

# Volunteer Policy

## 1. Introduction

Glasgow Women's Library aims to:

- Advance the education of the general public by increasing the knowledge and understanding of women's history, lives and achievements.
- Provide information on a range of women's and gender equality issues. Enable women, particularly the most vulnerable and excluded in society, to access the information, resources and services they need to make positive life choices.
- Break down barriers to learning and participation for women so that they become fully active citizens, develop skills and knowledge, engender self-confidence and equip themselves to pass on their experience to benefit their families and broader communities.
- Be a catalyst for change by taking a lead role in redressing the neglect of women's historical and cultural contributions to Scottish society.
- Pioneer new ideas of, and approaches to, culture and heritage that bring together people from the most diverse backgrounds.
- Invest in women's social, cultural and creative capital to the benefit of our nation.
- Achieve financial independence.
- Provide the highest quality service for all our users, enquirers and members.

Volunteers make a vital contribution to our aims. We recognise the added value that volunteers bring to our organisation and those who use our services. Volunteer involvement in this organisation does not replace or devalue the role of paid staff.

Within Glasgow Women's Library volunteers are involved in:

- Board of Directors
- All areas of GWL's work: Lifelong Learning, the collections, literacy and numeracy support, reception, admin, fundraising, marketing etc

Glasgow Women's Library aims to have a reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship with our volunteers; with their involvement informing and developing our work, and our work enabling individuals to learn skills and achieve personal development through their volunteering.

The involvement of volunteers will be guided by the following principles of good practice:

- the tasks to be performed by volunteers will be clearly defined, so that all everyone is sure of their respective roles and responsibilities;
- the organisation will comply with the Data Protection Act in the use of data held on all volunteers;
- volunteering opportunities will complement rather than replace the work of paid staff



- volunteers will be provided with regular opportunities to share ideas/concerns with a named contact;
- volunteers and staff will work together to capture the outcomes for volunteers, for the organisation and for the community, resulting from volunteers' involvement;
- all existing and future policies will be checked as to how they affect volunteers

## **2. The Purpose of this Policy**

By adopting this policy Glasgow Women's Library aims to:

- highlight and acknowledge the value of the contribution made by volunteers;
- reflect the vision, mission, values, and strategies of the organisation in its approach to involving volunteers;
- recognise the respective roles, rights and responsibilities of volunteers;
- confirm this organisation's commitment to involving volunteers in its work;
- establish clear principles for the involvement of volunteers; and
- ensure the ongoing quality of both the volunteering opportunities on offer and the work carried out by our volunteers;

This policy provides an overview of the activities carried out by volunteers currently and provides a basis for the expansion, if required, for the role of volunteers alongside paid staff. This document and the associated policy, procedures and guidance provide a framework for the involvement of volunteers.

## **3. Recruitment and Selection**

- Glasgow Women's Library will adhere to its equality and diversity policy when recruiting and selecting volunteers.
- All potential volunteers will be asked to complete a volunteer application form.
- Where there is specific training required this will be highlighted as part of the recruitment process.
- Where there is a requirement for a Disclosure Check this will be highlighted as part of the recruitment process.
- All volunteers will be required to provide 2 references.
- Where individuals cannot be placed we will endeavour to refer them to another agency which can support them to find a volunteering opportunity.

## **4. Support and Supervision**

Once placed, we will expect volunteers to comply with existing policies and procedures, and to work in line with Glasgow Women's Library's Vision, Mission, Aims and Core Values (See Appendix 1).

All volunteers are covered under Glasgow Women's Library's Public Liability Insurance.

All volunteers will have an induction to their volunteering which will involve an overview of the relevant policies and procedures, and an introduction to Glasgow Women's



Library's project, staff and history. Following Induction, volunteers will be provided with ongoing support from the staff member responsible for their work. The Volunteer Coordinator will also maintain regular contact, by email or in person, to provide volunteers with opportunities to identify areas for development, or to discuss any issues. A record of these discussions will be held as part of the individual volunteer's records. Volunteers can have access to their records at any time.

Due to the nature of their work, Adult Literacy and Numeracy (ALN) volunteers will be offered additional group support sessions with other ALN volunteers and the ALN Development Worker.

Volunteers will be able to claim reasonable expenses for their volunteering in line with the Expenses Policy. Volunteers should discuss any planned expenditure prior to incurring this expense to ensure that it will be covered by the organisation.

Where volunteers have holidays or other commitments which mean that they cannot attend their normal volunteering, they should advise their named contact to ensure that we can arrange alternative cover. If volunteers require a longer break from their volunteering, they should discuss this with their named contact. Glasgow Women's Library will endeavour to be as flexible as possible to accommodate the needs of volunteers.

Volunteers will be encouraged to access learning and development opportunities which are relevant to their volunteering role throughout their time with Glasgow Women's Library. Opportunities for Learning and Development will form part of the discussions at support and supervision sessions.

In order to allow Glasgow Women's Library to constantly evaluate the impact of volunteers' involvement volunteers will be expected to keep records of their experience of volunteering, with the support of staff, including completing an exit form, and anonymous evaluation forms.

## **5. Problem Solving**

Where a concern is highlighted – either by a volunteer or about a volunteer, this will be dealt with using the organisation's Grievance Procedure.

## **6. Responsibility**

Overall responsibility for the implementations, monitoring and review of the policy and procedures lies with the Chair of the Board. Implementation and adherence to this policy is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers within the organisation.

*June 2014*

*This policy will be regularly reviewed in consultation with volunteers and the staff team.  
Next review date: June 2015*



## Appendix 1: Glasgow Women's Library Vision, Mission, and Core Values.

### **Our Vision**

Our vision is of a world in which every woman is able to fulfill her potential and where women's historical, cultural and political contributions to society are fully recognised, valued and celebrated.

### **Our Mission**

Glasgow Women's Library's mission is to celebrate the lives and achievements of women, champion their historical, cultural and political contributions and act as a catalyst to eradicate the gender gap that contributes to widespread inequalities in Scotland.

### **Our Values**

#### **Empowerment**

GWL is about empowerment. We provide a safe welcoming space where women can access information, find their voice and discover the confidence to embrace new opportunities, take control of their lives and achieve their potential.

#### **Addressing Inequalities**

We recognise that there is inequality between women and men and that this creates barriers for women to fully participate in many aspects of life. We will work with and for women to make Scotland a better place for all.

#### **Valuing All Women**

We value the skills, abilities, knowledge and experiences of every woman regardless of her background and circumstances. We welcome all women equally so that each individual shares a sense of ownership and belonging in this organisation.

#### **Learning and Development**

We affirm that we are all learners. We encourage an approach to life based on continuous inquiry, reflection and free expression. We commit to taking this life long journey together in the spirit of collaboration and equal partnership. We believe this approach is at the heart of supporting the flourishing of individuals, communities and society.

#### **Diversity and Inclusivity**



We are fully committed to diversity, respecting human rights and creating opportunities for access and participation across Scotland. We strive at all times to promote the achievement of individual potential, to operate transparently and to involve people across the organisation in decision-making.

## **Openness and Respect**

We are committed to maximising the accessibility of our resources and to ensuring that they are freely and widely available. It is important to us that we are known to provide a courteous, friendly, professional and non-discriminatory service and are continually working to ensure that all our staff, Board members, partners, volunteers, learners, users, donors and supporters treat each other and are treated with respect. The GWL team also endeavour to demonstrate our values at all times.

