

## VOLUNTEER POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to identify and set out the key principles underpinning the involvement of volunteers within Paddington Development Trust. It is relevant to all volunteers and employees.

PDT is committed to supporting and developing a diverse volunteer network. Volunteers are critical to the mission of PDT, which is “to bring people together and support them to take charge of their own individual and shared futures”. As well as enabling PDT to accomplish its mission in the most cost-effective and engaging manner, volunteering opportunities are encouraged within PDT projects in order to enable local people to contribute their time and skills to the good of their community and to gain new skills and abilities which may support them to access training and employment-focused opportunities.

Grand Junction is a community, arts and culture venue based at St Mary Magdalene Church, run by Paddington Development Trust (PDT).

### VOLUNTEERS COMPLEMENT AND ENHANCE THE WORK OF GRAND JUNCTION BY:

- Contributing to the project’s delivery of a community programme of education, arts and cultural activities for young people, families, and adults
- Acting as ambassadors for Grand Junction, encouraging links between the project and the local community, promoting local engagement, and extending the project’s reach
- Contributing the voice and views of local and wider communities, enabling people to directly support the development of opportunities in their area, and adding credibility to the work of Grand Junction

## VOLUNTEER DEFINITION

PDT defines a volunteer as ‘someone who, without expectation of financial compensation, beyond reimbursement of expenses, performs a task at the request of and on behalf of the charity’.

The gift relationship between PDT and its volunteers is entirely voluntary and non-contractual, being based on trust and understanding, and depends on mutual expectations. It is beneficial to both parties.

Volunteers shall at no point be considered as, or have status as employees of PDT, nor will they be recruited to substitute or replace paid staff.

PDT does not recruit volunteers who are under the age of 16 or over 85.

## PDT’S VOLUNTEERING VALUES

### PDT:

- Recognises that without volunteers we would be unable to meet our main objective of supporting and empowering our local communities
- Understands that volunteering is an enjoyable activity which should meet the individual’s needs, as well as the organisation’s
- Is committed to making volunteering a fulfilling and worthwhile activity
- Is committed to ensuring that volunteers are supported into further training or employment, if this is their ambition
- Views volunteers as complementing, not replacing, paid staff, and adding significant value to our activities
- Invests in volunteers, as far as possible, and in return asks volunteers to recognise their responsibilities towards PDT and its projects.

## VOLUNTEERING RIGHTS

All volunteers are entitled to equal treatment irrespective of age, gender, disability, marital status, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, community background or political beliefs.

### ALL VOLUNTEERS HAVE A RIGHT TO: -

- Protection from discrimination or exploitation from paid PDT employees.
- A clear and concise role description, and adequate induction and role-specific training for the tasks they are to undertake
- Receive ongoing support and supervision in their role
- Health and safety information to maximise their safety and welfare whilst volunteering with PDT, and on their journey to and from the PDT projects
- Reimbursement of reasonable, agreed out of pocket expense
- Be valued by everyone within the PDT. PDT promotes a culture of inclusiveness and tolerance, and respects volunteers' personal beliefs and values
- Support to access advice, including training and employment advice, if this is their ambition
- Sympathetic and fair treatment if faced by problems relating to volunteer conduct or complaints. Efforts will always be made to reach a mutually acceptable solution in a sensitive, timely and consistent manner
- Involvement in consultation if changes are to be introduced that affect their role

## VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

### ALL VOLUNTEERS HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO: -

- Comply with the PDT Volunteer Policy
- Treat all visitors, volunteers and staff with respect, courtesy and consideration, and promote a culture of inclusivity
- Respect people's values and beliefs, and avoid expressing personal, religious or political views whilst volunteering
- Uphold the reputation of PDT by behaving in a reliable, honest and mindful manner when representing the charity
- Fulfil their role to the best of their ability, honouring agreed time commitments
- Communicate with the Volunteer Manager if they are unable to fulfil the agreed volunteering role for any reason
- Respect all information concerning PDT's operations or personal information relating to staff, volunteers or visitors, as confidential
- Treat with confidence any information made available to them as a result of their relationship with PDT, whether of an individual or commercial nature
- Take responsibility for their personal belongings
- Ensure they are adequately insured for any task they undertake in their own cars whilst undertaking PDT business. (PDT carries relevant insurances to cover all other aspects of work undertaken by its volunteers).

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

PDT is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and access, and valuing diversity in all areas of its work. In line with PDT's [Equality and Diversity Policy](#), volunteers are treated fairly and equally, regardless of whom they are, their background or their lifestyle.

## RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

PDT uses a variety of methods to recruit volunteers, dependent upon task and location. In the first instance, all opportunities will be advertised on PDT project websites.

Recruitment will involve a simple and accessible application form, and an informal face-to-face meeting, from which the suitability of the prospective volunteer will be determined. Recruitment is based on merit.

### THE AIMS OF THE SELECTION PROCEDURES ARE: -

- To provide potential volunteers with sufficient information about the project and the various volunteering opportunities available for them to make an informed decision on whether or not to pursue their application
- To enable applicants and PDT Volunteer Managers to assess whether or not the applicant has the requisite motivation and skills, or potential skills after training, to fulfil the role's requirements
- To agree upon a probationary period, dependent on satisfactory references and screening checks, acceptable to both the applicant and PDT

Where roles are suitable for volunteers under the age of 18, appropriate guardian consent will always be sought prior to a 16 or 17 year old undertaking any volunteering activity, and the volunteer will be supervised by a named, DBS-checked staff member at all times. They will not be left alone with members of the public, staff or other volunteers who have not been DBS checked.

## REFERENCES AND SCREENING

For specific roles, volunteers may need to provide written references as part of the recruitment process. This may seem intrusive but is necessary for the following reasons:

- Providing the volunteer with a degree of credibility
- Acting as a basis of trust between the volunteer and the organisation
- Reassuring the public that any money they donate, which is handled by volunteers, is in safe hands
- Fostering a safe environment for the people who use PDT's services
- Verifying that the applicant possesses the necessary skills, or potential skills after training, to fulfil the role, and that the tasks set by the Volunteer Manager are suitable, and manageable, for the applicant

Volunteers may be asked to present photographic proof of identity.

Individuals from outside of the European Economic Area must ensure that they have a visa which permits them to volunteer in the UK before applying to be a volunteer.

## CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

As required under Safeguarding and Child Protection legislation, any volunteer who will be working closely and regularly with children, young people or adults who are vulnerable will be required to undergo checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service. The applicant will be advised whether this requirement is necessary at the initial face-to-face meeting. If required, Grand Junction will arrange for these checks to take place. There will be no cost to the volunteer.

## INDUCTION AND TRAINING

PDT is committed to providing a thorough induction, including an introduction to the organisation, health and safety training, risk assessments and role-specific guidelines and resources. Further role-specific training will be provided as required and agreed.

Each volunteer will be assigned a member of PDT staff who will offer supervisory support throughout their volunteering role. Regular review meetings will be scheduled to discuss progress, including additional training needs, to ensure that volunteers are equipped with the relevant skills and information to undertake their roles.

## HEALTH, SAFETY AND INSURANCE

PDT has a duty of care to all volunteers and takes reasonable steps to protect their health and safety. Detailed information is provided during the induction process, including how to report any accidents or incidents. If a volunteer is concerned about anything relating to their health and safety whilst volunteering with PDT, they should speak to their Volunteer Manager immediately. PDT's Public and Employer Liability Insurance policies cover volunteers in the event of an accident whilst undertaking volunteer duties with the charity.

## VOLUNTEER EXPENSES

It is PDT's policy to reimburse reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred whilst undertaking voluntary tasks, subject to agreement in advance and production of valid receipts. These expenses may include travel costs, refreshments, and any miscellaneous expenses related to a volunteer's tasks. Volunteers' situations are unique and therefore, reimbursement of expenses will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, where possible, taking into account the nature of the role and the expense.

### GRAND JUNCTION WILL REIMBURSE THE FOLLOWING EXPENSES:

- Travel expenses: Limited to a maximum of £5.80 for each volunteering session, unless agreed in advance.
- Refreshments expenses: Claimable up to a maximum of £5.00 if a volunteering session exceeds 4 hours.

## DATA PROTECTION

In accordance with the Data Protection Principles set out in the General Data Protection Regulation 2018, PDT will collect and confidentially store personal data relating to volunteers for the purpose of processing volunteer applications, assessing suitability for roles, and to communicate with volunteers regarding their roles. This information will be stored while there is a legitimate business purpose to do so.

Volunteers have the right to access the information that PDT holds about them, and withdraw consent to the use of personal information at any time, in accordance with PDT's [Privacy Policy](#).

## RESOLVING PROBLEMS

PDT is committed to addressing any problems, issues or complaints with fairness and consistency, in a sensitive and timely manner. Any day-to-day issues concerning volunteer complaints or conduct should be discussed in the first instance by the supervising staff member and the volunteer. Clear, accurate information concerning the issue should be ascertained and recorded at this stage.

The following complaints procedure should only be employed when informal solutions have failed to reach a swift and amicable resolution.

### VOLUNTEER COMPLAINTS:

- If you are dissatisfied with the response you received at the informal stage, a meeting with the Project Manager will be convened.
- Should you still not be satisfied with the response to your complaint, a meeting will be convened with the Deputy Chief Executive or Chief Executive.
- If your dissatisfaction remains unresolved, and we are unable to resolve your grievance, it would be inappropriate for the volunteer relationship to continue

### VOLUNTEER CONDUCT:

- If a volunteer's actions do not meet the expected service standards an initial informal meeting will be scheduled with the supervising staff member who will explain the concerns
- If this does not resolve the concern, a meeting with the Project Manager will be convened
- If this does not resolve the issue, a meeting with the Deputy Chief Executive, or Chief Executive will be scheduled
- If the volunteer's contribution still does not meet with the expected service standards of PDT, the volunteering relationship will be ceased
- At all times you will be able to freely state your case and you may be accompanied by a friend or family member throughout this process

## ON LEAVING

A volunteer may cease their involvement with PDT at any time. When this happens, it is helpful to ascertain how they feel about their volunteering experience. This may take the form of an exit interview or satisfaction survey.

Policy Review: This policy will be reviewed annually by the PDT Board of Trustees.

Review date: April 2021