

Northfields Community Library

Draft Volunteer Policy

Introduction

This document sets out how Northfields Community Library will support all volunteers to have a positive volunteering experience.

Northfields Community Library will be run entirely by volunteers. The organisation is completely dependent on them and our success will be reliant on volunteers feeling safe supported and fulfilled in their volunteering experience.

As an organisation we are incredibly grateful for the support of all of our volunteers.

Equality and Diversity

Northfields Community Library has an Equality and Diversity Policy in place that helps to guide us to recruiting a diverse volunteer workforce.

That policy sets out how we will seek to recruit and support trustees and volunteers with different backgrounds, cultures and career fields who bring a broad range of skills, expertise and knowledge, including volunteers with protected characteristics.

This Volunteer Policy should be read together with our Equality and Diversity Policy to understand the approach that Northfields Community Library takes to managing volunteers.

Roles

There are a variety of volunteer roles at Northfields Community Library. These include:

- Library volunteers – who staff the library on a regular basis
- Team leaders – who support library volunteers
- Organisational roles, including in communications, fundraising, events support, finance and business planning, building management, offer development, and volunteer support.

More detailed role descriptions are attached in the Appendix.

The offer to volunteers

Northfield Community Library will offer:

- A well-managed volunteering experience, with support from our Volunteer Team and our Team Leaders; clear and accessible policies to guide and support you in your role; and clear routes by which to raise and resolve concerns.
- A meaningful role with a clear role description so volunteers understand the contribution they make to the running of the library.
- Support from your team leader and/or from the Trustees and training to make sure you are well equipped for your role.
- An inclusive, supportive, and friendly environment to help volunteers enjoy their volunteering experience.
- A two way dialogue to understand the motivations of volunteers, take feedback on the volunteering experience, and to build the ideas of volunteers into the future of the library
- A safe place to work.

Expectations of Volunteers

Northfields Community Library expect that our volunteers will:

- Volunteer for at least 3 hours per month
- Be honest and open in the personal information they share about skills and experience
- Be courteous, polite and approachable to other volunteers, trustees and to members of the public
- Be reliable – giving as much notice if possible if shifts need to be changed or cancelled and being on time for shifts
- Develop themselves to provide a high quality library service by attending training and continuing to learn in the role
- Help the running of a high quality library service by carrying out the role description to the best of their ability
- Uphold the reputation of Northfields Community Library in person and on social media/online platforms at all times

Recruitment

We use a variety of routes to help recruit volunteers, helping us to reach different audiences in order to maintain diversity in our volunteer base. Examples of the ways in which we recruit volunteers include:

- Online: Through our website and through the Do-It website
- Face to face: At local events, in churches, and (once open) in Northfields Community Library itself
- In the media/in print: Through our leaflets and through promotion of the library in local newsletters etc.
- Through our partners: Through local residents associations, schools and the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme for example.

Onboarding

Volunteers are asked to fill in a form that shares their contact details, skills and experience, availability and diversity information. They are then added to our database and invited to training and volunteer events. **All potential volunteers will be asked to provide two personal references.**

Some volunteers may be required to complete a DBS check if their position falls within the criteria for a regulated role. Applicants will be made aware of the possible requirement for a DBS check when an application is made to volunteer.

Induction

Volunteers will have an induction meeting with a team leader or trustee in Northfields Community Library before they are deployed in the library. This meeting will:

- Enable us to understand the motivations of volunteers so that we can shape a volunteering experience that best meets their ambitions.
- Allow time for a discussion about skills and experience and availability, so that we match people to the right roles in the library and make the most of their ability to contribute.
- Give time for a conversation about worries or concerns about volunteering with NCL.

- Enable us to learn from this, and build in more training and support for volunteers where this would be helpful.

Training

Training will be provided to library volunteers and to team leaders. This training will include:

- Volunteer roles
- Library systems
- Customer services
- Supporting reading
- Safeguarding
- GDPR
- Equality and Diversity
- First aid (as necessary)

Training will be provided directly from Ealing Council, from other local organisations with expertise (e.g. Ealing CVS, St John's Ambulance), and as a cascade model through other NCL volunteers. Some training may be provided online.

Minimum Staffing Levels

Volunteers must never work alone at the Library. There will be a three volunteers on rota at each point in time and the library will close if at least two of them are not on site at any particular time.

If a volunteer does not arrive for their shift please contact that volunteer using their telephone number on the system. If you cannot reach them, then please contact the person who is on the rota as the cover person. If you cannot reach either of these people then please contact the volunteer coordinator to help find cover. If no cover can be found then the library should not remain open with only two volunteers and you will need to close the library, placing a sign on the door indicating that we apologise we have closed because of staff shortages.

Internet and Email

Some volunteers may need to request changes to the Northfields Community Library website. Changes are agreed by a single contact to ensure the website continues to operate effectively in meeting our needs. Currently this person is: Jenny Oldroyd.

A small number of volunteers will need access to Northfields Community Library's email system. These volunteers must read the email guidance and GDPR policy before accessing the email, and follow these policies at all times.

The use of the internet/email to access and/or distribute any kind of material which is offensive or unrelated to your tasks will result in termination of a volunteer's relationship with us.

Expenses

Northfields Community Library is a local organisation recruiting mostly from within walking distance of the library itself. One of our objectives is to reduce our environmental impact.

For that reason, we will not normally pay travel expenses or subsistence allowances to volunteers. This policy will be reviewed in line with any changes in our volunteering recruitment in future.

If volunteers are incurring other expenses as a result of their volunteering with the library they should talk to their team leader or to the most relevant development team before the expenses are incurred to gain a commitment for NCL to pay those expenses. Examples of expenses might include the purchase of materials or resources for an activity, set up costs for an event, investment for fundraising or costs to visit another community library that requires paid for travel. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list and we will consider expenses in other circumstances too.

Raising concerns

It is very important that volunteers are able to raise concerns about anything related to the library or their volunteering experience. We would want to welcome a conversation about any such concerns because it gives us the opportunity to improve the way we work.

If you do have a concern then please talk to your team leader if you are able to. If not, then please talk to another team leader or trustee that you are comfortable approaching. Your concern will be dealt with sensitively, with information not being shared further than necessary and with a focus on putting any problems right through support where possible.

If your concern is not able to be resolved this way or if you do not feel comfortable approaching someone personally, then we can handle any more serious concerns through our Whistleblowing Policy.

Changes in personal details

We may need to contact you in emergency so please notify us of any change of address and emergency contact.

Insurance

During your time with us you are covered under our insurance policies

Volunteers' Liability

No liability is accepted for any loss of, or damage to property. You are advised not to take any personal items of value to where you volunteer or to leave any items overnight and to use lockers where provided.

Data Protection Policy

We have a GDPR Policy in place in the library which sets out how we keep data safely. Please make sure you are familiar with this policy and talk to your team leader if you have any doubts about what this means in practice.

Safeguarding Policy

We have a Safeguarding Policy in place in the library which sets out how we help to keep children and vulnerable adults safe. Please make sure you are familiar with this policy and talk to your team leader if you have any doubts about what this means in practice.

Health and Safety Policy

We have a Health and Safety Policy in place in the library which sets out how we keep everyone who is using the library building safe. Please make sure you are familiar with this policy and talk to your team leader if you have any doubts about what this means in practice.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every 6 -12 months to ensure it continues to meet the needs of Northfields Community Library and of our volunteers.

APPENDIX: ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

LIBRARY VOLUNTEERS

Library Volunteers are responsible for:

Creating a welcoming community library:

- Greeting library users and creating a welcoming atmosphere.
- Creating a welcoming place for people of all ages.
- Be able and willing to lend a listening ear and be able to value differing opinions from library users.
- Supporting new volunteers

Helping to run a high quality library service:

- Accepting and loaning library materials.
- Being familiar with the library's and Ealing Library Service's stock of adult and children's books, audio books, DVDs, newspapers and magazines and digital information.
- Organising the sorting of books and other library materials.
- Assisting library users with photocopying and using computers.
- Processing the payment of library fines and other sales, e.g. cards, merchandise.
- Offering suggestions for book stock and lending materials.

Maintaining a safe and pleasant library environment:

- Keeping the library tidy and helping to keep it clean.
- Reporting/logging incidents, health and safety issues.

Helping to direct the public to further help should they need it:

- Check leaflets and information displays.
- Sign posting to local services, council services and other advice and support services.

Promoting and supporting the wider offer of Northfields Community Library:

- Talking to the public about our activities, handing out leaflets, and helping the public to purchase second hand books and other items.
- Helping us to gather evidence on our impact.
- Explaining our community library status and what that means.
- Gratefully thanking the public for any donations they make towards our running.

TEAM LEADERS

As per volunteers, and additionally:

Supporting our Library Volunteers:

- Being a positive and motivating force for good in the library.
- Supporting volunteers on their shift – ensuring they are welcomed and thanked; providing opportunities to have a fulfilling volunteering experience and helping them to learn.
- Giving positive feedback to volunteers so they feel valued for their volunteering and sensitively supporting them when they are finding things more challenging.
- Gathering feedback from volunteers and helping us use that feedback to keep improving our offer and the volunteering experience.

Helping to run a high quality library service:

- Taking responsibility for providing a great library service when leading the library team.
- Being proactive in identifying what needs doing in the library on a daily basis by using our “To do list” and by looking around the library.
- Organising the volunteer team to help get work around the library done – e.g. ensuring the books and library space are tidy, ordering books for schools visits, putting up displays etc.
- Checking rotas to ensure that the library will be fully staffed.
- Finding cover where a gap in volunteer support emerges.
- Opening and closing the library, setting the alarm; or handing over the library smoothly to the next shift.
- Responding to enquiries or passing them to others as appropriate.

Promoting and supporting the wider offer of Northfields Community Library:

- Ensuring we collect evidence of impact of our work
- Ensuring that different parts of our offer run smoothly throughout each shift.

Maintaining a safe and pleasant library environment:

- Checking and acting upon reports that have been recorded in the log for accidents and incidents

ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

- Volunteer Team Leaders
- Organising activities and events
- Accounting and finance
- Publicity and Promotion
- Fundraising
- Administration