

Volunteer Policy and Procedure

**Date of Approval by CREST Management Committee:
Thursday 14th February 2013**

**Date for Revision by CREST Management Committee:
February 2014**

Background

CREST Waltham Forest exists to work with local communities to empower disadvantaged and marginalised people. CREST acknowledges the value that volunteering bring to those benefiting from the work of CREST and to society in general. Volunteers offer a valuable resource by giving their time and dedication freely without pay. As such, we are committed to promoting volunteering throughout all aspects of our organisation. This Policy has been developed in order to ensure the organisation provides a friendly and nurturing environment in which to volunteer with appropriate procedures, and to ensure the volunteering experience provides a range of training opportunities and helps the volunteer develop on both a personal and professional level. CREST aims to offer its volunteers support and training where appropriate and an opportunity to gain in confidence, skills and experience.

Purpose of this Policy

The aim of this policy is to produce a clear framework for the work of all volunteers within CREST. The definition of a volunteer is ***“an individual who gives some time, freely and by choice for the benefit of others in the community, and the individual”***. This Policy is intended to help promote a constructive and fruitful partnership between CREST and its volunteers. People volunteer for a variety of reasons and can contribute in a range of ways according to the individual needs and talents that they bring. CREST will seek to provide its volunteers with a valuable volunteering opportunity. In return, volunteers will be expected to abide by the values, principles and policies which form the framework of CREST.

Equality of Opportunity

CREST is committed to the development of equal opportunities and believes that opportunities should be open to all, regardless of social class, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, religion, colour, race or ethnic or national origin. Volunteering as part of a team promotes mutual interests, harmony, respect, co-operation and understanding between volunteers from diverse backgrounds. As a matter of course, volunteers for CREST will be expected to operate within the spirit of equal opportunities for all.

Volunteering Roles

At any one time within CREST there are a number of different volunteering opportunities. Individual role descriptions and person specifications will be made available. CREST will happily consider developing other volunteering opportunities if expertise is offered to meet a particular need within CREST.

Recruitment and Selection

Volunteers will be recruited through a variety of means: website, mailings, newsletters, through our charity shop, the local volunteer centre etc. Volunteers will be selected according to their suitability in helping meet the needs of planned activities. Volunteers should normally be over the age of 18. If an applicant is under 18, the application should be considered by the appropriate departmental Manager in consultation with the CREST Manager. The application process will comprise of:

- The completion of an application form
- The provision of two references – if possible one from a previous employer and the other a character reference from someone who has known the candidate for a reasonable period of time
- A visit to view the setting of the individual volunteering opportunity
- An interview with the relevant departmental head
- If necessary, the completion of a CRB check

The decision to take on a volunteer will rest primarily with the relevant departmental Manager, if necessary in consultation with the CREST Manager. At selection stage, CREST will endeavour to:

- review each application fairly
- inform each applicant as to the result.
- provide an appropriate induction at the beginning of the volunteer's service

Volunteer Agreement

All volunteers will be expected to sign an agreement which lays out what they are entitled to expect and the expectations CREST will have of them. This agreement is not legally binding but clearly sets out what each party can expect from the other. It does not amount to a contract of employment and does not intend any employment relationship to be created either in the present or the future. Under this agreement, volunteers will:

- Have the right to be made welcome and to feel involved and valued.
- Agree to be accountable to the relevant departmental Manager for their work and agree to receive regular supervision from the departmental Manager
- Be expected to arrive promptly at the agreed time that the volunteering will take place.

- Let the departmental Manager know if for any reason they will not be able to attend for a specific reason
- Be expected at all times to promote a spirit of co-operation with other team members – staff and volunteers.
- Be expected to acquaint themselves with and work in accordance with all appropriate policies, guidelines and procedures. These will be covered as part of the induction procedure.
- Receive regular supervision and support during induction.
- Undertake only those tasks and responsibilities as arranged and agreed.
- Respect confidentiality at all times.
- Take responsibility for providing feedback and information to other members of the staff and volunteering team as appropriate.
- Report all accidents, serious incidents or damage to equipment immediately to a member of staff
- Have the right to representation on team meetings provided an active part is taken in the project.
- Endeavour wherever possible to give reasonable notice before withdrawing volunteering services.

Induction and Training

CREST will provide a thorough induction on its work, its staff, the volunteering role and all that is necessary for the volunteer to fulfil the role. This will be the responsibility of the departmental Manager. This will include all appropriate policies, guidelines and procedures. CREST will endeavour to ensure that all volunteers receive on-going training and support. CREST will endeavour to provide at least one training session per year to update volunteers on policies and procedures. Wherever possible CREST will endeavour to encourage and support its volunteers to undergo appropriate training to fulfil their role.

Health and Safety

CREST will ensure that all volunteers are made aware of the Health and Safety Policy and Procedures and the risk assessments that have been carried out.

Supervision

The departmental Manager will have responsibility for ensuring that each volunteer receives regular supervision. The reason for this is:

- To explain the standards expected and to encourage and support the volunteer to achieve and maintain them

- To provide a named person to meet regularly with the volunteer to discuss their volunteering and any successes and problems
- For CREST to do its best to develop the volunteering role

Expenses

Subject to prior agreement and the project budget, any eligible costs incurred during volunteering will be reimbursed. CREST agrees to reimburse these expenses following the submission of a completed Volunteer Claim Form:

- Any reasonable travel expenses to and from home necessary to undertake volunteering. Any costs of travel or car mileage allowances must be agreed beforehand with the relevant departmental Manager
- Where a full day's volunteering is undertaken, meal expenses to a maximum of £5.00 per day

For accounting purposes, volunteers will be required to produce all receipts in order to claim expenses.

Insurance

CREST will ensure that adequate Public Liability cover is in force to protect the project's legal liability for third party injury or property damage arising in connection with the work of volunteers.

Problem Solving

Should a volunteer have a complaint about another volunteer or member of staff, or should they have a problem with what they are being asked to do, they should follow the procedures laid out in the CREST Complaints Policy