

Macclesfield Music Centre Volunteering Policy

1) Introduction

Macclesfield Music Centre (MMC) recognises the significant and valuable role that volunteers have in creating, implementing and enhancing our services and believe that volunteering should be a worthwhile and rewarding experience for volunteers.

We intend to encourage, develop and support volunteer involvement in our work. For the purpose of this policy, a volunteer is a person who does voluntary work on our behalf, with voluntary work defined as: “ Any activity which involves spending time, unpaid, doing something which aims to benefit someone (individuals or groups) other than or in addition to close relatives, or to benefit the environment” (helping out Survey volunteering England 2007).

MMC is a volunteer-run organisation. Within MMC, volunteers serve as Trustees and on our Business Committee which is fundamental to the running of MMC through managing the delivery of our services. Other volunteers undertake supplementary and supportive tasks, complementing and not replacing the work of our Trustees, Business Committee and freelance music tutors. The majority of additional volunteer activity takes place at the Saturday morning sessions where members of the Business Committee are in attendance.

MMC believes that our relationship with our volunteers is one of mutual responsibility and commitment within which MMC and our volunteers both have rights and responsibilities.

We hope that volunteers will enjoy their involvement and gain from it in terms of their own personal objectives. We expect people at all levels to work together positively with all our volunteers.

2) Purpose and Advantages of adopting a Volunteer Policy

This policy presents MMC with a framework of best practice and procedures, which we will follow when recruiting, selecting, managing and supporting volunteers. The policy will:

- recognise the respective roles, rights and responsibilities of volunteers and MMC
- establish clear principles for the involvement of volunteers
- give a framework for recruiting and supporting volunteers including people from underrepresented groups
- set out MMC’s approach to payment for those who volunteer by giving their time
- recognise the contribution all its volunteers make in a range of ways

3) General

In involving volunteers, we will be guided by the following principles of good practice:

- Volunteers receive specific role descriptions where appropriate (eg positions on the Business Committee or reference to the information for Trustees on the Charity Commission website), thus ensuring they are clear on expectations of their role prior to entering into verbal agreements.
- Volunteers have a named person as their main point of contact with whom they can discuss any issues or concerns.

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- Training and support will be offered to volunteers relevant to the role they are undertaking.
- Information given to volunteers, and any forms they are asked to complete, are clear and easy to understand
- Volunteers attend MMC as agreed to fulfil their role in their own time and at their own expense (see section 9 for exceptions) – reimbursement can be claimed for money paid out on behalf of MMC
- Within resources currently available, MMC will try to meet additional equipment, or support needs to enable disabled people to participate fully as a volunteer
- We aim to identify and solve problems at the earliest possible stage; procedures are in place to deal with complaints either by or about volunteers (see complaints policy)
- We do not regard volunteers as unpaid employees and do not expect volunteers to undertake inappropriate responsibilities or roles
- All volunteers are expected and required to follow our Equality and Diversity Policy and treat each other and all visitors with respect and fairness
- Our Health and Safety Policy covers volunteers, and we take care not to expose volunteers to risks to their health and safety, and that of others: volunteers will have a member of the Business Committee on site with them at all times
- There is no formal/legal agreement between MMC and its volunteers. When volunteers give their time for a given number of hours, this is entirely at their discretion
- We will update our guidance in line with relevant changes in either law or in the scope of volunteer roles

4) Identifying Volunteering Opportunities

If a Trustee, member of the Business Committee or a freelance music tutor identifies a new volunteering opportunity, they should discuss the proposal and its implications, in terms of resources and support, with a member of the Business Committee.

A description and the main contact for the new role will then be agreed by the Business Committee if appropriate.

Volunteer role descriptions for key Business Committee functions are found in the Business Committee Handbook. This ensures Business Committee members are clear as to what is required and expected of them and will minimally include:

- The volunteer's role title
- A list of tasks and responsibilities
- Times/days and location of volunteering activity
- Skills/experience that are required/desired/essential
- Whether the role is anticipated to be short term or ongoing
- The person who will be their main contact.

There are some volunteering opportunities available during Saturday mornings which are more informal (eg helping out with the coffee shop, helping at the beginning/end of the morning with set up/take down and transporting things to the MMC storage cupboard) – there will be a verbal outline of the role and a named point of contact for support.

For some roles, it may be possible for the volunteer to “build on” certain tasks once their confidence and experience has grown.

5) Recruitment

The majority of people who come forward to volunteer are already involved with MMC as members and are therefore known to the Trustees and/or members of the Business Committee. The recruitment process for volunteers reflects this and is therefore fairly informal. Initial discussion with prospective volunteers will help establish whether they and MMC meet each other's interests and needs. We will use a variety of approaches to ensure we recruit volunteers that are representative of the community and the people who use our services.

6) Selection

The selection process for volunteers interested in volunteering for MMC will include:

- An informal discussion with a member of the Business Committee where they will learn about MMC and be given specific information on the volunteer role/s. This will adhere to MMC's Equality and Diversity Policy and current legislation, and they will be signposted to key MMC policies available on the website
- Members of the Business Committee and Trustees are required to complete a DBS check
- Other volunteers who are adults or over 16 years will complete a DBS check only where they have supervisory or responsibility for young people

Where people come forward to volunteer who are not members or previously known to Business Committee, MMC will undertake more formal checks to ensure they are suitable for the proposed volunteer role.

Where a volunteer role requires a volunteer to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, if the volunteer has completed one within the previous 3 calendar months, we will not ask them to complete a further check but will request to see the original certificate. We reserve the right to request a further DBS check based on the applicant's criminal record or other relevant information which may have changed since its issue.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to anyone who applies to be involved with our work and only relevant convictions will be taken into account when considering a prospective volunteer's application (see Safeguarding policy).

At any point in the selection process, if a potential volunteer is considered unsuitable for a role, MMC will explain their reasons to that volunteer.

7) Induction

All volunteers will receive an induction, determined by the Business Committee, which will be in keeping with the duration and nature of the volunteering activity. This will include referring the volunteer to MMC policies which are located on the website.

All volunteers will have a named contact who shall be responsible for:

- Providing the volunteer with a description of the volunteering role outlining specific and general tasks, responsibilities and who they will report to
- Ensuring that volunteers are aware of their agreed responsibilities with regards to confidentiality.
- Ensuring the volunteer has completed the induction and understands their role and responsibilities and position within MMC.

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- Ensuring volunteers have adequate space, equipment and services necessary to perform their tasks effectively and safely.
- Arranging a short, trial period during which volunteers will receive training, support and feedback, including the chance for them to feedback their views and concerns. It is hoped that, if a volunteer considers a volunteer role does not fulfil their requirements, they feel able to withdraw their help without fear of embarrassment.
- Making up and maintaining a note of key details for the volunteer (eg name, contact details, emergency number, dates of involvement, DBS where appropriate). The information will be held in a secure manner in compliance with the Data Protection Act. For Business Committee members and Trustees, the information should include anything of relevance to the role (for example, DBS check information,)
- Providing on-going support including opportunities for one-to-one meetings as required.

8) Volunteer Agreement

All volunteers will enter into a verbal agreement regarding the arrangement between the volunteer and MMC. It is binding in honour only and is not intended to be a legally binding contract of employment. This agreement is intended to be flexible enough to take account of changes in a Volunteer's circumstances or in the requirements of MMC

9) Volunteer Expenses

MMC is an organisation run by volunteers who freely provide their time and costs of travel to fulfil the agreed role. In exceptional circumstances, the Business Committee will consider, within resources available, reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred by our volunteers.

10) Problem solving

In any organisation, problems can sometimes occur and, whilst it is hoped that this will not be the case, if there are any concerns volunteers should in the first instance speak to either their named contact or the Chair of the Business Committee who will try and resolve the matter informally.

If the matter remains unresolved, reference will be made to the complaints policy, a copy of which is on the MMC website.

If there are concerns about the conduct or performance of a volunteer, their named contact should investigate to find out what is happening. This includes talking with the volunteer concerned. If conduct or performance is unsatisfactory, the volunteer should be informed that s/he will be offered 'special guidance' for a period. The object of 'special guidance' will be to encourage improvement. If a volunteer does not meet our standards of performance or the steps we have taken to encourage them to improve do not work, the volunteer arrangement will be ended. If behaviour, which in MMC's view, is equivalent to gross misconduct has occurred, then the volunteer activity will be terminated immediately.

11) Ending Involvement

Although both MMC and a volunteer can end their volunteering arrangement at any time and without any notice, unless there is an emergency or misconduct, MMC will

aim to give a volunteer at least 2 weeks notice, hoping that they will offer the same to us.

The decision to ask a volunteer to leave will be a last resort. It might not be possible to keep a volunteer, for reasons nothing to do with the person's performance, due to, for example, a project or role ending. It may be necessary to ask a volunteer to leave due to, for example, poor performance, misconduct, attendance irregularities, DBS issues or criminal convictions. Every effort will be made to ensure that the reasons for ending an involvement are clarified, recorded and shared with the volunteer.

12) Provision of references

If asked, either during a volunteer's time with us or when it ends, we will supply a reference, based on a volunteer's service with MMC, indicating the skills and knowledge acquired as well as personal qualities observed.

13) Insurance

MMC Volunteers are covered by its Employers and Public liability insurance policies. MMC is responsible for the actions of its volunteers in the course of their duties and will take all reasonable precautions to prevent or minimise accident, injury, loss or damage.

14) Monitoring and Review

It will be the responsibility of the Business-Committee to ensure that the Volunteer policy and information available to volunteers via the website is in accordance with current legislation, best practice in relation to managing and supporting volunteers.