

Volunteer Policy

We welcome volunteers in a wide range of roles within our organisation, to help us engage with people and communities, and we recognise the very important contribution they make to our service.

Volunteering is intended to be mutually beneficial. As ambassadors for Cumberland Lodge, it is important that volunteers follow our decisions, policies and procedures, both general and role-specific. As defined in the agreement, we expect volunteers to be reliable, punctual and appropriately dressed and presented for a public-facing working environment.

In return, volunteers are warmly welcomed into the Cumberland Lodge community and made to feel part of our charitable mission. Volunteers should feel supported and valued for their commitments. Regular updates and timely communications with volunteers help to ensure that volunteer engagement remains high.

Definition of 'volunteer'

Cumberland Lodge defines a 'Volunteer' as someone who spends time doing a non-compulsory, unpaid activity for the benefit of Cumberland Lodge and its wider community.

Roles

Each volunteer post will have a Role Description, drafted by the Volunteer Volunteering Coordinator (VVC) and the supervisor of that role (the volunteer manager). This will set out the purpose and tasks involved in a volunteer role, including any necessary skills or time commitment required. Other duties will be for the volunteer and their supervisor to negotiate and review at regular intervals.

We also welcome volunteers who offer interest, skills and talents beyond the remit of our existing volunteer roles. In these instances, where possible, the VVC will collaborate with relevant staff to develop new, useful and interesting roles. In some cases, potential volunteers will be asked to make direct contact with other members of staff. The VVC may support members of staff by drafting role descriptions, advertising the role and other necessary administration.

The VVC is a support role for volunteer managers at Cumberland Lodge. The VVC leads on administration, recruitment and induction for some of our volunteer roles, but staff volunteer managers are expected to lead on support and supervision of any volunteers who are responsible to them.

Induction

New volunteers will receive a comprehensive induction, covering all aspects of Cumberland Lodge, both past and present. A tour of the house will be provided, covering the history and heritage of the building, the foundation of the charity and the ethos and mission of Cumberland Lodge today.

The tour will include a practical familiarisation of the site. This will include:

- Fire, first aid and health and safety procedures
- Toilets
- Storage areas for personal belongings
- Refreshment facilities
- Volunteer manager's office

Volunteers must sign both the Volunteer Agreement and the Induction Checklist before their first day.

Training and development

Full and comprehensive training will be provided for specific roles. Volunteer managers should ensure that their volunteers are fully comfortable with all aspects of their role, offering additional support or refresher training where required.

A training plan will be written before volunteers begin their role. This should outline in writing anything that volunteers need to know or deliver. If training is largely 'on the job', volunteer managers should write an outline of their training expectations and regularly check in with their volunteers. Volunteers should sign the training plan on completion.

All volunteers must be made aware of, and have access to, all relevant policies and procedures, including those relating to volunteering, health and safety, safeguarding vulnerable groups, and equal opportunities.

This role does not currently require any form of background check, but we may be required to undertake a DRB/CBS check if the role description or relevant legislation changes

Support

The Volunteer Volunteering Coordinator will take the lead on general volunteering queries and administration. Volunteer managers should ensure that any role-specific queries or concerns are responded to in a timely manner.

Volunteer managers should make every effort to ensure that their volunteers are comfortable with their responsibilities. This may require some one-to-one additional training, refresher training, or familiarisation. Contact should be made with volunteers within one week of their first day, to garner their thoughts and feedback.

Where possible, one-to-one 'catch ups' between volunteer managers and their volunteers are useful for morale and engagement. This may be done in-person, over the phone or digitally.

Frequency of meetings should be agreed between volunteer managers and their volunteers and these may vary, depending on circumstances.

Equality and diversity

Cumberland Lodge strives to create a diverse and inclusive organisation within a diverse and inclusive community. Equality is about creating a fair society where everybody has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Cumberland Lodge is committed to equal access to volunteer opportunities and equal treatment for existing volunteers.

Volunteers and volunteer managers should recognise the value of difference by promoting a culture of respect. All should respect diversity as one of the charity's key missions.

Confidentiality

Volunteers at Cumberland Lodge and may become party to information that is not in the public domain. In this case, the volunteer manager (or other member of staff) should ensure that volunteers understand that the information is confidential.

Volunteers must take care not to divulge any confidential information obtained at Cumberland Lodge. If in doubt, the volunteer manager should be contacted.

If things go wrong

We aim to create a culture of volunteering that is enjoyable and beneficial for all concerned. However, if things go wrong, every effort should be made to put things right.

Examples include poor performance, unreliable attendance or inappropriate conduct. Volunteer managers should hold honest and timely conversations with any volunteers who fall below the expected standard. The aim is to identify potential issues and address them to ensure that they do not reoccur.

If every effort has been made and there is still no change in the volunteer's performance or behaviour, or a serious breach of trust or conduct occurs, volunteers may be asked to stand down from their role. There is no legal contract between Cumberland Lodge and volunteers. It is prudent and polite for volunteer managers to hold open and honest conversations with any volunteer who is asked to stand down.

Volunteers are entitled to report their own issues or grievances, except for grievances against staff members, which should be addressed to volunteer managers in the first instance, for investigation.

Grievances against members of staff should be directed to the Executive Assistant for investigation, by a member of the Senior Management Team.

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