

Central England Area Quaker Meeting

Volunteer Policy

1. Principles

1.1 The Volunteering Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- Central England Area Quaker Meeting (“CEAQM”) will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to CEAQM’s work and witness.
- CEAQM expects staff to work positively with volunteers at all levels and where appropriate, actively seek to involve them in their work.
- Volunteer involvement and time commitment will vary according to individual projects. All volunteers however, will be treated equally by paid members of staff and volunteers alike, during the duration of their voluntary engagement.
- CEAQM recognises that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing relevant training for them to do their voluntary work effectively.
- All volunteers to be treated equally and in line with guidance outlined in this policy.

1.2 Each Meeting, Branch or Committee which has volunteers integrated into it will have a nominated volunteer co-ordinator. Management, supervision, support and training of volunteers are the responsibility of each volunteer co-ordinator. Individual volunteer co-ordinators are responsible for ensuring that volunteers are aware of their rights and responsibilities. (A list of Volunteers’ Right & Responsibilities is attached as Appendix 2).

2. Definition of a Volunteer

For the purposes of this policy

2.1 A volunteer is defined as any individual who willingly gives their time, energy and skills, without payment of wage or salary, for the benefit of both themselves, CEAQM and to the good of the community.

2.2 Volunteers are people specifically recruited as volunteers, through a process that is open to all, and not restricted to Members and Attenders of the Religious Society of Friends. (For some voluntary roles, there may be a requirement for knowledge and understanding of Quakers, which may effectively restrict recruitment to Members and Attenders. This requirement should be applied sensitively.)

2.3 Members and Attenders appointed to roles through our Quaker nominations process, and Quakers giving service as part of their Quaker commitment, are not volunteers for the purpose of this policy.

2.4 Members, Attenders or others, who undertake voluntary tasks on an occasional or informal basis, are not covered by this policy.

3. Volunteer Recruitment

3.1 An underlying principle adhered to by CEAQM is that everyone has a right to apply to become a volunteer. Recruitment should aim to attract volunteers that are representative of the wider community's cultural and ethnic balance.

3.2 All prospective volunteers will be interviewed initially by the volunteer co-ordinator for the Meeting, Branch or Committee seeking volunteer services. All appointed volunteers will be required to fill out an appropriate registration form, during an informal interview. All volunteers must agree to adhere to the policies and procedures associated with projects in which they participate.

4. Equal Opportunities and Diversity

4.1 All volunteers must operate within the context of CEAQM's Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policies.

5. Task Outlines

5.1 All volunteer co-ordinators must provide volunteers with written Task Outline(s); these should clearly define the role(s) to be carried out.

5.2 A volunteer need not necessarily be restricted to a single task. In the interests of the volunteer, service users and CEAQM, a volunteer should, if they wish, be allowed to undertake other clearly defined tasks. For additional tasks, written Task Outlines should be provided. All tasks carried out by the volunteer must not be as a substitution for a paid employee.

5.3 Tasks may be subject to amendment and volunteers' advice should therefore, be sought as appropriate.

6. Written Information

6.1 All information relevant to and for volunteers will be contained in a volunteer's handbook. This will be revised and updated in consultation with volunteers.

6.2 CEAQM should ensure that in line with the handbook, each volunteer is made aware of and agrees to adhere to CEAQM's aims, policies, procedures and practices.

6.3 Within the volunteer handbook, CEAQM will stipulate and make volunteers fully aware of their roles, rights & responsibilities i.e., what the volunteer should do if they are unable to attend, what the volunteer or volunteer co-ordinator should do if they wish to end the voluntary agreement and what the commitments and expectations are of all parties. Volunteers should receive a copy of handbook/volunteer agreement.

7. Induction, Support and Training

7.1 Projects should ensure that each volunteer receives a thorough induction to the organisation as well as to individual projects. All volunteers must receive sufficient relevant training to fulfil their role and be encouraged to undertake further training appropriate to their roles.

7.2 Volunteer co-ordinators should offer consistent support, encouragement, guidance, relevant training for the role, and regular informal supervision sessions. If a volunteer has an issue they wish to raise, they may talk to the volunteer co-ordinator or another member of CEAQM, possibly the person named to give support (Appendix 2), when they have the opportunity, or mention it in their supervision sessions.

8. Insurance, Health & Safety

8.1 All volunteers to be covered by CEAQM's Public Liability Insurance plus any other insurance policies appropriate to projects.

8.2 CEAQM commits to ensure that all volunteers are informed of Health & Safety practices and procedures. These should be included as part of each volunteer's induction process.

9. Volunteer Expenses

9.1 All volunteers will be entitled to reimbursement of reasonable out of pocket expenses upon receipt of proof, but are not entitled to receive any other money.

10. Confidentiality

10.1 Volunteers must agree to adhere to CEAQM's Confidentiality Policy.

11. Grievance Procedure

11.1 Any volunteer may report a grievance in accordance with CEAQM's Grievance Procedure for all staff and volunteers. A copy should be made available to all staff and volunteers.

12. Problem solving process

12.1 If any problems and complaints about volunteers arise, CEAQM will institute a problem-solving procedure. If problems cannot be rectified by these means to mutual satisfaction, and CEAQM feels that a volunteer is not suitable for the role, the volunteer may be asked to stop attending.

13. Holidays or sickness

13.1 To assist CEAQM in providing appropriate cover for tasks, volunteers will be asked to inform CEAQM of any sickness or other absence and give notice of holidays.

14. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) & Ex-Offenders

14.1 As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess volunteers' suitability for positions of trust, CEAQM complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice. A disclosure is only requested if it is both proportionate and relevant to the voluntary role concerned. For those positions where a Disclosure is required, it will be stated clearly in the role description that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual wishing to volunteer in that role.

14.2 Unless the nature of the position allows CEAQM to ask questions about a volunteer's criminal record, we shall only ask about "unspent" convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

14.3 At interview we shall ensure that a discussion takes place on the subject of any offences, or other matter that might be relevant to the voluntary role. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the role, could lead to withdrawal of an offer of a voluntary placement.

14.4 CEAQM makes every subject of DBS Disclosure aware of the existence of the DBS Code of Practice and will make a copy available on request.

14.5 CEAQM undertakes to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of a voluntary placement.

14.6 Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar a person from volunteering with CEAQM. This will depend on the nature of the role and the circumstances and background of the offences.

15. Volunteer Records

15.1 Volunteer records should be kept in a safe and secure environment. Records will vary according to individual projects; for example, car drivers will need to provide copies of MOT certificates etc. However, standard records may include:

- volunteer contact details
- copy of written Task Outline
- copy of handbook/volunteer agreement
- contact sheets from volunteer
- relevant training and support received

15.2 Once a volunteer has left CEAQM, relevant information will be archived in a secure location and will be kept for three years.

15.3 This policy applies to those volunteers who are appointed in a voluntary capacity within CEAQM Meetings, Branches, Committees and Projects.

This Policy will be reviewed every three years, or as otherwise required by legislation, in consultation with volunteers, staff and trustees.

Appendix 1

Questions for CEAQM to consider before involving volunteers

- Why is volunteer support being sought?
- Is the organisation at all levels in favour of volunteers – i.e. are there worries over redundancies, job substitution, falls in standards, role conflict etc.?
- Does the Project's/ Meeting's/ Branch's/ Committee's budget cover the cost of volunteers and/or is there scope for increases in budgets. Does it take into account realistic costings e.g. travel reimbursement costs, extra beverage costs?

- Have legal and other implications been taken into account, e.g. confidentiality, health & safety?
- Have any specific problems or health risks that volunteers may encounter been taken into account?
- Volunteers bring new dimensions, new skills and enthusiasm. Can CEAQM, its projects, Meetings, Branches, Committees cope with change brought about in this way?
- Has staff time been allocated to manage volunteers long-term and in the initial start-up phase?
- Has the staff time required to train and manage volunteers been estimated?
- Is there space for volunteers and sufficient extra equipment associated to individual projects?
- How will user groups react to the involvement of volunteers?
- How will funders react to the involvement of volunteers?
- Is there the capacity to fund further relevant training for volunteers?

Appendix 2

Volunteers' Rights and Responsibilities

CEAQM aims to give the following rights to volunteers, beyond minimal legal requirements, in line with its testimony to Equality. All volunteers to:

- be given a clear idea of their tasks and responsibilities within CEAQM.
- be given the name of someone within CEAQM who will look after their interests and who will offer them appropriate support, and supervision on a regular basis.
- be assured that any information shared with CEAQM is kept confidential as required by the Data Protection Act 1998.
- be given the same protection under health & safety regulations and public liability as paid employees.
- be offered opportunities for relevant training and skills development, appropriate for the voluntary tasks involved.
- have a complementary relationship with paid staff, who should be fully aware of the role and responsibilities of a volunteer.
- have access to, and to play a part in, the decision-making process of CEAQM where decisions are being made that are relevant to their role.
- be informed about the CEAQM's policies relevant to the volunteer i.e. health & safety, grievance and problem-solving procedures.
- be provided with appropriate equipment, tools and materials associated to their tasks.
- Volunteers may join a trade union relevant to the tasks in which they are involved. NUPE, MSF and UNISON currently welcome volunteers into their membership.
- be supported when things go wrong and to be encouraged to learn from their mistakes or difficulties.
- Volunteers **should not**: -
 - ♦ Have unfair demands made on their time
 - ♦ Be asked to do something which is against their principles or beliefs
 - ♦ Be subject to any discrimination e.g. on the basis of race, sexuality, age, gender.
 - ♦ Be out of pocket through doing voluntary work.

Volunteers' Responsibilities

- To support and embrace CEAQM's aims and objectives.
 - To do what is reasonably requested of them, to the best of their ability.
 - To treat information obtained whilst volunteering in a confidential manner - this can be information about clients, members, attenders or other workers, paid and unpaid.
 - To recognise the right of CEAQM to expect quality of service from all its volunteers.
 - To recognise that they represent the organisation and therefore need to act in an appropriate manner at all times.
 - To honour any commitment made to the best of their abilities, notifying CEAQM in good time if their intention to attend changes.
 - To be willing to be made fully aware of CEAQM's Equality and Diversity policies, and to undertake appropriate training with respect to health & safety issues, insurance liability and general good practice as necessary for the voluntary work undertaken.
 - To abide by any relevant policies and procedures.
 - To offer suggestions for changes/improvements in working practices to the Volunteer Co-ordinator.
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