



## Sunderland Culture

### Volunteer Policy

March 2022

#### Introduction

Sunderland Culture aims to improve life for everyone in Sunderland through arts, heritage and culture. By encouraging as many people as possible to get involved, we aspire to improve health and wellbeing for people in Sunderland; building confidence and aspirations, and creating connectivity in our communities.

We recognise the wealth of life experience, skills, ideas and knowledge that exists in our local communities, and the valuable contribution that volunteers from our communities can make to the aims of Sunderland Culture. Sunderland Culture is committed to providing meaningful, enjoyable and safe volunteer assignments of real value within clear and appropriate programmes of activities.

#### Policy Scope

Sunderland Culture leads the programming of Arts Centre Washington, Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens, Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, National Glass Centre and The Fire Station, as well as a citywide programme, which is not restricted to a single venue. This policy applies to volunteer roles for Sunderland Culture activity in any of these venues or the citywide programme.

#### Definition

Sunderland Culture (sometimes referred to in this policy as “the organisation”) defines volunteers as those who spend their time, unpaid, for the benefit of the organisation. Volunteers are under no obligation to perform duties and have no expectation of, and do not receive any, remuneration for the time that they spend volunteering for the organisation. It is central to our definition that the decision to volunteer must be a choice made freely by each individual.

## Principles

- The relationship between volunteers and Sunderland Culture does not create a legally binding contract or a relationship of employment between the organisation and the volunteer. Sunderland Culture accepts volunteers on the understanding that their services are received at its sole discretion, and that a volunteer's relationship with the organisation may be terminated by either side at any time without notice and for whatever reason.
- Volunteers are not a substitute for employees and Sunderland Culture does not recruit volunteers to displace them.
- Individuals who gain employment with Sunderland Culture must step down from their volunteer roles. Staff may not be Sunderland Culture volunteers whilst also working for the organisation.

## Recruitment

When Sunderland Culture has opportunities for volunteers, where possible these are listed on Sunderland Culture's 'Opportunities' page on the website. Sometimes these will be listed on 'Sunderland Futures', the University of Sunderland's online opportunities portal. Opportunities will often also be shared through local VCS networks and Sunderland Culture's *Unlock* e-newsletter.

Sunderland Culture may select individuals from applications for voluntary opportunities and invite them to a meeting, online video call or phone call to determine whether the individual would be suitable as a volunteer for the organisation. Sunderland Culture's decision on suitability of a prospective volunteer is absolute and final.

When applying for a role, volunteers will be asked if they would like to remain on a Volunteer mailing list held by Sunderland Culture. This would mean they could be invited to take part in future volunteering roles across the organisation, without needing to re-apply. Volunteer data will be stored in accordance with our Privacy Policy (<https://sunderlandculture.org.uk/privacy-policy/>), and volunteers can opt out at any time.

## Checks and references

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks will not be carried out as standard practice for volunteers, unless they will be in regular and sustained contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults. Volunteers will be supervised by members of staff during their work in venues and/or be volunteering in spaces/venues/events where staff are present.

Individuals from outside of the UK must ensure that they have a visa or equivalent documentation which permits them to volunteer in the UK for Sunderland Culture before applying to be a volunteer.

We ask volunteers to provide contact details of at least one referee before beginning volunteering with Sunderland Culture. This reference does not have to be from current or previous employment, but should be someone who knows the volunteer well and is not a relative or close friend (unless known in a professional capacity). A referee might be a teacher, tutor, leader of a group the volunteer belongs to or mentor.

## Training and development

Volunteers will receive a venue-specific induction before volunteering commences with their staff team leader/named contact. In addition, volunteers will be provided with relevant training for their role. Sunderland Culture recognises that many volunteers have ambitions to enter into the arts, cultural or community sectors, and so this will be discussed at the application stage. If the volunteering role is ongoing or over a longer period, regular check-ins, scheduled between the volunteer and the staff supervisor, will monitor and evaluate any set goals or ambitions.

## Expenses

Reimbursement of expenses for travel costs will be paid within one working week of receipt of expense claims form and a copy of receipt/travel ticket. This should be submitted to your supervising staff member.

Any expense receipts forms submitted more than one month after the date of the receipt/ticket will not be accepted.

## Equality and Diversity

Sunderland Culture is committed to developing a volunteer cohort that is representative of the diversity of the people who live in our city. Sunderland Culture aims to make volunteer opportunities as accessible and responsive as possible to the different needs of our volunteers and audiences.

Staff supervisors will discuss any needs that prospective or existing volunteers may have in order to identify the best volunteering opportunities available and to support their full and safe involvement. When required, the Museum will make reasonable adjustments to volunteering roles where possible.

## Volunteers under the age of 18

Children and young people (under 18) may volunteer only as part of a recognised programme or as part of a specific project developed for them by Sunderland Culture. Volunteers under the age of 18 must have signed parental permission to volunteer, and when volunteering must be always supervised by a DBS-checked member of staff.

## Support

Sunderland Culture is committed to ensuring that all volunteering experiences are meaningful, enjoyable, rewarding and safe. All volunteers are assigned a member of staff to act as their supervisor during their time spent volunteering for the organisation. Any questions or concerns should be discussed with them in the first instance.

Volunteers do not have the authority to represent themselves as spokespersons for Sunderland Culture, to make contracts for the organisation, or make any other commitment on its behalf.

## Moving On

Sunderland Culture recognises that the relationship between the organisation and a volunteer may be terminated by either side at any time, without notice, and for any reason. We will offer volunteers the opportunity to feed back on their experience via an informal meeting or telephone call. Any recommendations will be taken into account so that improvements can be made where necessary.

## Health and Safety

Sunderland Culture is committed to ensuring that all volunteering experiences are safe. Volunteers are asked to attend any support, training or supervision sessions necessary in order to meet health and safety requirements.

## Safeguarding

All volunteers will be asked to familiarise themselves with Sunderland Culture's Safeguarding Policy and will be informed of how to share concerns with a designated Safeguarding lead. If the volunteer is under 18 years old or a vulnerable adult, additional measures will be put in place by staff to safeguard the volunteer.

## Insurance

Sunderland Culture holds the following insurance policies that cover volunteers:

- Public Liability Insurance
- Employers Liability Insurance

Sunderland Culture does not provide motor insurance for volunteers using their own vehicle. It is the responsibility of the volunteers to inform their motor insurance company that they are using their car in the act of volunteering. Charitable work is normally classed as social domestic pleasure use and not business use.

## Copyright

All written material, whether held on paper or electronically, which was made or acquired by a volunteer when volunteering is the property and copyright of Sunderland Culture.

## Confidentiality

While volunteering with Sunderland Culture, volunteers may have access to confidential information regarding staff, clients and other volunteers. Our confidentiality policy aims to safeguard privacy and ensure appropriate access to information. Breaches of confidentiality can occur through thoughtlessness or a lack of awareness of the consequences to an individual when disclosing confidential information.

Volunteers with Sunderland Culture should regard all information they have access to or are given as a result of their volunteering as confidential unless advised otherwise.

## Data Protection

Sunderland Culture will process volunteers' personal data in accordance with the organisations Privacy Policy and any additional privacy information in accordance with UK data protection legislation.

Volunteers shall also comply with the Museum's Privacy Policy in respect of any data which they collect, process or handle while volunteering. If any volunteers are required to collect, process, or handle personal data, all necessary steps will be taken to ensure compliance with any UK data legislation then in force before any such processing is carried out by the volunteer.