

# Volunteering Policy

Version 1 – February 2018

## Introduction

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in CLAPA. It is of relevance to all within the organisation, including volunteers, staff and those elected or appointed to positions of responsibility.

This policy is endorsed by CLAPA's Board of Trustees of the organisation and will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of CLAPA and its volunteers.

## Commitment

CLAPA acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways, that their contribution is unique and that volunteering can benefit users of services, staff, the wider cleft community and the volunteers themselves. CLAPA values the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering. CLAPA recognises its responsibility to arrange its volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

## Definition

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship as well as an important component of democracy. Volunteers are people who are unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community.

## Statement of values and principles

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by CLAPA and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment. The role of volunteers complements but does not replace the role of paid staff.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise CLAPA cannot be compelled to provide either regular tasks, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what CLAPA expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of CLAPA, as an organisation.

## Volunteer Coordination

All volunteers will have a nominated member of staff to offer guidance and support to help the volunteer carry out tasks effectively. Volunteers will be informed of who to contact to receive support and supervision.

The nominated post holder with overall responsibility for the development of voluntary activities within the organisation is Claire Cunniffe, Deputy Chief Executive. This person is responsible for the management and welfare of the organisation's volunteers.

## **Recruitment and Selection**

CLAPA is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs or offending background that does not create a risk to vulnerable groups including children, young people or vulnerable adults. The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out agreed tasks. Information about the volunteer not relevant to the performance of the volunteering tasks concerned will be disregarded by CLAPA in terms of recruitment and selection.

Volunteering opportunities will be widely promoted in ways that makes them accessible to all members of the community.

Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task will either be offered alternative voluntary involvement with the organisation or referred to the nearest Volunteer Centre.

All volunteers will be asked to produce two references and will be invited to have an informal discussion with their nominated member of staff prior to their induction and training if required. If the volunteer will be carrying out activities with vulnerable groups (children and/or adults) there may be other safer recruitment procedures carried out including asking a volunteer to undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check. More detailed information will be made available specific to legislative requirements and to the particular volunteer position.

Volunteers will have a clear and concise role description, which will be subsequently reviewed on a regular basis.

All new volunteers will be properly inducted into the organisation.

Volunteers will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform with confidence.

## **Training and Development**

All volunteers will be made aware of and have access to all the CLAPA's relevant policies, including those relating to volunteering, health & safety, safeguarding vulnerable groups and equal opportunities.

The development of training and support for volunteers is a high priority for CLAPA in order to equip volunteers with the necessary information and skills to carry out their tasks. The designated person named above delegates responsibility to the nominated staff members to see that this training is provided. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to attend relevant training.

Training in the supervision of volunteers will be provided for all those who have direct responsibility for supporting other volunteers.

## **Support, Supervision and Recognition**

Volunteers will have a named person to whom they can take their volunteering concerns and seek guidance and support and will have access to regular support and supervision. This will enable both the volunteer and the named person to identify, monitor and evaluate the volunteer's involvement, recognise achievements and identify individual training needs. The frequency, duration and format of supervisions will be negotiated between the volunteer and the named staff member.

A process will be developed in order to give formal recognition of the contribution of CLAPA's volunteers (e.g. website articles, thank you cards, certificates, etc.).

## **Expenses**

CLAPA recognises that the reimbursement of expenses incurred in traveling to and from the place of volunteering or in the course of volunteering is important from an equal opportunities point of view.

This is necessary to ensure that all individuals have access to voluntary opportunities. CLAPA's volunteers are able to claim reasonable out of pocket expenses, subject to the production of receipts as evidence of the expenditure. What can be reclaimed from the organisation and the calculation of expenses will be explained to the volunteer before they start any activity likely to give rise to expenses.

It is the responsibility of the nominated staff member to make volunteers aware of the procedure for the reimbursement of expenses.

## **Insurance**

CLAPA's liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them. The organisation does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage.

## **Confidentiality**

CLAPA will advise volunteers on its confidentiality policy and procedures. This would include those relating to personal information held by CLAPA relating to the volunteer. Volunteers will be expected to follow the policy and procedures when working in the community unless there is a safeguarding concern.

## **Settling Differences**

Whilst CLAPA hopes that volunteering will be a positive experience for all our volunteers, it is aware that sometimes things can go wrong. As an organisation, CLAPA is committed to ensuring that staff, volunteers and beneficiaries alike are treated fairly and are not discriminated against. For more information, please refer to CLAPA's Volunteer Problem Solving Procedure.

## **Rights and Responsibilities**

CLAPA recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- know what is (and what is not) expected of them
- have adequate support in their volunteering
- receive appreciation
- volunteer in a safe environment
- be insured
- know their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong
- receive relevant out-of-pocket expenses
- receive appropriate training
- be free from discrimination
- be offered the opportunity for personal development

CLAPA expects volunteers to:

- be reliable
- be honest
- respect confidentiality
- make the most of training and support opportunities
- carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of the organisation
- carry out tasks within agreed guidelines
- respect the work of CLAPA and not bring it into disrepute
- comply with CLAPA's policies