



Volunteering policy

Introduction

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) recognises that volunteers' help can make an appropriate and significant contribution to our work and to achieving our objectives. This document explains what we understand by volunteering, and sets out the principles, practices, and procedures that SCoJeC will follow in the appointment, management, support, and control of volunteers.

Definition

Volunteers are individuals who provide their experience, knowledge, and skills to an organisation, free of charge, with the primary aim of helping the organisation to achieve its objectives, or of bringing some benefit to the local community. In this sense, volunteers are to be distinguished from work placements, students, and secondees, whose primary aim is usually to obtain certain work experience or to carry out work or research in certain areas for their own benefit, although we recognise that volunteering can also provide a volunteer with experiences and opportunities for personal and career development.

Note that, in this document, "volunteer" refers to a particular role; if the same person is also be separately employed by SCoJeC to perform other tasks that will be clearly stated.

Support and Feedback

Volunteering for SCoJeC offers a real opportunity to make a difference to the Jewish Community of Scotland, and we want our volunteers to know how much we appreciate this. We will do our best to make sure their experience of volunteering with us is both enjoyable and rewarding. To this end we will offer our volunteers support, supervision, and training, as required, to help them fulfil their role and to develop skills and experience, while also adding value to the work being delivered by SCoJeC.

We understand that some volunteers may wish to terminate their volunteering role earlier than anticipated for whatever reason. In that event, or at the planned conclusion of the role, we will offer the volunteer an exit interview at which he or she will have the opportunity to reflect on the experience and to receive feedback. This will be used to inform any subsequent review of organisational volunteering policy and practice as necessary.

Principles

In appointing volunteers SCoJeC will adhere to the following principles:

- Our volunteers are valued and their contributions to SCoJeC and the Jewish Community are appreciated;
- Our volunteers support the work of paid staff to enhance what SCoJec delivers;
- Our volunteers are ambassadors for SCoJeC, so we expect them to act in ways that protect and enhance our good reputation at all times;
- Our volunteers will not be engaged in work that facilitates the loss of an existing employee's post;
- Our volunteers are treated with dignity and respect and are considered as members of our team.

Recruitment of volunteers

Volunteers will be selected through the following process:

Step 1

The following items must be agreed by the Director before a proposed volunteer placement at SCoJeC is implemented:

- a role description, outlining the specific tasks, responsibilities and reporting lines of the volunteer;
- terms and conditions including the duration, hours, expenses, insurance, etc, relating to the placement;
- a person specification, outlining the relevant experience, skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary to carry out the role effectively;
- a recruitment plan, including whether to advertise the opportunity or to offer it to an individual who has already volunteered his or her assistance, and if the former, the text and placement of advertisements, and a closing date for applications, and if the latter, reasons why this course of action has been chosen.

Step 2

The prospective volunteer, or short-listed candidates following advertisement, will be invited to a meeting with a panel including the intended line manager and the Director or her/his representative, and for a substantial placement, a member of the SCoJeC Executive or Council, to discuss the proposed role, its requirements, and each other's expectations, based on the agreed role outline and the person specification, with a view to assessing mutual suitability. If a prospective volunteer demonstrates a lack of understanding or support for SCoJeC's objectives, ethos, or policies, he or she will be deemed automatically to be unsuitable for a volunteer position at SCoJeC.

Following the meeting, the SCoJeC representatives will make a decision within one week regarding the individual's suitability for the particular role.

Step 3

Prior to commencing his or her placement at SCoJeC, each successful volunteer must provide a reference from a suitable person (who may not be a relation) attesting to their character and their suitability for the position.

In addition, where relevant, engagement is dependent on SCoJeC obtaining a satisfactory Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme Record.

Step 4

Prior to commencing his or her placement at SCoJeC, each successful volunteer shall be formally allocated to a particular named person who will manage, supervise, and support the volunteer throughout the duration of her or his placement at SCoJeC. This person will act as a mentor for the volunteer, and will meet the volunteer regularly to review his or her activities and discuss any problems or issues that may arise.

The manager's responsibilities will include ensuring that the volunteer receives the following:

- a planned induction to SCoJeC, including this and other relevant policies;
- regular supervision and support sessions;
- supportive feedback on their contribution;
- adequate office accommodation, equipment, and services to perform his or her tasks effectively.

Equal opportunities

In accordance with SCoJeC's equal opportunity policy, volunteer placements at SCoJeC will be open to individuals irrespective of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, or marital status.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

SCoJeC has a strict confidentiality policy that all staff and volunteers are obliged to observe. All information relating to the volunteer's activities with SCoJeC or originating from SCoJeC is to be considered confidential and is not to be disclosed to any third party without advance permission, and SCoJeC staff and volunteers remain under a continuing obligation not to disclose or make use of any confidential information following the termination of their service. Irrespective of the reason, method, or timing of termination of engagement by SCoJeC, by entering into that engagement, a volunteer undertakes to return to SCoJeC on or before termination, all documents obtained by him or her in the course of his or her engagement, any copies thereof, and any SCoJeC property in his or her possession, and to delete irretrievably any information that relates to the activities of SCoJeC stored on any computer memory device that he or she does not return.

Managing expectations

The relationship between SCoJeC and our volunteers is entirely voluntary and does not imply any contract, and volunteers will not be subject to SCoJeC's formal disciplinary procedures, nor have access to SCoJeC's grievance procedures. However, since it is important that SCoJeC is able to maintain its agreed undertakings and also that our volunteers find their contribution to our service enjoyable and rewarding, volunteers will be entitled to instigate the following procedure, initially by raising the issue with their line manager, or, if the issue concerns their line manager, direct with the Director of SCoJeC.

There will be a trial period of six weeks to give both SCoJeC and the volunteer time to assess whether there is a match in expectations. If not, or if at any time either party wishes to raise a concern, it will be dealt with as follows:

- Initially the Director of SCoJeC or his or her nominee will meet the volunteer to discuss the concern;
- If this does not resolve the concern, then a meeting will be arranged with a member of the SCoJeC Executive at which the volunteer will be given the opportunity to state his or her case;
- The volunteer will be entitled to be accompanied if he or she wishes.
- If the issues or problems are still not resolved, either party may need to make a decision to end the volunteering arrangement.

Please note that the need for any particular volunteering role, or the actual requirements of a particular role, may change from time-to-time at SCoJeC's discretion, or cease entirely. If it is not possible to agree a new volunteer role, the agreement will cease.

Termination

The role and placement of the volunteer may be terminated by the Director at one week's notice, or immediately if behaviour equivalent to gross misconduct is deemed to have occurred, including failure to undertake tasks that have been allotted to him or her. Any delay by SCoJeC in exercising its rights to terminate shall not constitute a waiver of those rights.

In all cases the volunteer will be entitled to an explanation of the decision and action taken, and the Director will report any such terminations to the Chair of SCoJeC.

Expenses

SCoJeC values our volunteers and wishes to ensure that volunteers are not out of pocket as a result of working for us. Volunteers will be entitled to travel expenses, and reasonable subsistence allowance, but in that capacity may not receive payment for their time or services or for any other reason, although they may be separately employed in another capacity.

Travel will be reimbursed on the basis of receipted actual costs up to published standard class fares, unless previously approved by the Director. Travel by car when previously authorised will normally be reimbursed on the basis of actual receipts for fuel unless otherwise agreed in advance.

We will also reimburse any other reasonable out of pocket subsistence and administrative expenses against receipts, subject to guidelines agreed from time to time by the Executive.

You are expected to claim any expenses incurred, in agreed written format, during the last week of each month. These will normally be reimbursed within a week of receipt of claim.

Insurance

SCoJeC is protected by employer's public liability, professional indemnity, and personal accident insurance that extends to our volunteers whilst they are on our premises or engaged in any activities authorised by the organisation, so long as they follow the policies, processes, and instructions relevant to their roles.

Details of our insurance cover is obtainable upon request.

Training and involvement

Where a volunteer is based at SCoJeC on a day to day basis he or she will be expected to be involved and included in general staff activities, such a staff meetings, and to have general access to SCoJeC offices.

Monitoring and review

It will be the responsibility of the Director periodically to review the operation of SCoJeC's volunteer policy.



Scottish Council of
Jewish Communities

Volunteering Agreement

I (print name)

agree to assist SCoJeC in a voluntary capacity and accept the terms of the Volunteer Policy set out above.

In particular, I acknowledge that I will :

- perform my volunteering role to the best of my ability;
- follow SCoJeC’s procedures and standards, including those relating to equal opportunities in relation to its staff, volunteers, and service users;
- meet time commitments and expected standards as required;
- remain under a continuing obligation not to, at any time, disclose or make use of any confidential information belonging to or relating to SCoJeC or any individuals;
- provide an appropriate independent reference, and to agree to a Disclosure Scotland check being carried out where and when necessary.

I also undertake that at any time on request and in any event on or before the termination of my engagement as a volunteer with SCoJeC, I will:

- return to the Director all documents obtained by me in the course of carrying out my responsibilities together with any copies thereof that I am aware of, and
- delete irretrievably any information relating to the activities of SCoJeC that is stored on any computer memory device that is in my possession or under my control outside the premises of SCoJeC that I do not return.

I understand and accept all the terms of this Volunteer Policy and Agreement, and in particular that there is no employment relationship being created either now or at any time in the future, and that this agreement is not intended to be a legally binding contract between the parties and may be cancelled at any time.

Signed.....

Date.....