Policy and, where appropriate, will seek to involve them in their work where capacity allows and a meaningful role can be developed; and that can lead to personal development. Employees will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing access to relevant training for them to do their work effectively.
- The overall responsibility for volunteers rests with the Chair of Trustees. However, the day-to-day management rests with designated managers.
- Escape Arts invests in volunteering and its volunteers – and will provide training, support and advice to volunteers.

### **4. Equal Opportunities and Diversity**

Escape Arts is committed to equal opportunities and a summary of the Equal Opportunities and Diversity policy is located in the Volunteer Induction Handbook. In the induction process,

volunteers are informed about this policy in depth and are also shown on induction the location of the full policy folder, which they are encouraged to read. Volunteers are expected to have an understanding and commitment to this policy.

## **5. The Role of Volunteers**

Volunteers are people who offer their time to help Escape Arts achieve its objectives. Escape Arts believes that volunteers are vital to the organisation and the connection with local communities. A big part of the volunteer role at Escape Arts is creating and maintaining those connections with local communities. Volunteers, employees, freelance workers and the Escape Arts board of trustees work in partnership to achievement of the organisation's objectives. Volunteers are reimbursed for all out of pocket expenses relating to their volunteering with Escape Arts and will not be expected to carry out tasks such as those performed by paid employees.

## **6. Expectations/Responsibilities/Opportunities**

Escape Arts expects its volunteers to be realistic in their commitment and volunteers are expected to give as much or as little time as they consider is appropriate to them. However, once a commitment is made Escape Arts expects its volunteers to fulfil this unless negotiated otherwise. Volunteers will not start their volunteering until 2 references and a Criminal Records Check (where required) are received, although in some cases they will be invited to join in with community art groups to get a feel for Escape Arts before making a commitment.

Volunteers will be given a full induction on appointment, covering topics such as the history of Escape Arts, the Escape Arts team and summaries of Escape Arts key policies, all of which will be tailored to their individual role. Refresher courses will be held three times a year for new volunteers and old volunteers who want refreshing on certain topics.

Volunteers will be supervised by the Volunteer Coordinator, who will hold regular meetings with each volunteer to discuss their role and progress.

All employees will be fully informed about the rights and responsibilities of volunteers as part of their own induction and through the approved working practices of Escape Arts.

Volunteers are encouraged to represent their views to management on all aspects of our organisation's work through any written or verbal communication, including volunteer meetings and individual volunteer reviews. In all areas not related to conditions of paid employment, volunteers will be covered by all the provisions of other Escape Arts policies.

If at all possible, opportunities will be provided for changing and/or upgrading volunteer responsibilities as desired by the volunteer and appropriate to the organisation through the review system.

## **7. Recruitment, Selection and Signposting**

Escape Arts believes that volunteering should be open to all and welcomes applications from anyone who wishes to volunteer. Once an enquiry is made by a prospective volunteer, they are invited for an informal chat with the Volunteer Coordinator to discuss their interest and Escape Arts volunteering opportunities. This will help identify how best their skills, suitability and potential may be matched to appropriate volunteering opportunities.

Where appropriate, they may also be invited to attend a community group to meet the participants and observe what it is that Escape Arts does. If both parties are happy to proceed, an application form featuring two referees will be completed and a further meeting will be carried out to outline the volunteer agreement, followed by an induction.

If the prospective volunteer's application fails to meet the criteria of the appropriate Escape Arts volunteer post or if no other suitable volunteer vacancy within Escape Arts is available at any point during this process, the prospective volunteer will be sign posted to the local Volunteer Centre to register for any suitable vacancies with other organisations. The prospective volunteer can be signposted directly by the Volunteer Coordinator to local representatives from VASA and Warwickshire CAVA, who can provide the prospective volunteer with a range of organisations and opportunities.

## **8. Volunteer Tasks/Role Descriptions**

There will be a specified range of tasks that volunteers will be required to undertake. All volunteers will receive a Volunteer Induction 'pick-up-pack', with hard copies located at each Escape project and separate information packs specific to each volunteer role. All volunteers will be given clear guidelines and instructions for their tasks volunteering with Escape Arts. The Volunteer Coordinator has and updates volunteer tasks and role descriptions based on Escape Arts needs and feedback from volunteers during supervisions about how to improve and develop their role.

## **9. Confidentiality, Security and Data Protection**

Volunteers will be bound by the same requirements for the above as employees, as detailed in the Volunteer Handbook. This states that Escape cannot promise confidentiality and must consider the safety and wellbeing of all staff, participants and volunteers and will take steps to ensure this if necessary. This policy is particularly relevant for volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults. Additional support is provided to volunteers who are concerned by anything of this nature that they experience whilst volunteering with Escape Arts.

All volunteers will give permission on appointment for Escape Arts to contact them, receive promotional information and be placed on our mailing list. This will allow volunteers to be kept up to date with the latest information about Escape Arts and events they can attend and be a part of. This permission will be given on their signed application form, where they will be asked to sign and check a box to confirm that they agree to these terms.

In compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018, all volunteers will be made aware on appointment that they have the right to be removed from this mailing list at any time. Volunteers also have the right to request what personal information Escape Arts has about them and can ask that it is deleted at their request. Escape Arts can guarantee that all volunteers personal information will not be distributed to any third parties.

### **11. Training**

Appropriate training for volunteers will be identified through individual training plans in supervision by the Volunteer Coordinator. These could be general training courses or training which is specific to the role of the volunteer. Where possible, training for volunteers will be offered free of charge.

### **12. Expenses**

All volunteers will have their travel and any other approved expenses reimbursed. Normally, expenses should be claimed on the monthly "Volunteer Expenses Form", given to the volunteers by the Volunteer Coordinator which is then paid by BACS. Refreshments (eg tea, coffee) are provided free of charge.

### **13. Insurance**

All volunteers are covered by the insurance policy of Escape Arts whilst they are on the premises or engaged in any work on behalf of Escape Arts, provided this is within the boundaries of role/task descriptions and/or handbooks.

If any Escape Arts driver volunteer driver uses his/her own car for Escape Arts official business they are covered by the Escape Arts policy. Additionally, attention is drawn to the detailed instructions for volunteer drivers, known as the "Drivers Handbook", which is kept, up-dated and re-issued as appropriate by the Transport Scheme Organiser. All volunteer drivers will be issued with a copy of the "Drivers' Handbook", which must be adhered to.

### **14. Health and Safety**

All volunteers are covered by the Escape Arts Health and Safety Policy, a summarised copy of which is kept in the Volunteer Handbook. This features information specific to the volunteers and what they need to know if faced with an emergency whilst engaging in volunteering with Escape Arts. Volunteers are encouraged to read the full policy and shown its location during the induction process. All volunteers based in Escape Arts projects will go through the Risk Assessment procedure as part of induction. All volunteer drivers need to adhere to the "Drivers' Handbook". This includes sections on Lone Working and Risk Assessment.

### **15. Internet and Email usage**

Volunteers must become familiar and comply with this and the E-Safety policy as detailed in the Volunteer Induction pack.

### **16. Support and Supervision**

All volunteers will be supervised by a designated supervisor. The supervisor will agree objectives with the volunteer. The Volunteer Coordinator will speak with each volunteer informally on a monthly basis to check in, with more detailed supervision to discuss progress, goals and feedback every three months. Additional support from the Manager (or their designated lead staff within their allocated project) is available to focus on recognition for positive efforts and guidance for strengthening areas of weakness.

Volunteer 'thank you' events will be held at each Escape Arts location to celebrate their achievements no less than every three months.

### **17. Timesheets**

Recording volunteer hours is extremely valuable for a variety of purposes; most importantly it increases recognition within the organisation of volunteer contribution. In addition it can be used externally for "match funding" in funding bids. A cumulative record of volunteers' hours will be kept on a monthly basis by the Volunteer Coordinator. This will include voluntary hours clocked by staff and corporate partners.

### **18. Retirement/Termination of Volunteering**

The principle underlying retirement/termination of volunteering will depend on the tasks the volunteer undertakes and the individual's continuing fitness to perform the task. The task description will be reviewed at supervision sessions with line managers to ensure that both the volunteer's and Escape Arts objectives are being met. Should a volunteer have any concerns or issues, then this should be raised in the first instance with their line manager in accordance with the procedure detailed in the Volunteer Induction Pack. Similarly, any complaints or problems associated with individual will be investigated in accordance with the procedure detailed in the Volunteer Induction Pack.

If the volunteer is no longer able to fulfil the volunteering role, an alternative role should be sought for the volunteer, with the volunteer's agreement. If a suitable alternative within Escape Arts is not available, an interview should be arranged with their local Volunteer Centre or local connections within Warwickshire CAVA and VASA in an effort to locate a new volunteer opportunity. Any volunteer is able to retire or terminate their role with Escape, the charity will request a minimum notice of 4 weeks.

### **19. Monitoring of Volunteer Policy**

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it is still appropriate to Escape Arts. Volunteers and paid employees contribute to this review.

### **Responsible Persons**

Volunteer Coordinator – Naimh Oldham

Trustee – Claire Pitney

**This policy was reviewed and adopted on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018**

**Review Date October 2020**

