

Manchester City of Literature

Manchester City of Literature – Volunteer Policy

Context

The Volunteer Policy identifies and sets out the principles by which Manchester City of Literature works with volunteers, the benefits it gains from its volunteers and benefits that volunteers expect to gain. This policy sets out the minimum standards for recruitment, induction and appointment of volunteers to ensure that both volunteer and organisation expectations are met. It provides for fair and equal treatment of its volunteers and a framework for implementation.

Who the policy applies to?

The policy is for staff that work with, and provide support to, volunteers within Manchester City of Literature and for volunteers themselves who provide this role as a part of their activities. It is useful for organisations and individuals with whom Manchester City of Literature has partnership relationships. The policy will be provided to all Organisation volunteers.

Who are Manchester City of Literature volunteers?

A Manchester City of Literature volunteer is someone who freely chooses to give their time to undertake tasks and activities to help Manchester City of Literature achieve its aims, without payment or the expectation of payment. The arrangement is voluntary on both sides. Either party can bring this to an end.

Broadly, Manchester City of Literature recognises two main types of volunteer:

- i) Programme - those involved in Manchester City of Literature-managed programme delivery and related face-to-face work with beneficiaries.
- ii) Office - those involved in office-based work supporting the front-line work of Manchester City of Literature.

In addition to these roles, Manchester City of Literature is supported by a number of secondments, work placements and corporate volunteers.

Manchester City of Literature seeks and values the following attributes that volunteers bring

- a genuine interest in helping the organisation
- a non-judgemental attitude
- a willingness to listen
- understanding, commitment and reliability

Equality and Diversity

Manchester City of Literature is committed to building a diverse organisation that is responsive to the needs of our stakeholders. Manchester City of Literature is also committed to equal opportunities at all stages of recruitment and selection. Short-listing, interviewing and selection of volunteers should always be carried out without regard to protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment;

marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

The value and benefits that volunteers bring to Manchester City of Literature

Manchester City of Literature recognises that volunteers are an enormous resource in helping to meet its aims. They bring a wealth of expertise, knowledge, experience and skills to Manchester City of Literature. Specifically, volunteers:

- help deliver much of the face-to-face work with beneficiaries
- enrich the quality of programme delivery
- provide a unique and different relationship with beneficiaries that cannot be provided by paid staff
- provide contacts and networking opportunities that help promote and raise the profile of Manchester City of Literature
- offer specialist knowledge in a variety of areas
- provide an interface between Manchester City of Literature, the local community, funders, and other partners upon whom Manchester City of Literature relies

The benefits to a volunteer of supporting Manchester City of Literature

Supporting Manchester City of Literature provides volunteers with:

- the ability to make a difference to the work of Manchester City of Literature and thereby making a contribution to society as a whole
- an opportunity to be part of a high profile, well-respected charity
- personal development opportunities and experiences
- networking opportunities and interaction with other volunteers, supporters and Manchester City of Literature staff

Manchester City of Literature principles of working with volunteers

Manchester City of Literature has a number of defined principles and processes relating to a range of areas and aspects that underpin volunteer involvement in its activities. These are outlined below. The principles will ensure fair and equal treatment of all volunteers.

A. Manchester City of Literature's Safeguarding Young People and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy

The Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy gives clear procedures on responding to concerns regarding the safeguarding and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults. Combined with the associated procedures, and guidance, the policy provides a structure for staff and volunteers that may come across concerns of this nature within the context of their work.

All volunteers should be aware of this policy, and their responsibilities detailed within it.

B. Recruitment and appointment of new volunteers

All volunteers will be formally interviewed to provide relevant information and explore their aspirations and the experience they can bring to Manchester City of Literature. It is important for all involved to

appreciate that the interview is not a competitive process, and the sole selection criteria is suitability for the role. Written references may be required and taken up to help confirm suitability for volunteering and for specific roles.

A DBS check is required for volunteers undertaking 'regulated activity'. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar someone from volunteering with us. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of their offence.

C. Training

Volunteers will have a set of skills, knowledge and attitudes gained from their education, work, previous volunteering, and life experiences. However, to ensure that volunteers are appropriately equipped for their role each volunteer must undergo the appropriate induction and training process prior to appointment. Full details will be provided on appointment.

D. Appointment

Only when the selection process, background checks and training have been completed fully, and it is agreed that the person is suitable for the role, can a volunteer be appointed. All volunteers will be provided with details of what is expected from the volunteer and what they can expect from Manchester City of Literature. In commencing their role, the volunteer commits to the aims, values and key policies of Manchester City of Literature. They also commit to delivering the key tasks outlined in the relevant role description.

This Statement of Expectation is binding in honour only and there is no intention to create a contract of employment between Manchester City of Literature and volunteers. When appointed, all volunteers must have a named contact at Manchester City of Literature. This may be the Executive Director, or other as designated. The named contact is responsible for guiding and supporting the volunteer in their role and should be available to discuss any aspect of the volunteer's role. A volunteer must be informed in writing (letter or email) if their Manchester City of Literature contact changes.

E. Management and support of volunteers

Each volunteer will be provided with relevant management and support. This will include regular, appropriate and mutually agreed contact. As a minimum, volunteers will be offered an annual review, which offers the opportunity to discuss their role, share feedback and identify individual development and support needs. Shorter engagements will have a different feedback arrangement.

Manchester City of Literature will also provide appropriate recognition and occasions to celebrate volunteers and their work, on an individual and group basis, according to specific role(s), commitment and length of service.

Manchester City of Literature has a procedure to help resolve any type of problems that arise, and will be carried out by an appropriate person to ensure fair and equitable treatment of volunteers. The procedure for managing volunteers will be discussed on appointment.

Volunteers cannot commit Manchester City of Literature to expenditure, e.g. events, contracts, expenses (other than those incurred in the course of their work for Manchester City of Literature).

F. Health and Safety

Manchester City of Literature will ensure that all volunteers are provided with the appropriate information, supervision and training required to enable them to complete voluntary work safely. This includes providing suitable systems and procedures and guidance as outlined in The Health and Safety Policy.

Volunteers must take reasonable care of themselves and others while volunteering for Manchester City of Literature and follow any health and safety advice and instruction given for their role. Volunteers should cooperate with Manchester City of Literature on health and safety matters, and immediately report accidents/incidents (including near misses – accidents/incidents that may have led to injury). Volunteers should not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare.

Manchester City of Literature has a duty of care to volunteers to ensure they are supported in their role, as well as our beneficiaries. If a volunteer finds themselves in a situation which is a threat to personal safety, the Executive Director or designate.

H. Expenses

Manchester City of Literature endeavours to reimburse volunteers reasonable out-of-pocket expenses, however the decision to reimburse expenses is made at the Executive Director's discretion, based on their assessment of the requirements of Manchester City of Literature, the available budget and the volunteer's own needs. Volunteers' expenses will be paid in accordance with the Volunteers Expenses Policy

I. Insurance

Manchester City of Literature provides Employers Liability, Public Liability and Professional Indemnity cover for all volunteers whilst working on Manchester City of Literature activities. Manchester City of Literature does not provide motor insurance cover. Volunteers will be asked to sign the relevant section on the Expenses form to confirm that they have agreed their driving on Manchester City of Literature business with their insurers before we can reimburse mileage costs.

J. Confidentiality, copyright and data protection issues

All volunteers are required to comply with Manchester City of Literature's Confidentiality Policy with regard to their dealings with beneficiaries, and to keep confidential any Manchester City of Literature information they become aware of through their volunteering that is not in the public domain. Office volunteers will be asked to sign an agreement to this effect as the role will require access to Manchester City of Literature records and email.

Volunteers are required to assign copyright to Manchester City of Literature of any work produced as a part of their volunteering role or activity. Manchester City of Literature, in complying with The General Data Protection Regulation 2018, will treat in confidence the information it holds about volunteers. The information will be held while there is a legitimate business purpose for doing so. Volunteers have the right to request to see all the information held about them by Manchester City of Literature. Volunteer information, such as any application forms, references and any reports regarding conduct concerns, will be stored in a safe and secure (encrypted) location.

K. Leaving Manchester City of Literature

Volunteers are free to cease volunteering with Manchester City of Literature at any time, although, wherever possible, an agreed period leading up to this point would be helpful in order to give Manchester City of Literature time to make any alternative arrangements required. It is possible that there may also be times when Manchester City of Literature will ask a volunteer to cease volunteering for various reasons. Wherever possible we will offer the volunteer the opportunity to feedback before leaving their role, and ensure they are appropriately thanked for their support.

L. Volunteer Feedback

We provide a range of opportunities for volunteers to offer feedback on our processes, support and work. Should a volunteer wish to make a complaint, they are invited to put their complaint in writing and this will be given to the Executive Director and responded to within 14 days.

We invite volunteers and staff to send any comments or suggestions regarding the Volunteer Policy to:

Ivan Wadeson, Executive Director, Manchester City of Literature, PO Box 532, First Floor, Town Hall Extension, Manchester M60 2LA