

HILLFIELDS COMMUNITY GARDEN (HCG)

VOLUNTEER POLICY 2024

Date adopted: November 2024

Date for review: March 2026



1. Our people

Hillfields Community Garden (HCG) is a resident-led, grass-roots organisation that was founded by local volunteers. Volunteers form an essential part of our activities, and our events, groups and management of the HCG are all supported by volunteers.

We want to start off by welcoming you to the Hillfields Team - thank you for joining us in our work in Hillfields.

The Trust Board would like to thank everyone who is involved in HCG's activities and continues to give their time, energy and support to our work. We appreciate the energy that has gone into creating and growing this space. The passion, activism and enthusiasm from our volunteers to champion the organisation in the local area has meant that our reach in Hillfields has been really significant, and has brought joy, pride and a sense of belonging to our local community.

2. Volunteer definition

A volunteer is a person who gives freely of their time, skills and experience without expectation of financial reward. HCG recognises that volunteers bring with them a diversity of experience, background, skill, age and outlook, which provide added value to our operation.

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 a more ongoing basis (for example to assist in support of a particular project).

HCG's aim is to ensure that the benefits of volunteering are maximised for individuals and the organisation and we aim to strike that balance by having open, honest and regular contact with our volunteers. This ensures that volunteers feel free to engage in activities when they feel able in a supportive and meaningful environment.

HCG will facilitate and encourage volunteers to achieve their own learning, which will enhance their development and the development of others, to which HCG and local residents will benefit.

3. Hillfields Community Garden - the Charity

Hillfields Community Garden (HCG) is based in Hillfields Park, and our registered address is Hillfields Park Community Centre, Thicket Avenue, Hillfields, BS16 4EH.

HCG is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) registered with the Charity Commission under the registration number 1204254 and has a Trust Board and Membership model.

HCG's governing document is a Constitution inline with the Charity Commission guidelines and has voting members other than its charity trustees. These documents can be found on the HCG and Charity Commission websites.

If you are uncertain about anything stated in this code, you are encouraged to discuss the issue with the Charity Director or Board of Trustees, contact details can be found at the end of this document.

4. HCGs Mission Statement

By listening to our community we will create a range of meaningful and impactful opportunities, which bring collective and individual action and enable the development and maintenance of our natural spaces and the community in Hillfields.

Further information on the charitable aims and purposes of Hillfields Community Garden (HCG) can be found in our **Constitution**.

5. Policy Scope

This policy applies to all HCG volunteers who support the aims of the charity conducted in Hillfields. It provides guidance which will help maintain and improve standards which will ensure that everyone is treated fairly. Our aim is to demonstrate integrity at all times and avoid any suggestion of influence by improper motives. If you are uncertain about anything stated in this code, you are encouraged to discuss the issue with the Chair or a member of the Board of Trustees, contact details can be found at the end of this document. HCG is committed to high standards in:

- volunteers management
- fair and equal recruitment
- accessible roles
- inductions, supervision, support and training
- health and safety
- confidentiality and data protection
- complaints and problem solving

6. Aims of the Policy

Hillfields Community Garden (HCG) and its Trustees have ultimate responsibility for all actions carried out by staff and volunteers who are supporting the charity. This responsibility encompasses the administration of funding, encouraging active participation of community members in the management of the project, and the interaction and communication with other local organisations. Community members and organisations that come into contact with HCG are entitled to expect conduct of the highest standard.

For volunteers who are under the age of 18, the **Safeguarding Policy** will also apply.

7. Status of Volunteers

Volunteer roles will be agreed with an individual before volunteering begins and there will be an expectation that the volunteer will adhere to HCG's requirements. As a charity, HCG will seek to create a range of volunteer roles and offer these to local residents. However,

individuals are free to refuse to fulfil the role and HCG is not bound to provide the opportunity. There will be no remuneration for legitimate expenses incurred without prior approval from the charity Director.

Volunteers are not intended to act as paid employees. HCG will take care to ensure that no undue demands are placed on volunteers and that they do not undertake volunteering that is not appropriate for them and their needs.

8. Public and Private interests

*Volunteers should try not to put themselves in a situation where personal interests, paid responsibilities and voluntary roles are in conflict. HCG has a **Conflict of interest Policy**, which should be followed at all times.*

1. Serious misconduct or certain criminal offences, committed whilst supporting HCG, which bring HCG into disrepute will be subject to the due procedure and may result in volunteers being asked to step away from activities. Any actions will be taken in line with the **Complaints Procedure**. A copy can be supplied or found on our website.
2. Volunteers must not act in a manner liable to place the public, other volunteers, staff or themselves at risk, and must adhere to the duty of care prescribed in the **Health and Safety Policy and Procedure**.
3. During community activities (groups and events) volunteers should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.
4. Volunteers should not make representations on behalf of HCG without the express permission of the Trustees or Senior Managers.

9. Disclosure of information

Supporting HCG occasionally gives us access to confidential information about local residents (adults and children).

1. Volunteers should not disclose personal or financial information about any other volunteer, staff member, any unauthorised person, or any external organisation/agency without the express approval of the person concerned.
2. Subject to the requirements of legislation, including The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) ([GDPR GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/gdpr)), information obtained about a local resident or volunteers is confidential unless otherwise agreed in advance. All data should be handled in accordance with the **Data Protection and Information Policy**.
3. Images of users, volunteers, or children obtained by photography or video should never be used in the public domain e.g social media without the verbal permission of the person concerned or the guardian, in the case of a child. Where pictures have been taken, these will be edited to remove identifiable features of said person when used in online domains. HCG volunteers will not use photos of park users for personal purposes. Photographs taken should comply with our **Photography and filming consent form**.

10. Equality

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, delivered through our work. We will continue to promote a welcome, open and diverse space that is proud of the uniqueness of our community.

We will celebrate our diverse community and take care to create 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.

Volunteers must promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability in order to ensure that in the delivery of activities, we ensure impartiality and that choices are made on merit alone. A copy of our **Statement of intent on equality, equity, diversity and inclusion** can be supplied.

HCG actively aims to ensure volunteers reflect the community in Hillfields. We may periodically conduct an anonymous survey of our volunteer base to ensure this.

11. Health and Safety

HCG has a responsibility for the health and safety of volunteers, who should, at all times, follow the **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 volunteering or duties and they must report all accidents and near misses to the Director, where this will be recorded in the Near Misses, Accident and Investigation Report in the **Health and Safety Policy and Procedure**. This Policy can be found on our website.

12. Insurance

Volunteers are covered by HCG's Liability Insurance where volunteering is being conducted in line with HCG's 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.

13. DBS Checks

Where the volunteering is with children, young people under the age of 18 years or vulnerable adults, volunteers will be advised that an enhanced DBS must be applied for prior to volunteering commencing. All volunteers will follow the guidelines set out in the **Safeguarding Policy**, a copy of which can be found on our website. This Policy also provides information on training and HCG may request that volunteers complete this before volunteering begins.

14. Registration and Selection

Depending on the role, HCG will either hold a formal interview or have an initial brief chat with prospective volunteers before volunteering begins. The aim is to check the following:

- Does the individual want to do the particular role that is available?

- Is the individual able to do the role? (physically, mentally, practically, geographically)
- Are the times and days that the role and the individual are available mutually compatible?
- (If applicable) Is the individual prepared to wait while their Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check is obtained? (some individuals may want to start immediately)
- (If applicable) Is the individual prepared and able to complete certain training courses before beginning volunteering?

If these questions are answered satisfactorily, the person wishing to become a volunteer will be asked to complete the **Volunteer Application Form** <https://forms.gle/ew7abGz1nKd8DfXF7>.

15. Health Checks

Prospective volunteers must declare any health issues that may affect their ability to carry out volunteering on the **Volunteer Application Form**. If a volunteer highlights a health issue in this respect, the Charity Director must discuss it with them before any volunteering is undertaken and, where appropriate, further advice should be sought.

If, once a volunteer has started their volunteering, there is any concern about their fitness and appropriateness for the tasks, the Director should discuss it with the individual and consider if it is appropriate to discuss the volunteers with the Trust Board or external agency for support.

16. Openness Conduct and integrity

HCG is active in encouraging local residents to become involved in the management and running of the organisation. All meetings will be conducted in a polite and professional manner. A comprehensive list of training and support agencies can be provided on request and can also be found on our **Health and Safety Policy** and **Safeguarding Policy**.

Bullying and intimidation by volunteers will not be tolerated by HCG and will result in disciplinary action which is set out in the **Problem Solving and Complaints Policy and Procedure**.

17. Standards of Dress and Appearance

Volunteers must ensure that their standards of dress, the type and style of clothes and personal ornamentation worn are appropriate to the nature of the duties and responsibilities being undertaken.

Volunteers must conform to requirements for clothing that apply for health and safety reasons, see the **Health and Safety Policy**.

18. Specific gardening and outdoor work.

All volunteers who do outdoor groups are responsible for making sure that they themselves and any residents taking part are dressed safely to complete garden tasks.

Volunteers should request residents to stop work if they are not dressed appropriately on the grounds of **Health and Safety as per our Policy and procedure**. Volunteers may be asked

by staff to pause any outdoor work, where clothing and footwear is not appropriate for the tasks being undertaken.

Further information on the guidelines for this should refer to the **Health and Safety support pack for practical activities carried out by volunteer groups** booklet provided by BCC Parks Team.

19. Alcohol and Drugs

All volunteers must not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs (illegal or other), and without having their ability to undertake the role adversely impaired by alcohol or drugs. If you are taking prescription drugs that may adversely affect you whilst you are volunteering you must tell the person who is responsible for running the session. Consumption of alcohol or drugs immediately prior to and/or during supporting HCG is not permitted on the grounds of health and safety, which will result in a failure to follow this conduct policy and be cause for disciplinary action.

20. The Media

All communication with the media (for example, television, radio, and newspapers) must be directed through the Charity Director and/or Trustee Board, contact details supplied at the end of this document.

21. Failure to follow Code of Conduct

Volunteers should recognise that failure to follow this Code of Conduct may damage HCG and its work and will normally be viewed as a disciplinary matter. For volunteers, such matters will be dealt with by the HCG Trustee Committee. Action will be considered in accordance with HCG's constitution.

22. Dealing with Problems

HCG views complaints and feedback as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of volunteers, residents and stakeholders, by responding positively to complaints and putting mistakes right.

Any issues which occur are normally resolved quickly through problem solving methods, however, very occasionally there may be a situation that is more serious or requires further investigation. The **Problem Solving and Complaints Policy and Procedure** sets out the procedure that will be followed in this instance. A copy of this Policy can be found on the HCG website.

Date of Change:	Changed By:	Comments:
April 2024	S.Rogers	Approved by the Board - BA, AB, PD
July 2024	S.Rogers	Adaption of the document to define the volunteering support with HCG
February 2025	S.Rogers	Distinction of volunteering outdoors included.

Hillfields Community Garden

Registered Charity number: 1204254

Registered Address: Hillfields Park Community Centre, Thickett Ave, Hillfields, Bristol, BS16
4EH

Email address info@hillfieldscommunitygarden.co.uk

Website: www.hillfieldscommunitygarden.co.uk/

Director email address: ceo@hillfieldscommunitygarden.co.uk