

Emerging Voices: Volunteering Policy (vs 1 Jan 2024)

Introduction

Emerging Voices is a music charity based in Yorkshire that enables adults with lived experience of mental ill health to reach their potential as musicians and artists in a collaborative and friendly environment. Our vision is to promote social inclusion and empower people who experience mental ill health through music.

As an entirely volunteer-run organisation (our board members are themselves volunteers), volunteers are crucial to achieving our mission and providing a high standard of support and service to all who benefit from our various activities. This document is for guidance and information only and does not form a contract of employment.

In adopting this volunteer policy Emerging Voices wishes to:

- a) Formally acknowledge and support the role of volunteers in its work
- b) Set out the principles governing the involvement of volunteers and provide a set of guidelines to ensure good practice in working with volunteers
- c) Encourage and enable, rather than restrict, the involvement of volunteers.

This volunteer policy and accompanying guidelines are intended for use by Emerging Voices trustees and volunteers. Please note, this guidance relates to those volunteers specifically working with Emerging Voices, and not those working for other organisations.

Volunteer Policy Statement

Emerging Voices Equal Opportunities

- As an engager of volunteers, Emerging Voices is committed to a policy of equal opportunities. This principle will apply to service delivery, recruitment, promotion, training, facilities, procedures and all terms and conditions.

Recruitment & Selection

- Recruitment of volunteers will be from all sections of the community. Appropriate targeting may be used.

Information & Training

- Volunteers will receive full information about their chosen area of work and will be given a clear idea of their responsibilities to Emerging Voices
- Volunteers will be given induction and training in the specific tasks to be undertaken
- Volunteers will be consulted in decisions which affect them.

Support & Supervision

- Volunteers will be assigned a named contact person for supervision and support.

Problem-Solving

- Emerging Voices recognises that problems can sometimes arise and we aim to identify and resolve these problems at the earliest stage. Volunteers who have a problem of any kind should discuss it in the first instance with their named contact person.

Confidentiality

- Volunteers will be bound by the same confidentiality conditions as Emerging Voices trustees.

Expenses & Insurance

- Emerging Voices will ensure that there is a clear and accessible system to enable volunteers to claim out of pocket expenses in line with our Volunteer Expenses Policy.
- Volunteers will be adequately covered by insurance while carrying out agreed duties.

Health and Safety

- All volunteers are covered by the same health and safety policies and provisions as trustees.

References

- On the basis of their voluntary work, volunteers will have the right to request a reference.

Monitoring & Evaluation

- Emerging Voices will systemically monitor and evaluate its involvement of volunteers with reference to this Volunteer Policy.

N.B. This document refers to other policies which will have been shared with volunteers as part of their induction process.

Guidelines for Involving Volunteers

These guidelines are intended for use along with the policy statement. They give further detail on recommended good practice in the involvement of volunteers within Emerging Voices.

Recruitment

- Emerging Voices will not discriminate in recruitment, particularly on the grounds of gender, marital status, disability, race, colour, religious belief, political belief, sexuality, nationality, ethnic origin, age, trade union activity, responsibility for dependents or employment status
- In order to reach a wide section of the community, recruitment should be by a variety of means
- Positive action in recruitment may be used for specific voluntary tasks. For example, specific work with people with lived experience of mental ill health.

Initial Contact

- People interested in becoming volunteers with Emerging Voices should be invited for an informal talk with a trustee. They should:
 - a) Be given written information to take away, or have this emailed to them shortly after the initial meeting
 - b) Have their role explained (see appendix for role responsibilities) and how it fits in with Emerging Voices overall aims and ethos
 - c) Have the next stages of becoming a volunteer with Emerging Voices outlined.
- If the volunteer wishes to proceed with moving to volunteering application at this stage, the contact trustee should request full contact details, as well as a minimum of one personal reference from the volunteer.

Selection

- All volunteers should complete an application form. A written reference will be required. If the volunteer is to carry out specialised work (e.g. marketing, finance,) the reference should relate directly to this
- If volunteers may be working with vulnerable people, or in positions of trust, they should be asked to provide information about any criminal convictions that they may have. They will also need to complete a DBS check
- All information should be dealt with in the strictest confidence and should not necessarily prejudice the person being accepted for voluntary work.

Records

- Minimum details should be kept on volunteers. This will include the reference, contact details, relevant personal experience, and any other relevant information such as emergency contact details
- Record keeping must be secure but accessible to other trustees if the contact trustee is absent
- The Data Protection Act enables people to access information held about them.

Induction and First Sessions

- An induction email should be sent to all new volunteers and should cover:
 - a) Role of volunteers
 - b) Responsibilities of volunteers
 - c) Contact trustee
 - d) Need for confidentiality
 - e) Ethos/values, etc
 - f) System for payment of expenses
 - g) Background to Emerging Voices
 - h) Building orientation
 - i) Health and Safety, including Fire Safety
- First sessions will vary for each type of volunteer role

Expectations of Volunteers

Emerging Voices should expect volunteers to:

- a) Participate in induction sessions
- b) Comply with existing policies and procedures.
- c) Undertake voluntary work at agreed times and to the standard required
- d) Inform relevant trustees if unable to attend.
- e) Give some notice if unable to continue volunteering.
- f) Raise any issues of concern relating to their voluntary work with their contact trustee or, if this is not possible, with another trustee.
- g) Agree with the aims and ethos of Emerging Voices
- h) Behave in an appropriate manner to all participants in whatever capacity when volunteering, recognising they are a representative of Emerging Voices. This means being polite, friendly and encouraging to all.
- i) Respect confidentiality as appropriate.
- j) Not put themselves or others at risk, including being in a fit condition to work. If you do not think you are in a fit condition to work through illness or other reasons, please inform us ASAP. Don't be a hero!

Volunteers should expect Emerging Voices to:

- a) Be clear what is (and is not) expected of them
- b) Provide adequate support for their volunteering.
- c) Recognise their contribution.
- d) Ensure safe working conditions.
- e) Provide appropriate training.
- f) Provide a working environment free from discrimination.

Time commitment

- At the outset of their engagement, volunteers will indicate to their contact trustee approximately how many hours they can commit to per month, as well as any areas of responsibility they may not be able to cover for a variety of reasons. If for any reason a volunteer is persistently unable to commit to the initial hours stated, their contact trustee will have a conversation with them to establish what would be a more realistic level of commitment. This is important so that both Emerging Voices and the volunteer are clear on what commitment is being agreed to

- Emerging Voices reserves the right to ask volunteers to leave and will give reasons in writing if requested.

Support, Supervision and Problem-Solving

- Appropriate support should be available to each volunteer. The type and level of support will depend on the needs of the volunteer and the nature of their role. Full information on this will be provided during induction
- If a complaint about a volunteer arises, refer to the complaint's procedure.

Expenses

- The procedures for claiming expenses should be clear and accessible
- All agreed out of pocket expenses should be reimbursed on production of receipts
- The pro forma should be used and the volunteer should liaise with the finance team.

Insurance

- It should be ensured that volunteers have appropriate insurance cover in terms of employers and public liability.

Appendix:

Possible Volunteer Role Responsibilities

- Course/ project Session Assistant
- Event Volunteer
- Choir Supporter
- Mentoring.

Review

- This policy comes into force on ? February 2024 and Emerging Voices commits itself to review the policy as and when changes in legislation or other factors make this necessary. The policy will be subject to a comprehensive review two years after its introduction. (Review date: ? February 2026).

Policy Date: January 2024