

# ENGLISH HERITAGE EDUCATION VOLUNTEERS POLICY

## 1. Introduction

This policy sets out the principles for voluntary involvement in education-based activities at English Heritage sites. It is of relevance to education volunteers and everyone concerned with recruiting, supporting, developing and managing volunteers and promoting volunteering activity. It will be kept under review to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of English Heritage and its volunteers.

Learning is at the heart of English Heritage's 5-year strategic plan. We aim to help people understand and learn from the historic environment, to value it, care for it and – importantly – enjoy it. We will achieve this directly through learning programmes at over 400 historic sites in our care, through wider engagement with the public and through working with partners.

## 2. Policy statement

The Education Department intends the education volunteering programme to be mutually beneficial for English Heritage and volunteers. For English Heritage, the introduction of volunteers will increase the number and range of Discovery Visits and other activities for education groups by introducing more people on site to help deliver them. For the volunteer, the benefits of participating include learning new skills, meeting new people and helping to ensure that the historic environment is understood and enjoyed by our visitors.

English Heritage recognises that volunteers are a valuable resource, and it is grateful for the service that they offer. It also recognises that they share the same objective of protecting and promoting understanding of the Historic Environment. Volunteers will not replace the work of employees; they will not be asked to carry out activities of such a nature as to deprive employees of any component of their work. Volunteers enable English Heritage to broaden the range of activities and resources for educational visitors to our sites.

Volunteers willingly contribute their time and service, and in respect of this commitment they should be made to feel welcome by the organisation. English Heritage hopes that the relationship is of mutual benefit, and that volunteers enjoy what they do and gain satisfaction from the help that they are giving. Additionally, volunteering with English Heritage may be an aid to career opportunities and in certain circumstances may help towards the attainment of recognised qualifications.

English Heritage believes that the contribution of all sections of society is important in making its services appropriate and accessible to all. It aims to ensure that members of the community have equal opportunity to give voluntary service and to do this by:

- creating an image of English Heritage that is inclusive rather than exclusive;
- demonstrating English Heritage's commitment to volunteers and best practice in volunteer management;

- following English Heritage's Equal Opportunities Policy, and ensuring that the Statement of Values is understood by volunteers and employees alike;
- encouraging employees and existing volunteers to be open and welcoming to new volunteers;
- ensuring that barriers to involvement are recognised and removed.
- valuing all volunteers, regardless of type of service or level of commitment.

The education team at English Heritage recognises and values the contribution that volunteers can make. The time, skills, experience, enthusiasm and knowledge of volunteers is a means of fulfilling English Heritage's learning aims. The education volunteering programme is committed to delivering a quality assured programme that recognises and addresses the individual motivations of volunteers.

### **3. Status and roles**

Volunteers give of their time and service to English Heritage, and there is no obligation for them to attend or to do required tasks. In the same way, English Heritage is not obliged to provide work or provide any benefit for activities undertaken. The relationship is based on mutual trust and understanding, and there is not a legally binding contract.

On starting the volunteer will receive a "Role Description" outlining the tasks and duties involved. This will also detail the support that the volunteer can expect from English Heritage and the conduct that English Heritage expects of the volunteer.

The educational volunteers will be undertaking roles which are specifically associated with the delivery of on site learning at selected sites. Their roles will vary, depending on the needs and activities being run at each site, but it is anticipated that the volunteers will be involved with meeting education groups, undertaking research for the Education Team, assisting with or leading school workshops and demonstrating or developing resources.

The volunteers' work should not interfere with the day to day running of a department (i.e. Visitor Operations). The education volunteers will be undertaking roles associated with the Education Team and the delivery of the Learning Strategy only.

Paid members of English Heritage may volunteer if the volunteer role description is significantly different to their job description in their employment contract. This must take place outside of normal working hours and permission needs to be sought from their Head of Department.

There are no restrictions on people volunteering from the European Union. Volunteers from outside the EU (including refugees and asylum seekers) need to have an appropriate visa or confirmation that they are able to undertake work in this country.

People claiming Job Seekers Allowance and other benefits can volunteer and there is no maximum number of hours as long as they still meet the conditions of benefit. It is the volunteer's responsibility to seek advice from their benefits advisor when looking for voluntary work.

#### **4. Age limits**

There is no upper age limit to volunteering for English Heritage. The minimum age for education volunteering for the purposes of the pilot programme is 18 to be reviewed at the end of the pilot in autumn 2007.

#### **5. Recruitment**

“Open Days” will take place at selected sites throughout the country; these will provide opportunities for potential volunteers to see what is on offer. Promotion for the programme will be dealt with on a site-by-site basis and volunteers will be recruited at a local level. The recruitment process will be open and transparent, for example using posters, flyers and advertising in the local press. Applications of interest should be addressed to the Education Volunteers Manager.

#### **6. Application process**

Following the recruitment campaign and Open Day, potential volunteers will be invited for an informal interview to explore their motivations and suitability for the volunteering opportunity. If people would like to pursue volunteering opportunities within the education department, a registration form must be completed and returned to the Education Volunteers Manager. Volunteers' skills will be matched to the most suitable task; however, flexibility exists to allow volunteers to learn new skills. We will aim to contact volunteers in a way which is most sympathetic to their needs.

New volunteers are required to provide details of two people who can act as referees and these will be followed up by the Education Volunteers Manager. A letter of agreement/confirmation will be sent to the volunteer if their application has been successful. An Induction and training programme will be set up as soon as possible after their acceptance.

Once the details have been established, the manager will send out the Reference Request letters to the referees. The volunteer may start before the references are received, but these should arrive no later than two weeks afterwards.

The Confirmation Letter will be sent to the volunteer's home address along with the Role Description, and will state a time to return for the Induction. The volunteer must sign and return the form and confirm that they are fit enough to undertake the tasks contained in the Role Description. Any details still outstanding from the interview can be completed at the induction.

#### **7. Re-imbusement and reward**

An education volunteer is someone who commits time for the benefit of others (in this case English Heritage Education Department), through his/her choice and expects no financial reward with the exception of the reimbursement of out of pocket expenses.

- Travel costs will normally be reimbursed and will be on the basis of actual fares or the mileage rate of 25p per mile within a 20 mile radius (subject to a maximum claim of 20 miles per day). All travel expenses will be paid for and funds will be transferred to bank accounts via BACS. Bank details must be provided for this purpose. The Education Volunteers Manager signs off travel expenses on a monthly basis.

- Refreshments, such as tea and biscuits, may be provided whilst on duty. Other refreshments such as meals will not be provided.
- Free entry to English Heritage sites may be provided in recognition of the time given by volunteers in the form of an EH membership. This will be given after a satisfactory probation period of 4 months. All volunteers will also need to have completed 60 hours of service to receive this reward. The membership lasts for one year and is renewable if regular volunteering continues.

An essential part of the Education Volunteering Programme will be to recognise the contribution volunteers will be making to educational activities at English Heritage sites. English Heritage site staff will ensure appropriate formal and informal ways of recognition are given to volunteers.

### **8. Management, supervision & support**

The management, supervision and support of the volunteers will be based on a three stage process, involving the Education Volunteers Manager, Education Managers and a nominated person from site staff who will be acting as a liaison between the volunteer and the Education Department (please see document: Management, Supervision & Support outlining the framework). All volunteers will have a clear framework of support, with a designated member of staff that they will have frequent access to. Volunteers will receive clarification of the support framework in the Volunteer Pack provided during induction.

### **9. Induction & training**

All volunteers will undertake an induction and training programme relevant to the tasks which they will be performing. The programme will include an induction outlining their role, health & safety, security & emergency procedures and English Heritage policies. The programme will also involve site-specific training; this might include learning about the history of the site and other site related issues. All new education volunteers will be issued with a volunteer pack which will include the following information: site information; CRB information; English Heritage information, volunteer role description and health & safety policy.

In-house training and support will be made available to English Heritage staff who will be working with and managing volunteers.

### **10. Insurance**

Once the arrangement has been formally accepted, through a Letter of Appointment, volunteers are covered by English Heritage's own indemnity arrangements. Details of the indemnity cover are issued to volunteers on starting.

### **11. Security, Confidentiality and Copyright**

Volunteers must understand that for security purposes English Heritage requires confirmation of identity and two references. They will be made aware of security issues on site and where they may or may not go. Volunteers must also be aware of the need for confidentiality where they have access to sensitive information.

Similarly, the supervisor is responsible for ensuring that all correspondence and personal details relating to the volunteer are kept secure and confidential.

English Heritage also asks that the volunteer assigns copyright to English Heritage for any material produced as part of their duties. Those who are unwilling to accept this should inform their supervisor beforehand.

All patents, copyright, design rights and other intellectual property and proprietary rights ("IP Rights") in all Data prepared or supplied by English Heritage to the volunteer shall remain the property of English Heritage. All "IP Rights" in all Data prepared or developed by the volunteer under or in connection with the role are hereby assigned to and shall vest in English Heritage free from any encumbrance and with full title guaranteed.

## **12. Health and Safety**

It is the Volunteers responsibility to act in a safe manner and not to put themselves or others at risk, and managers must provide appropriate Health and Safety training regarding this. Volunteers must not undertake tasks without appropriate protective clothing and this should be supplied by English Heritage.

## **13. Equal Opportunities**

English Heritage values and appreciates the full worth of all volunteers and everyone with whom we come into contact during the course of our work.

English Heritage acknowledges, respects and celebrates the cultural diversity of England's heritage in our activities and we are committed to promoting access to the historic environment for everyone, including improving physical access for people with disabilities. As an employer, English Heritage is committed to policies which encourage equality of opportunity for everyone. Applicants for volunteer positions are welcome from all sections of the community.

We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. Each individual will be respected for the separate contributions that he or she can make to the work of English Heritage.

We believe that all volunteers have the right to be treated with dignity and respect at work and to feel included. Open and frank exchange of views and trust, freely given, are to be encouraged. To support this, we will seek to ensure that everyone associated with English Heritage understands what this means in practice. English Heritage will support those who act professionally and in good faith in their day-to-day work. We will not tolerate any form of harassment or intimidation in the workplace or infringement of the principles put forward in this statement.

## **14. Problems**

The relationship between English Heritage and volunteers is one of mutual benefit and trust. It is expected that any problems that arise will be resolved through reasonableness and goodwill by all parties.

### Health

Volunteers must not attend site if they are unwell, and they should notify their supervisor if they are unable to attend. It is also the volunteer's personal responsibility to inform their supervisor if they are unable to perform a task.

Supervisors will try to find suitable duties for volunteers taking into account their capability. However volunteers cannot be allowed to put themselves or others at risk by taking on roles for which they are not fit.

### Disagreements

Occasionally a volunteer may have a disagreement with their supervisor or other employees and volunteers. If this cannot be resolved satisfactorily by the volunteer's supervisor then the volunteer may approach the Education Volunteer Manager outlining the complaint. A response should be given within 14 days. The supervisor and Education Volunteer Manager will ensure that the volunteer's views are treated seriously and dealt with fairly.

Where a supervisor has concerns about a volunteer's conduct, performance or reliability they will discuss it with the volunteer. If there is no improvement over a set period of time then the volunteer arrangement may be ended, but the supervisor should discuss the matter first with the Education Volunteer Manager. Where there is alleged serious misconduct the volunteer may be asked to leave the site until the matter is investigated.

Where there is a complaint on an Equal Opportunities issue, then the matter will be dealt with using English Heritage's Equality and Diversity procedure as a guide.

### **15. CRB Checks (Criminal Records Bureau)**

As some of the roles involve working with children, it is necessary for all volunteers undertaking these roles have a CRB check. This check will only identify criminal convictions relating to children/vulnerable adults.

CRB Disclosure Application Forms take time to process, and no volunteer can perform any duties which involve working with children or vulnerable people until the checks have been passed. English Heritage cannot accept volunteers who do not meet the standards provided by the results of the CRB check. Whilst the CRB checks are being processed, a general training could be underway. However if the results from the CRB check are negative, we cannot allow the volunteer to work alongside children. The process will be explained in the volunteer pack and will administered by the Education Volunteers Manager.

### **16. Ending the Volunteer relationship**

The relationship is not contractual and there is no obligation on the volunteer or English Heritage to give notice that the arrangement is to end. As a courtesy, however, the volunteer should give 2 weeks notice when resigning, and English Heritage should provide 2 weeks notice when ending the arrangement. There may be occasions where the arrangement is ended with immediate effect. We ask all volunteers working with English Heritage have an informal exit interview.

### **17. Monitoring & Evaluation**

To continually improve the education volunteering programme we will closely monitor and review its progress. The evaluation of the programme will involve looking at: the performance of the individual volunteer, the efficiency of the programme and the effectiveness of the volunteer programme. An evaluation of the contributions of a volunteer will involve a self-evaluation by the individual volunteer as well as an evaluation by appropriate site staff or Education Volunteer Manager. It will be based on the

expectation detailed in the volunteer role description as well as the volunteer's working relationship with EH staff, other volunteers and visiting education groups. Evaluations and exit interview assist with recommendations for training, promotion, retention and address any problems.

As the volunteering programme evolves it will be necessary to examine the tasks volunteers perform, their satisfaction with the programme, their retention, and the effectiveness of paid staff's participation and support. An evaluation will also examine the coordination and administration of a programme, the adequacy of supervision, the effectiveness of training, the level of staff and budgetary support available and performance expectation.

An evaluation of the effectiveness of the education volunteering programme will look directly at the direct output of the programme. This will include the numbers of visitors served, programme conducted, and service provided. The measure of success for the programme would be based on the goals and measurable objectives established by the start of the programme.

**The Education Volunteers Manager for English Heritage is Kate Davies on 01793 441438**

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