

# BRIGHTON UNEMPLOYED CENTRE FAMILIES PROJECT

# VOLUNTEER POLICY

## INTRODUCTION

Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project (BUCFP) is unique in that it is run and managed by The Centre's Users. The Centre aims to relieve poverty, distress and hardship amongst unemployed, unwaged and low waged people living or staying in the Brighton area. All services and projects are run by volunteers, the project groups are then supported by paid workers. Volunteers are therefore crucial to the running of the Centre. Volunteers work for the unemployed Centre for many reasons, often to gain experience and confidence, to undertake further training or simply to help others. We usually have around 70-80 volunteers at a time and need new volunteers continuously.

### **Supporting Volunteers**

BUCFP aims to find creative ways to engage the most deprived and excluded members of our community and progress them towards volunteering, while at the same time working to reduce barriers to participation.

BUCFP values and celebrates the diversity of people living and working in Brighton and Hove and the surrounding areas. We will openly consult with others to find the best ways of ensuring that our centre, services, volunteering and employment practices are accessible.

This policy, which is supported by our volunteers, sets out how BUCFP intends to support its volunteers.

## TYPES OF VOLUNTEER

BUCFP recognises three different types of volunteers:

### **Occasional Volunteers**

These are people who volunteer on an as and when basis. They volunteer occasionally, and undertake tasks such as watering the plants, doing lunch time clean up in return for a meal on the day they volunteered. It is the responsibility of the day co-ordinator to manage occasional volunteers.

### **Regular Volunteers**

These are people who take on a particular task, on an ongoing basis and are managed by the paid worker for that work group. Regular volunteers include all volunteers based in the following work groups; Kitchen, Office, Welfare Rights, Toy library, Wholefood co-op, Crèche, Temporary Housing, Education and Participation.

### **Trustees**

These people hold positions of responsibility and have been elected by members of the organisation or selected on the basis of their skills and experience. Most trustees have volunteered at the Centre for at least 4 months.

# PRINCIPLES

**The volunteer policy is guided by the following principles:**

- The organisation and its volunteers will follow this policy.
- The organisation recognises that volunteers donate their time. Their contribution should be mutually agreed by the volunteer and paid worker.
- The volunteer's role will be clearly explained and mutually agreed.
- The organisation will provide induction, information, training and support to its volunteers appropriate to their volunteer role.
- The organisation will, whenever possible, give volunteers work that is satisfying and appropriate to their interest.
- Volunteers have the right to express their views within the organisational structure.
- Volunteers and staff will work together within the organisation's rules, policies and procedures.
- Volunteers and staff will treat each other with respect and courtesy.
- The organisation is committed to equal opportunities in relation to the recruitment, selection and involvement of volunteers.

## PRACTICE GUIDELINES

BUCFP is committed to good practice when supporting its volunteers. For more detailed information on how the organisation supports volunteers, see the Volunteer Induction Pack.

### **Recruitment**

BUCFP will make ongoing efforts to recruit volunteers who match appropriate needs. This selection process will be based on the skills and interest of the volunteer and the current needs of the organisation.

### **Volunteer agreement and work outline**

Volunteers will be asked to read the rights and responsibilities of volunteering outlining the commitment and expectations of BUCFP. The Participation Worker and/or the worker from the chosen Work Group will go through this; it is to be used as a guideline to help the volunteer feel supported and clear about their rights within the Centre. The role and specific tasks that the volunteer has offered to undertake will be given by the worker in the chosen work group. Volunteers will also receive a copy of the Volunteer Induction Pack to keep and refer to when necessary.

### **Induction, information and training**

All Volunteers will be invited to a Centre induction, which will include information on the aims, background and organisational framework of the organisation. You will also receive an appropriate induction to your work group by a paid worker. Training will be given by either a paid worker or by an experienced volunteer. Additional information will be provided to help the volunteer in their work. BUCFP will strive to make the information sessions accessible and relevant to local needs. Opportunities to develop knowledge and skills will also be provided as appropriate.

### **Support and Supervision**

Volunteers will be supported and supervised by the worker in their work area. This person will provide the volunteer with feedback on their work, the opportunity to discuss future work and

a chance to discuss any issues that may arise. Additional support may be given by the Participation worker if required, in particular when moving from one work group to another.

### **Health and Safety**

BUCFP will, as far as is practical, care for the health, safety and welfare of its volunteers. Volunteers will be provided with copies of relevant health and safety procedures and receive appropriate support and training.

### **Expenses**

If you come to the centre by bus, we will refund your bus fares and other approved expenses when allowed by BUCFP's Expenses Policy. To claim expenses, supporting receipts must be provided. We also have a mileage rate for bicycle users.

All volunteers who are working a session are entitled to a free meal in our canteen.

Volunteers with children are entitled to a crèche place for the session they are working.

Once you have volunteered for 3 months you are entitled to a free computer course.

After 2 months you are entitled to a reference.

### **Having a voice**

Volunteers will be given opportunities to express their views about issues concerning the Centre and its work in the following ways:

- At regular Work area meetings
- Through using the suggestion box and ideas tree in the main area
- By attending Centre user meeting (weds at 12.30 in the main area)
- Feedback through your worker in your work group.
- Through the Participation Worker.

### **Insurance**

Volunteers will be covered by the organisation's insurance policy while engaged in approved work for BUCFP.

### **Equal opportunities**

All volunteers are required to make a commitment to equal opportunities. Volunteers will be provided with a copy of BUCFP's Safe Centre Policy, this is also available in the main area and all volunteers will be supported in its practice.

### **Confidentiality**

Volunteers will have access to personal information about some individuals. Some volunteers will also hold information about, for example, financial and personnel matters. The organisation needs to be able to trust its volunteers with such information, which is confidential. However, volunteers suspecting mistreatment or abuse of a volunteer, staff member or Centre users should discuss the matter with their worker. This person will make an informed decision on what needs to be done.

### **Resolving concerns**

BUCFP aims to identify and resolve problems at the earliest possible stage. A Complaints Procedure has been drawn up for dealing with complaints by all who attend and use the Centre. Copies of these procedures can be found in the Volunteer Induction Pack.