

Museums Worcestershire Volunteer Policy

Introduction

Museums Worcestershire fully recognises the value volunteers add to our organisation and the time and commitment they give to all areas of our operation. This policy aims to support volunteers in the roles they undertake and provide Museums Worcestershire with a clear set of guidelines to enable staff and volunteers to understand and assist each other in the development and delivery of our service.



Throughout this document, the term **Volunteer** is defined as a person who spends unpaid time undertaking defined and agreed activities for the purposes of Museums Worcestershire. The role of volunteers is in no way regarded as a replacement or alternative to paid staff but one that enables Museums Worcestershire to extend and add value to its services.

Museums Worcestershire was formed in April 2010 following the merger of Worcestershire County and Worcester City Museum Services. The museum service forms part of Worcestershire County Council and reports to a Joint Committee of City and County Councillors. The sites that make up Museums Worcestershire are: Worcester City Art Gallery and Museum, Worcestershire County Museum based at Hartlebury Castle near Kidderminster, The Commandery, Worcester and a Museums Collections Centre. The service also operates an Object Loans Service and a Mobile Museum exhibition bus.

Volunteers already play a much valued role in supporting the work of Museums Worcestershire, e.g.: exhibition installation, assisting with the delivery of events and holiday activities for children, caring for and restoring collections, demonstrating traditional crafts and assisting with school visits. We are keen to develop further opportunities for volunteers of all ages and abilities and this policy provides Museums Worcestershire with the framework to reach that goal.

Recruitment

All available volunteer roles will be advertised on the Worcestershire Volunteer Portal website (www.worcsvolunteering.org) and via the local press and via volunteer networks. Role Descriptions will also be available. These will define the time commitment required, necessary skills and give a named supervisor.

All potential volunteers will be asked to:

- Complete an application form (available to download from our website, via email and through the post)
- Attend a brief informal interview with the relevant manager/named supervisor to discuss their skills and abilities, interests and reasons for wishing to volunteer.
- Supply contact details for two references (depending on circumstances) which will be taken up by The Learning, Volunteering and Partnerships Manager
- On agreeing to undertake a volunteer role and the receipt of satisfactory references, the volunteer will complete a short trial period (agreed at time of interview and based on regularity of contact) which will help ascertain if the role is suitable for the individual
- Following this trial period the volunteer will be asked to sign a **Volunteer Agreement**. This is in no way a legally binding document or is it a contract of employment. It is an honour agreement so that both parties know and agree to what has been discussed and are clear as to what is expected of them.

Museums Worcestershire aim to deal with all volunteer enquiries as quickly as possible.

DBS & Safeguarding

Given the nature of volunteering roles at Museums Worcestershire, it is unlikely that **Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS)** will need to be obtained. If a volunteer role is deemed one that requires such a check, this will be stated clearly on the Role Description and discussed with the potential volunteer at the interview stage. Worcestershire County Council and Museums Worcestershire have a Safeguarding Policy that deals with contact with children and vulnerable adults. Copies of this can be seen in the Forms, Policies and Procedures section of the Volunteer Handbook. Copies of this are available for reference at all Museums Worcestershire sites.

Induction and Training

Upon agreeing to volunteer for Museums Worcestershire, all new volunteers will be given a copy of our **Volunteer Welcome Pack**. This contains a copy of this policy, the relevant Role Description, site-specific information, a Museums Worcestershire Volunteer Badge, Volunteer Training Record and record of volunteer hours undertaken. This last document is to be updated by the volunteer and a copy sent to volunteer supervisor at agreed intervals.

All new volunteers will be asked to attend a **Volunteer Induction Session**. These are organised 3 times a year and are intended to welcome new volunteers to the museum service, introduce our policies and procedures, outline the practicalities of volunteering with us and to provide the opportunity to meet people. New volunteers can also arrange to “shadow” other volunteers or staff members relevant to their volunteering role.

Relevant training specific to the volunteer role will be offered at various times throughout the year. These will be discussed and identified following Volunteer Induction Sessions. The volunteer will be required to keep a record of training received.

Refreshments and Shop Purchases

When you become a volunteer with us you become entitled to a 10% discount in our shops at the Museum and Art Gallery, The Commandery and Hartlebury and a 10% discount in the Castle Kitchen Café at Hartlebury on production of your Volunteer Card (part of your Induction information).

Tea and Coffee will be provided free of charge in an agreed location but not in Museum Cafes.

Supervision and Support

All volunteer roles will be allocated a named Volunteer Supervisor. This supervisor is a volunteers' first contact for questions, queries or any other issues that may arise whilst volunteering with Museums Worcestershire. If the Volunteer Supervisor is unable to deal with the issues, they will pass to the relevant member of the administration or museum management team as soon as possible. Supervision meetings will be arranged at mutually convenient times for both volunteer and supervisor during the year as required. All volunteers will be invited to a **New Year Meeting** to find out about plans for the year ahead.

Insurance

Whilst undertaking volunteering tasks as pre-agreed by Museums Worcestershire staff all volunteers are covered by Worcestershire County Councils Public and Employer Liability Insurance. If undertaking any task without staff agreement, cover will not be present.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity

Museums Worcestershire is fully committed to developing and maintaining an organisation in which people with diverse backgrounds, skills, abilities and experiences are able to participate, find enjoyment and provide a positive contribution. Copies of this policy can be seen in the **Forms, Policies and Procedures** section of the Volunteer Handbook. Copies of this are available for reference at all Museums Worcestershire sites.

Health and Safety

Museums Worcestershire is fully committed to preventing staff and volunteers from being exposed to any risks to their health and safety. An overview of Worcestershire County Councils Health & Safety Policy will be presented at the Volunteer Induction Session and site-specific emergency procedures will be provided in the Volunteer Welcome Pack. Copies of this can be seen in the

Forms, Policies and Procedures section of the Volunteer Handbook. Copies of this are available for reference at all Museums Worcestershire sites.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are expected to follow the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff.

Copies of Worcestershire County Councils Confidentiality and Data Protection Policies can be seen in the **Forms, Policies and Procedures** section of the Volunteer Handbook.

Problem Solving Procedure

At Museums Worcestershire our aim is to support volunteers and staff in undertaking their roles safely, to treat all people with respect and to minimise disruption within the organisation. If a complaint is made against a volunteer by a member of staff or the public, or by a volunteer about a member of staff, the volunteer supervisor or appropriate Line Manager will deal with all complaints quickly and fairly. All paid staff and volunteers are bound by the same **Code of Conduct** and as such, volunteers may be asked to leave if they are found to be in breach of this. A copy of this can be seen in the **Forms, Policies and Procedures** section of the Volunteer Handbook. Copies of this are available for reference at all Museums Worcestershire sites.

Museums Worcestershire
Learning, Volunteering and Partnerships Manager
2014