

# the exchange

## The Exchange Erith Ltd. Volunteer Policy

### **POLICY OBJECTIVES**

This policy outlines The Exchange's position regarding volunteering and its commitment to:

- Positively and actively engage volunteers in its work.
- Offer fully supported, well-managed volunteer opportunities which mutually benefit The Exchange and the individual.
- Follow consistent and fair volunteer recruitment and management procedures.
- Provide a duty of care towards its visitors, staff and volunteers.

### **DEFINITION OF AN EXCHANGE VOLUNTEER**

The Exchange considers a volunteer to be anyone who freely offers their time, skills, experience, and enthusiasm, through personal choice and without expectation of financial reward, for the mutual benefit of the organisation and themselves.

The Exchange involves volunteers aged 18 upwards with no upper age limit.

### **VOLUNTEERING AT THE EXCHANGE**

At the heart of The Exchange is the vision to 'creatively and collaboratively reimagine Erith' bringing the town a brighter and more cohesive future. Volunteers are a core part of that vision through their ability to make a significant and valuable contribution. The Exchange is committed to providing rewarding and enriching volunteering opportunities and recognises the many positive impacts that involving volunteers has, including:

- Helping to deliver The Exchange vision and mission to create a space that is valued by our diverse community.
- Encouraging links between The Exchange and the local community – groups, organisations and individuals
- Sharing fresh approaches and different perspectives that reflect the diversity of views, knowledge and experience of Erith and the vicinity.
- Bringing credibility to the organisation – volunteers giving their time for free endorses that The Exchange’s work is of value.
- Acting as ambassadors for The Exchange
- Undertaking tasks that add value to all aspects of The Exchange’s work.

The relationship between The Exchange and its volunteers aims to be mutually beneficial.

## **RECOGNITION**

The Exchange highly values the involvement of volunteers and aims to recognise volunteer contributions wherever possible, from showcasing their activity to providing learning and social opportunities. The Exchange is committed to providing opportunities for volunteers to gain new skills and experience and supports them by providing advice on further opportunities (where appropriate), as well as references outlining their contributions.

Furthermore, our volunteers will enjoy the following benefits:

- A discount of 10% on purchases made across The Exchange and Bookstore during active hours (including classes and events)
- Invitation to two annual volunteer socials.
- Recognition awards/certificates at annual ceremony

## **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

The Exchange is committed to following a fair and open recruitment and selection procedures to involve volunteers in accordance with The Exchange’s Equality and Diversity policy.

From time to time, The Exchange has other one-off volunteering opportunities which will be recruited for as appropriate to the role.

The Exchange will ensure that volunteer roles are varied, meaningful and enjoyable, distinct from those undertaken by employees, and clearly defined in a role

description. The Exchange aims to place volunteers in roles compatible with their interests, skills and availability where possible.

Prospective volunteers will be asked to apply using a standard application form and invited to an induction day. Occasionally individuals may be invited to attend a further informal interview. All individuals selected for a volunteer role will be asked to complete a personal details form and provide details of two referees. Some volunteer roles may require an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check if they involve volunteering with children or vulnerable adults.

The Exchange follows best practice guidelines produced by NCVO on involving volunteers receiving state benefits. It is the responsibility of the volunteer concerned to seek and follow advice from their benefits advisor before starting to volunteer.

It is at the sole discretion of The Exchange whether to accept a prospective volunteer and the organisation is under no obligation to offer a volunteer any task.

It is expected that both The Exchange and the volunteer will give as much notice as possible if unable to meet the expectations laid out in the role description.

## **PAID EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers compliment the work of employees. Volunteers are not a substitute for paid employees and the organisation does not recruit volunteers to replace them. The Exchange volunteers shall at no time be considered as, or have status as, employees of the organisation.

Within the arrangement between The Exchange and a volunteer, nothing is intended to create the relationship of an employer and employee. Both the organisation and the volunteer are free to terminate the arrangement at any time following the appropriate procedures outlined for volunteers in the Volunteer Handbook and for staff in the Volunteer Supervisor's Guidelines.

The Exchange employees may volunteer if the volunteer role is significantly different from their normal employed duties and outside of their normal working hours. Permission should be sought from their line manager before proceeding.

## **INDUCTION AND TRAINING**

The Exchange is committed to ensuring its volunteers are fully prepared for their roles through the provision of appropriate induction, training and supervision. All volunteers receive a Volunteer pact and general induction upon joining which are signed to confirm receipt. Role-related training and access to other relevant training and development opportunities is organised as required by Workshop Managers. All training is arranged at mutually convenient times.

## **COMMUNICATION, SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT**

The Exchange aims to ensure that all volunteering experiences are interesting, rewarding, enjoyable and well-supported. Volunteers will be assigned a member of staff to act as their supervisor for each role they undertake during their time at The Exchange.

Volunteers can also contact Participation and Operations Manager with any queries. The Exchange encourages feedback from volunteers and will provide a range of opportunities to exchange constructive feedback.

## **PROBLEM SOLVING**

The Exchange aims to ensure that, as far as possible, the involvement of volunteers is a positive experience for everyone and that all volunteers are treated fairly, objectively and consistently. The Exchange aims to take every reasonable step to resolve any problems as quickly and amicably as possible through informal discussion, additional training and support, or by offering alternative volunteer roles. Where a problem cannot be resolved through these methods or it is deemed a serious breach of conduct or policy, The Exchange may ask a volunteer to leave the programme.

The Exchange is a signatory of the 3R promise, which stipulates:

### We will endeavour to get it right from the beginning.

- Our organisation will follow guidance on good practice and ensure it has up to date policies and evidence this in appropriate reports.
- Our organisation will ensure that concerns of volunteers are listened to and given due consideration.

### We will offer means to achieve reconciliation if things go wrong.

- Our organisation recognises that sometimes things go wrong and makes sure that everyone in the organisation knows how to deal with it

- Our organisation will identify a trustee or equivalent to become a volunteering champion.
- Our organisation will appoint an individual who will monitor volunteer complaints and encourage rapid resolution in emerging conflicts. Volunteer complaints will be reviewed by directors / trustees on a regular basis.
- Our organisation will explore independent alternative conflict resolution when necessary.

#### We accept our responsibility.

- Our organisation explains and accepts its responsibility for its volunteers and their well-being and respects their wish to always have a fair hearing if a conflict arises.
- Our organisation will work with the Call-to-Action Progress Group to share lessons and improve standards.
- Our organisation will report publicly on the implementation of its **3R** promise.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The Exchange recognises its responsibilities and obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (GDPR) to maintain the confidentiality of any personal, sensitive and confidential information it holds on volunteers and has procedures in place to safeguard this information. The Exchange only retains information about volunteers that is necessary to ensure volunteering is an appropriately documented and safe activity. The Exchange respects the privacy of its volunteers and does not pass personal details on without consent unless legally obliged to. Volunteers should inform workshop managers or P&O manager of any changes in personal information.

Volunteers are required to treat as confidential any information they acquire whilst volunteering that relates to The Exchange, its staff, volunteers, donors, and partner organisations. Volunteers should not disclose information or use it for their own or another's benefit without the consent of the party concerned. This does not prevent disclosure once the information is in the public domain or where the law permits or requires disclosure.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The Exchange recognises and takes its responsibilities to provide a safe and healthy environment for its employees, volunteers and visitors very seriously. Volunteers are advised that everyone has a responsibility to take reasonable steps to safeguard their own health and safety, and that of any other person who may be affected by their actions.

Volunteers are provided with general health and safety information at induction, and specific training as appropriate to each role. Volunteers are required to observe The Exchange's Health and Safety / Fire Safety policies and procedures and to report any potential hazards, unsafe working conditions or personal injuries to an Exchange employee. Volunteers should not work outside their authorised area or tasks.

## **SECURITY**

Volunteers are provided with information on The Exchange's security procedures at induction and are required to comply with these to help ensure the general security of the premises and work environment.

## **EQUALITY AND ACCESS**

The Exchange is committed to upholding the principles of equality, diversity and equal opportunity in all its volunteering activity and management. All recruitment, selection, training and development procedures aim to ensure volunteering opportunities are as accessible as possible and that individuals are selected and treated solely based on their relevant aptitudes, skills and abilities, and suitability for the role. The Exchange is committed to developing a diverse volunteer team, and where required, the Exchange will make reasonable adjustments to volunteer roles where possible. The Exchange expects both employees and volunteers to understand and promote its Equality and Diversity policy in their roles.