

<b>Developed by:</b>	Nicola Williams	Volunteer Officer	July 2019
<b>Reviewed &amp; Approved by:</b>	Volunteer Working Group		26/07/19
<b>Sign off by:</b>	Jayne Manley	CEO	October 2019
<b>Policy review date:</b>	October 2020		



# Volunteer Policy

## Introduction

This volunteer policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement at Earth Trust. It is of relevance to all within the organisation, including volunteers, staff and trustees.

## Our commitment

Earth Trust values the contribution made by volunteers and recognises them as an integral part of our organisation. We have a responsibility to arrange our volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned. Volunteers' contribution supports our mission and strategic aims, and complements the role of paid staff.

## Statement of values and principles

The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise an organisation cannot be compelled to provide either regular tasks, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers. Earth Trust expects that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what Earth Trust expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of Earth Trust.

## Volunteer co-ordination

The Volunteer Officer holds overall responsibility for the development of voluntary activities within Earth Trust. All volunteers will be nominated a Staff Area Lead to offer guidance and advice and training to help the volunteer carry out tasks effectively and safely. Nominated staff will hold the responsibility of general management of their volunteers. The Volunteer Officer will be a secondary point of contact.

## **Recruitment and selection**

Earth Trust is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs or offending background that does not create a risk to vulnerable groups including children. The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out agreed tasks. Information about the volunteer not relevant to the performance of the volunteering tasks concerned will be disregarded by the organisation in terms of recruitment and selection.

Volunteering opportunities will be widely promoted in ways that make them accessible to all members of nearby communities.

Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task will either be offered alternative voluntary involvement with Earth Trust or referred to the nearest volunteer centre.

## **Induction and ongoing supervision**

Volunteers will have a clear and concise role description. New volunteers will be properly inducted into the organisation. Volunteers will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform with confidence.

Volunteers will be made aware of and have access to all the organisation's relevant policies including those relating to volunteering, health and safety, and safeguarding.

Volunteers will have a named member of staff to whom they can take their volunteering concerns and seek guidance and support.

Volunteers will have access to regular support and supervision.

Earth Trust recognises that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training for them to do their work effectively.

## **Recognition and thanks**

Regular social events will be held throughout the year to give formal recognition of the contribution made by Earth Trust volunteers. Formal recognition will be expressed through annual reports, social media, website articles, Supporters' Day and National Volunteers' Week.

## **Health and Safety**

Volunteers will receive a health and safety induction applicable to their chosen volunteering opportunity, prior to volunteering. Earth Trust will provide any health and safety equipment required for a volunteer to safely carry out their activities. Earth Trust recognises that it is duty bound to ensure the welfare of volunteers whilst they are volunteering for the Trust. Any accidents or near misses must be reported by volunteers to their allocated member of staff at the earliest opportunity. It is the responsibility of the allocated member of staff to

then ensure this is recorded appropriately in line with the organisation's health and safety protocol.

### **Insurance**

The organisation's Public Liability Insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them. Earth Trust does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage.

### **Expenses**

Volunteers are able to claim for reasonable out of pocket expenses with prior approval from their staff area lead. Travel expenses are generally not paid unless out of the ordinary and must be approved prior to travel. Receipts must be provided and a Volunteer Expenses Claim Form must be completed. All claims should be made as soon as possible and a maximum of two months after the expense has been incurred.

### **Young people**

The minimum age that young people can volunteer at Earth Trust is 14. Under-16s will require a parent/guardian to complete volunteering with them. Under-18s will require a signed parental permission form prior to undertaking any voluntary activity. The Trust holds a duty of care for any volunteers under the age of 18.

### **Confidentiality**

The privacy policy is available on the Earth Trust website and outlines how personal information is held by the organisation relating to volunteers. Volunteers will be bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff and will be expected to sign a Data User Agreement.

### **Settling differences**

Earth Trust aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. The Trust seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly and aim for a positive and amicable solution based on Earth Trust's guidelines for settling differences.

The Volunteer Officer is responsible for handling volunteer complaints or conduct. Support will be provided by the Trust to the volunteer while it endeavours to resolve the problem in an informal manner. If an informal resolution proves impossible, the Trust's wider grievance or complaints policies and procedures (which include volunteers) will be referred to. If a volunteer's behaviour is repeatedly or seriously unacceptable, they may be asked to change their role or to leave the Trust.