



Policy Number	Review Date	Next Review Date
23	March 2026	March 2027

## Little Village Volunteer Policy

### 1. Introduction

Little Village aims to have a reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship with our volunteers; as they inform and develop our work; we offer opportunities for them to thrive through learning new skills, and personal development. Our commitment is that volunteering complements and enhances existing work, but does not replace paid roles or activity.

The Volunteer Policy acts as a central guide for volunteering activity, as well as signpost to governance organisational policies which apply to all staff, volunteers or agency workers, as detailed in core policies below.

#### Definitions:

**“Volunteer”** – a person giving time on a voluntary basis, without pay, acting on behalf of Little Village with an agreed role and activities. This policy covers the following types of volunteers: regular, one-off, skills-based volunteers, and corporates.

**“Staff”** – a paid member of Little Village team and/or someone acting in supervisory role for volunteers including acting as their main contact.

**“Volunteer team”** – the centrally based administrative function responsible for recruitment, onboarding, engagement, development and best practice, without direct supervision of most volunteer roles.

### 2. Volunteer commitment:

Volunteers are asked to read and agree to the [Volunteer Commitment](#) as part of their application process. It outlines shared expectations, from staff and volunteers, that help create a safe, respectful and values-led environment for everyone.

### 3. Volunteer

Little Village manages volunteering activity through the [Volunteero](#) app, including onboarding, scheduling and managing volunteer opportunities.

Individuals may only volunteer if they are registered on Volunteero, this includes any guests e.g. family or friends of an existing volunteer. If an individual is not registered on Volunteero, they will not be able to volunteer – this is to ensure we know who is volunteering, when and where. Volunteers are asked to ensure they check-in and out of their shifts, and encouraged to complete post-shift reports to confirm hours attended.

Volunteers are asked to communicate in advance if they are unable to attend a scheduled session, wherever possible. The accurate recording of attendance supports compliance with Safeguarding, Health & Safety, risk and insurance requirements.

Where a volunteer is acting in a Lead capacity (managing other volunteers), they must have access to a portable device to monitor attendance, particularly in the event of an evacuation.

Guides for using Volunteero are available for all volunteers ([Volunteero FAQ](#)) and staff (via internal Volunteer Manager's Toolkit).

#### **4. Induction and training**

**All volunteers** will have an induction on, or before, their first shift covering the work of Little Village, introduction to their role and activities required. It also covers core principles such as safeguarding, health & safety and confidentiality.

Any **role-specific** training will be determined by the activities required and will either be provided, or organised, Little Village. Certain training may be required to continue in specific roles, this training may be delivered in person or online.

Little Village will try to include any adaptations per learning needs of individuals, where possible. Volunteers are encouraged to explore any adjustments with a member of the volunteer team, or the staff member managing their role.

#### **5. Support**

We are committed to providing volunteering opportunities that are inclusive and accessible, where possible.

Every volunteer has a named member of staff, available to provide support during their shift and/or during the staff member's working hours. Volunteers can speak to the staff member about any additional support, training or challenges that arise, and are encouraged to ask for help if they need it. If they feel the need for additional support, volunteers should contact the Volunteer Team.

**Reasonable adjustments:** Little Village will seek to implement, and agree, reasonable adjustments, where possible. Requests can be made as part of applying to be a volunteer or identified or whilst volunteering. Any agreements will be made together with the volunteer, staff member and volunteer team, with set review dates in place. Requests and review dates will be recorded on Volunteero through an automated process.

**Emotional wellbeing:** We recognise that volunteering can sometimes involve emotionally sensitive situations. Volunteers are encouraged to seek support from Little Village staff, if they feel affected by their role. We will look to explore and provide appropriate support and guidance where needed.

## 6. Expenses

Volunteering at Little Village is unpaid. Volunteers give their time freely and may be reimbursed for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses in line with our Volunteer Expenses Guidance.

This may include, but isn't limited to:

- Public transport costs to and from volunteer sessions
- Mileage for those using personal vehicles (in line with our mileage policy)
- Other reasonable costs that may otherwise prevent a volunteer from participating, assessed on a case-by-case basis

It is important to note that reimbursement of volunteer expenses is given only to cover costs incurred when volunteering and do not represent financial reward or compensation. Payment of expenses does not change the recipient's status as a volunteer.

Full detail can be found in the [Volunteer Expenses Guidance](#) and [FAQ](#) documents.

Volunteers may occasionally be invited to support communications or fundraising activity in their capacity as volunteers, for example by speaking about their volunteering role or the organisation's work.

Where an individual is invited to share personal or family experiences drawn from their own life, this is treated as lived experience participation rather than volunteering. In these circumstances, separate arrangements will apply, including different expenses and recognition, which will be explained clearly in advance.

## 7. Safeguarding & Recruitment

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk. All volunteers are expected to follow our safeguarding policies and procedures, and act promptly on any concerns. Safeguarding is a shared responsibility across all roles.

Volunteers must complete safeguarding training appropriate to their role. Those with roles including higher levels of exposure and/or contact with families may receive additional guidance or Safeguarding refresher training.

If something doesn't feel right or causes worry (a safeguarding concern):

- Volunteers must report any concerns to a member of staff, who will usually raise this on their behalf
- If a member of staff is unavailable, concerns can be raised directly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) using [safeguarding@littlevillagehq.org](mailto:safeguarding@littlevillagehq.org)
- Reports should follow the [Little Village Safeguarding Policy](#) which outlines procedures for handling concerns sensitively and appropriately.

Volunteers who are unsure about a situation should seek guidance from the Volunteer Team.

### **Safer Recruitment**

As some volunteer roles involve direct or indirect contact with children and families, they may be subject to additional safer recruitment checks and safeguarding requirements based on role risk assessment. The criteria for this are set out in our [Safer Recruitment policy](#).

Although these processes are in place, we encourage individuals to get in touch even if they have a criminal record or believe there may be a barrier to volunteering. Each case will be reviewed by an appropriate panel of staff in line with safer recruitment and safeguarding guidance, with a focus on inclusive and safe practice.

### **Problem-solving**

Acting with values, Little Village commits to being a solutions-focused, supportive but safe place for everyone. Our approach to resolving any issues raised by, or towards, volunteers is set out in our problem-solving guidance, available on request or within the Volunteer Handbook.

In the first instance, we would seek informal resolution before any formalised action plans, but we commit to working actively with all individuals involved and doing so in a positive, constructive way.

If a safeguarding or conduct concern is raised about a volunteer, Little Village may pause or restrict activity while this is reviewed. Decisions will be risk-based and follow process a detailed in our [Safeguarding policy](#).

If a volunteer would like to raise a formal complaint, or escalate this further, it can be done so using [Little Village's Complaints Policy](#).

## **8. Feedback**

We also recognise the value of first-hand experience of volunteers, so welcome feedback through both formal and informal methods. Little Village commits to offering space for operational feedback, using the Volunteero report function or live with a member of staff, but also formal methods such as volunteer survey, and or forums like Volunteer Voices Group.

Although it may not be possible to implement all feedback, there is a commitment to review and consider suggestions, as well as monitor types of feedback being submitted.

### **9. Volunteering if you've been supported by Little Village as a family**

We actively encourage those who have had support from Little Village to join as a volunteer; valuing their direct experience as part of the support we provide.

If a volunteer is being actively supported by Little Village, any access to services must continue to happen through standard channels, including a referral from an external party (see [referrals policy](#)).

Any provision of clothing and kit should happen outside of the hours of the volunteer's session to create clear separation between the two roles.

### **10. Young adult and child volunteers**

We recognise that volunteers under 18 require additional safeguarding considerations

#### **Minimum ages:**

- At our Baby Banks in Brent, Camden and Tooting, the minimum age is 10, although anyone under 14 will need to be accompanied by an adult, who is also registered on Volunteero.
- At our warehouse in Wandsworth, the minimum age is 14, and anyone under the age of 18 will need to be accompanied by an adult, who is also registered on Volunteero
- At our Brent, Camden and Tooting sites babies under 6 months are welcome to come along with their parent or carer, in a sling or a small buggy as space is limited. Please get in touch with us beforehand if you are thinking of bringing your baby.

In addition to above guidance, the below also applied to any volunteer under the age of 18:

- Will need to complete a separate application form, capturing the additional information we need to support young volunteers including parental consent
- Can only volunteer during sessions where there is a member of staff present with a current DBS, and at sites where our building insurance covers young people
- Volunteers under 18 will not be able to leave the premises during their volunteer sessions
- We ask that parents/guardians familiarise themselves with the [Little Village policies](#), accessible on the website

### **11. Ending your volunteering at Little Village**

We recognise that volunteers may step away from their roles for various reasons. We like to see this as a chance to celebrate achievements and take any learnings to improve the volunteer experience. Where volunteers formally end their role, we offer:

- A short exit survey to understand a volunteer's experience and reason for leaving
- To share recognition for their contributions, including a thank you letter
- To provide a professional reference documenting volunteering using a standardised template, we are unable to complete third party forms
- Encourage volunteers to stay involved by supporting Little Village in other ways

Volunteering with Little Village is a voluntary arrangement and may be ended at any time by either the volunteer or Little Village.

## **12. Confidentiality & Data Protection**

Volunteers must respect the confidentiality of families, fellow volunteers and Little Village matters in the same way as paid staff. Any data about volunteers will be held in accordance with the Little Village Data Protection and Retention [Policy and Procedures](#). Data will not be shared with any third parties other than in the event of a safeguarding concern.

Volunteers with access to Little Village online accounts and/or use of Little Village equipment, including PCs and phones, are required to read and sign the Little Village Use of Company Mobile Phones, PCs and Personal Device Policy.

Volunteers must maintain appropriate boundaries with families and children, including outside of volunteer settings and online. Personal contact details, social media contact, transport offers, or gifts should not be exchanged. Confidential information must be handled securely and not stored on personal devices. This includes safeguarding information and family details, which must only be recorded and shared through approved Little Village systems.

## **13. Core policies & Insurance**

There is an expectation that all volunteers, staff and agency workers comply to these policies determined by governance and good practice. These include the following policies, and can be found the [policies page](#) of Little Village website.

- Health & Safety
- Data Protection
- Safeguarding – Adult
- Safeguarding – Children
- Equal Opportunities
- Referrals

Volunteers, and any recognised volunteering activity, is covered by Little Village's existing insurance policies.

Signed:

Sophie Livingstone, CEO, Little Village

**Reviewer:** Calleigh-Marie Lawrence, Director of Volunteering

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