Volunteer Policy

Introduction

Sunderland Minster is an ancient and modern church at the heart of the city of Sunderland. Sunderland Minster's vision is to be the spiritual heartbeat of the city it serves and a place for meeting, learning and belonging. The Minster strives to be 'open to all' and this is reflected in our services and the communities we support. Our volunteer team are an integral part of our mission, our successes and our future focusses and they enable us to deliver a warm welcome and foster lasting relationships with our neighbours.

Volunteering at Sunderland Minster

This policy sets out how and why Sunderland Minster engages with volunteers. It explains the rationale behind our volunteer programme as well as what volunteers can expect when they join us.

Volunteering is:

"…An important expression of citizenship and essential to democracy. It is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community and can take many forms. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain" *The Volunteering Code of Practice*

Volunteering and its Surprising Benefits – HelpGuide.org

Involving volunteers in our daily life and work at Sunderland Minster allows us to:

- Enhance the warm, friendly welcome offered to all who visit us, whatever their reason for doing so from congregation to event guest to corporate hires.
- Open up our stories – exploring the rich heritage of our wonderful building.

- Offer a range of opportunities for a diverse range of people to get involved in the life of the Minster.
- Empower those volunteering with us to expand their own sense of worth through the development of their skills and experience.

Volunteering at Sunderland Minster revolves around the following key values:

- **Choice -** Volunteers are always free to choose when and how to volunteer with us within the available roles and set working times.
- **Diversity -** Volunteering is open to all, regardless of background, race, age, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, faith or any other factor.
- **Mutual Respect -** We recognise that volunteers have individual reasons for joining us and that these reasons will be different for each volunteer. Therefore, we support volunteers to fulfil their own potential, aims and goals through their volunteering with us.
- **Recognition -** We ensure that we provide regular opportunities to recognise the contribution made by our volunteers to both our organisation and to the wider community.

Recruitment

All volunteers are recruited in line with our **Safer Recruitment for Volunteers & Equal Opportunities** policies. Expectations of volunteering are set out in the **Volunteer Expectations** document which all volunteers are expected to sign when commencing their role**.**

Safeguarding

In addition to all volunteer recruitment being carried out within the realms of our **Safer Recruitment for Volunteers** policy, the Minster also operates under specific Safeguarding principles detailed in the **Safeguarding Information for Staff & Volunteers** document.

Induction and Training

All volunteers receive a comprehensive induction to Sunderland Minster, as detailed in the **Volunteer Induction Pack.**

Each volunteer role has a clearly defined role description and specific core training programme with timescales for completion. Additional training needs are identified by the Volunteer Coordinators (these are the appointed Church Wardens).

Expenses

Sunderland Minster covers the cost of all equipment needed for volunteers to carry out their role.

We are not able to reimburse volunteers for out of pocket expenses such as travel or subsistence costs but some exceptions are given for longer and/or later events, this will be detailed in the specific event plan.

Communication, Representation and the Volunteer Voice

The Minster uses multiple methods of communication to keep in touch with volunteers including briefing sheets and newsletters.

Volunteers meet regularly with Church Wardens and Minster staff to discuss the direction of volunteering at the Minster, new developments and areas of change.

Concerns and Complaints

Concerns and complaints raised either by or regarding volunteers are investigated by the Volunteer Coordinator in line with the **Complaints Procedure**.

References for Volunteers

Our organisation values and respects the motivation and skills of our volunteers and in line with our commitment to empowering worth in our volunteers, we are happy to provide a reference once the volunteer has completed 10 volunteering sessions with us. References are completed by the Volunteer Coordinator in consultation with other staff as appropriate.

Health & Safety

We have a duty to look after the safety and well-being of our volunteers. Further details are available in the **Sunderland Minster Health and Safety Policy.**

Insurance

Sunderland Minster indemnifies its volunteers against claims made against them for injury or damage whilst engaged in agreed activity on behalf of the Minster. Our liability

insurance document is displayed in the Level 1 office and a copy is held within the Volunteer Folder stored in the Servery.

What We Ask Of You

1. Carry out your role to the best of your ability and follow the guidance provided. Be open and amenable to training relevant and proportionate to your role.

2. Have a positive approach to training offered and participate in meetings and reviews.

3. Treat all guests, staff, volunteers and the public with respect and kindness.

4. Attend agreed shifts or inform us in advance if you're unable to attend.

5. Respect our policies and procedures, including those related to safeguarding, confidentiality, health and safety, equity and diversity, and data protection.

6. Be an ambassador for Sunderland Minster. Promote and uphold the organisation's mission, aims and values at all times.

7. Communicate openly and let us know if you have any concerns or need support.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

All volunteer data is handled in line with the **Sunderland Minster Privacy Notice** and in accordance with the G**eneral Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018**.

Volunteers are made aware of their responsibilities under this policy as part of their induction.

Volunteers only have access to Minster data necessary to them fulfilling their role.

Monitoring and Review of Policy

It is the responsibility of the PCC to review this Volunteer Policy on an annual basis or earlier if the need arises.

All supporting policies are stored in the Volunteer Folder

End of policy