

HILLFIELDS COMMUNITY GARDEN (HCG)

VOLUNTEERING POLICY 2023



Date for review: March 2024

INTRODUCTION

This policy relates to all volunteers. It has been drawn up to help you in your volunteering role(s) with HCG. It provides guidance which will help maintain and improve standards. If you are uncertain about anything stated in this code, you are encouraged to discuss the issue with the Project Manager, Chair or the Board of Trustees.

This Volunteer Policy should be read and accepted in conjunction with the **HCG Volunteer Code of Conduct** which provides further information about volunteering with HCG.

1. Scope

This policy covers all volunteers undertaking unpaid work for, or on behalf of Hillfields Community Garden. For volunteers who are under the age of 18, the **HCG Safeguarding Policy** will also apply.

2. Policy Statement

A volunteer is a person who gives freely of their time, skills and experience without expectation of financial reward. Volunteering can take many forms. Some tasks may require specific skills whereas others may require none. Volunteering may be for a limited time (for example to assist in the completion of a particular project or event), or it may be on an ongoing basis (for example to assist in the day-to-day delivery of a particular project).

HCG recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers can give to the organisation. Volunteers bring with them a diversity of experiences, backgrounds, skills, ages and outlooks, which can provide added value to the services delivered by the project.

This policy sets out the process for taking on and working with volunteers in a fair and equitable manner. Its aim is to ensure that the benefits of volunteering are maximised for both the volunteers and the organisation, volunteers will achieve their own learning, which will enhance their own development and the development of others and the project will benefit from the skills and experience of volunteers.

3. Principles

3.1 Status of Volunteers

The Garden Leader, Project Manager, Trustee or Lead Volunteer will agree a role with the volunteer and there will be an expectation that the volunteer will meet the role's requirements and that where available the Project or activity will provide work for the volunteer. However, the volunteer is free to refuse to fulfil the role and the Project is not bound to provide the work.

There will be no remuneration for expenses incurred or work done without prior approval from the Trustees, Project Manager or Treasurer.

3.2 Notice

It is appreciated that it is not always possible to give advance notice, but where it is possible either the Project or the volunteer should endeavour to provide as much notice as possible of their intention to end the volunteering arrangement. HCG will use the details provided on the **HCG Volunteer Sign Up Form** to contact volunteers where necessary.

3.3 Volunteering Roles

It is the responsibility of the Project Manager or Volunteer Project Lead working with the volunteer to draw up an outline of the volunteer role. This will set out the duties of the role and the skills and experience necessary, as well as any training that is required before the voluntary work is undertaken.

Voluntary work should complement other volunteers and provide added value to the benefit of local residents. Volunteers are not intended to act as paid employees, so care should be taken to ensure that no undue demands are placed on our volunteers and that they do not undertake work that is not appropriate for them and their needs.

3.4 Diversity and Equal Opportunities

HCG is committed to the principles of diversity and equal opportunities. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are an integral part of HCG and our efforts in Hillfields through the Hillfields Library Space. Which we will continue to promote as a welcome, open and diverse space that is proud of the uniqueness of our community.

We celebrate our diverse community and care about creating a supportive space that is inclusive of age, disability, gender, identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and experience.

We are keen to ensure that our volunteers are representative of the community, therefore we commit to evaluating and monitoring our progress towards achieving diversity.

We expect all volunteers to subscribe to and adhere to the principles and practices of this HCG Volunteer Conduct Policy.

3.5 Health & Safety

HCG has a responsibility for the health and safety of volunteers. Volunteers should at all times follow **HCG Health and Safety Policy and Procedure**. Volunteers have a duty to take care of themselves and others who could be affected by their actions. Volunteers must not act outside their authorised area of work or duties. Volunteers must report all accidents and near misses to the Project Manager, or Trustees, where this will be recorded in the Near Misses, Accident and Investigation Report in the **HCG Health and Safety Policy and Procedure**.

3.6 Insurance General

Volunteers are covered by the HCG Liability Insurance Policies. Volunteers that have completed Bristol City Council Parks Training are also covered under BCC's Public Liability

Insurance. Both insurance policies will not cover unauthorised actions on the part of the volunteer.

3.7 DBS Checks

Where the volunteering activity is with children and young people under the age of 18 years or vulnerable adults the volunteer will be advised that an enhanced DBS must be applied for prior to work commencing. Where funding allows HCG will cover the cost of DBS checks. All volunteers will follow the guidelines set out in the **HCG Safeguarding Policy**.

4. Procedure

4.1 Recruitment

Volunteers may be recruited from a variety of sources, HCG will proactively ensure that opportunities for volunteering within our activities are available equally to all eligible people.

4.2 Registration and Selection

We will have an initial brief chat with a prospective volunteer to filter out obviously unsuitable applicants. The aim is to check the following:

- Does the volunteer want to do the particular volunteer role that is available?
- Is the volunteer able to do the role? (physically, mentally, practically, geographically)
- Are the times and days that the role and the volunteer are available mutually compatible?
- (If applicable) Is the volunteer prepared to wait while their Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check is obtained? (some volunteers may want to start immediately)

If these questions are answered satisfactorily, the person wishing to become a volunteer will be asked to complete the **Volunteer Sign Up Form**.

4.3 Health Checks

Prospective volunteers must declare any health issues that may affect their ability to carry out voluntary work on their registration form. If a volunteer highlights a health issue in this respect, the Garden Leader, Project Manager or Trustee must discuss it with them before any volunteering is undertaken and where appropriate further advice should be sought.

If once a volunteer has started a volunteering role there is any concern about their fitness for the assigned role, the Garden Leader, Project Manager or Trustee should discuss it with the volunteer and consider if it is appropriate to refer the volunteer for further advice.

5. Volunteering Agreement - Trustees

All new Trustees must sign the constitution and **Volunteering sign-up form**.

6. Support for Volunteers

6.1 Training

HCG will seek to provide some training where necessary. Some free training is provided from VOSCUR and other Sources, volunteers are encouraged to attend courses where they feel this will add to their own personal development.

- **VOSCUR:** [Find a learning event – VCSE Academy](https://www.vcseacademy.org/courses/?tid=All) - <https://www.vcseacademy.org/courses/?tid=All>
- **Policy Bee** Insurance free courses: <https://www.flicklearning.com/courses/> / <https://www.flicklearning.com/>
- **Together Fund:** <https://www.vcseacademy.org/together-fund-support-programme/> - Password – Together

6.2 Development and Supervision

Where possible, the Project Manager and/or Board of Trustees will proactively look for and encourage development opportunities for volunteers. They will also seek to provide supervision for volunteers who might need additional support, encouragement, check-ins or reviews to support individuals with their volunteer development.

7. Dealing with Problems

The volunteer should discuss any problems associated with their placement with the Project Manager or Trustees. They will normally try to resolve problems informally, but if this is not possible the volunteer should write an email or letter to hillfieldscommunitygarden@gmail.com or FAO Hillfields Community Garden, Hillfields Family and Community Hub, BS16 4EH stating clearly what the problem is. HCG will endeavour to resolve the problem. If the volunteer is not satisfied with the outcome they may raise the matter with the Chair of HCG, who will make a final decision on the outcome.

If a complaint is made about a volunteer, this will be notified to them in writing and the Chair will decide whether any action should be taken. If the volunteer is dissatisfied with the decision they may raise it with the board of trustees.

In matters deemed by the Project Manager or Trustees to constitute serious or gross misconduct on the part of the volunteer the project may end the volunteering arrangement with immediate effect. If the volunteer wishes to appeal this decision they should do so in writing to the trustees of HCG who will discuss it at the next quarterly meeting and whose decision will be final.

8. Contact details for HCG Management and Trustee Board

Project Manager: Sarah Rogers – hillfieldscommunitygarden@gmail.com

Chair: Becca Jenkins - rebeccaayshajenkins@gmail.com

Treasurer: Pippa Davies - hcgfinances@gmail.com

Secretary: Alex Bugden