**Volunteering within Medway Adult Education**

**Policy Statement for Medway Adult Education.**

We offer a range of exciting volunteering opportunities which will enhance the work of Medway Adult Education and enrich our community.

We aim to engage volunteers from a diverse range of backgrounds, skills and experiences.

We will enable volunteers to make a useful contribution to society, develop their own skills, achieve their own goals and contribute to the goals and values of Medway Adult Education.

We will ensure that in terms of employment rights and responsibilities all volunteers will be given parity with employees.

* Volunteers will not be used to replace paid staff.
* Volunteers are not recruited as a substitute for paid staff.
* Volunteers will not be used to do the work of paid staff during an industrial dispute.

Services provided by volunteers should enhance and not replace those provided by paid staff.

We will communicate clearly with our volunteers. When more than one organisation is involved in a session it will be made clear to volunteers.

**Definition**

For the purpose of this document, volunteering is defined as the act of a person choosing to give time without the expectation of financial reward.

**Application**

Medway Adult Education will ask volunteers to complete an application form, attend an informal interview and to provide the names and address of **two** personal referees. The referees must have known the applicant for at least two years and must not be family members.

Medway Adult Education will try to place the volunteer in a role suited to their interests, experience and abilities. The volunteer will have a review after an agreed trial period of 6 weeks. This is to check that the quality of work is maintained to an acceptable standard and to ensure that the needs of the volunteer are being met.

**Vetting**

We aim to ensure that every adult learner is protected and kept safe from harm whilst engaging with staff or volunteers in this organisation. In order to achieve this we will ensure our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, trained and supervised. (see Medway Adult Education Safeguarding Policy )

We will treat any applicant for a voluntary position within our organisation fairly and not discriminate unfairly against the subject of a disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

If the subject of the Disclosure Check is found to be on the ‘Disqualified from Working with (Children/Adults) List’ we will notify the Police that an attempt has been made to acquire work with adults.

**Training and supervision**

Volunteers will receive induction training, which will include an overview of the organisation to ensure they know its purpose, values, services and structure. Volunteers will then receive both Safeguarding training, and Prevent training. Training on specific areas such as health and safety procedures, identifying and reporting abuse, and confidentiality will be given as a priority to new volunteers.

Relevant support will be provided to volunteers on an on-going basis, including information about their role and opportunities for practising the skills needed for the task.

**Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check**

If the volunteer’s role involves contact with adults at risk, a DBS check will be required. This will involve the completion of the DBS form and the provision of the forms of identity laid down by the DBS. There is no charge for DBS checks for volunteers.

**Expectations of Volunteers within Medway Adult Education**

To be valued as an individual

To be respected for their knowledge and skills

To have support, feedback, appreciation and encouragement

To have opportunities to contribute to improvements

To have opportunities to discuss concerns and problems relating to their role

Not to have their role changed without prior discussion

To be insured

To have clear guidelines within which to carry out their role

A safe environment

Medway Adult Education would like its volunteers to:

Make a regular commitment to volunteering, according to the timings of their

activity and support the learners fully.

Give as much notice of absence as possible

Treat staff, other volunteers and members of the public with respect

Follow advice and instructions, especially relating to health and safety

Alert the Lead Safeguarding Officer Candice Fanning of any concerns they have

as soon as they arise

**Insurances**

Medway Council holds public and employer’s liability insurance policies. The volunteer is covered by these policies whilst acting for and on behalf of Medway Council in connection with its business.

Volunteers who use their own vehicles as part of their volunteering role must have a valid driving licence, adequate car insurance and a roadworthy motor vehicle.

We recommend that volunteers advise their motor insurers that they are using their vehicles for voluntary work.

**Equal opportunities**

Medway Council’s equal opportunities policy states that:

‘No service user, employee, job applicant, partner, contractor, supplier or member of the public will be discriminated against, harassed or receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of race; ethnicity; nationality; ethnic or national origin; colour; disability; gender (including gender identity or presentation); marital status; family commitments; caring responsibilities; sexual orientation; age; HIV status; religious or political beliefs; social class; trades union activity; or irrelevant spent convictions.’

This policy applies to Medway Adult Education volunteers as well.

**Health and safety**

The council has a statutory responsibility, under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, to its volunteers, employees, and members of the public, to ensure their health, safety and welfare whilst on council premises, or when undertaking council business off-site.

Volunteers will be given instruction on health and safety matters appropriate to the role they are carrying out.

Volunteers are expected to operate in a safe manner and not to act in a way that may cause injury to themselves or others.

**Code of conduct**

Volunteers are expected at all times to display courtesy and integrity towards staff, members of the public and other volunteers. They should not do anything that will bring the council or its employees into disrepute.

**Absence**

Volunteers are asked to inform the Learner Service Co-Ordinator Candice Fanning if they will not be able to attend. It is helpful if volunteers can give as much notice as possible so that cover may be arranged. There may be occasions when volunteers wish to take a break from their volunteering role for a time and Medway Adult Education respects this.

**Confidentiality and security**

Any information seen during volunteering should be regarded as confidential unless advised otherwise. No information should be released to anyone outside Medway Adult Education without permission from the Learner Service Co-ordinator .

Volunteers whilst acting on behalf of Medway Council, should not disclose personal details (home address, phone number, email address etc) to members of the public; but should use their business address when an address is requested.

Medway Adult Education will fulfil its duty to safeguard the information contained within application forms, DBS forms.

The personal details of our volunteers will be held in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act and will only be used for the purpose of managing the volunteers within Medway Adult Education.

**Leaving Medway Adult Education**

The volunteer is free to leave at any time. It would be appreciated if as much notice as possible can be given, as it will give the Learner Service Co-ordinator chance to recruit a replacement volunteer.

It would help improve our volunteering programme if volunteers would attend a leaving interview and provide feedback on their volunteering experience and the reason why they are leaving.