

**VOLUNTEER POLICY**

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**EastSide Partnership**

**Volunteer Policy**

**About us**

EastSide Partnership is dedicated to the regeneration of east Belfast and our mission is ‘to make east Belfast a better place’ for residents and visitors.

Our vision is that east Belfast will be a great place to live, work, visit and invest, where:

* Residents enjoy good health and well-being
* Education is valued and high standards are achieved
* Tourism, arts and hospitality are thriving

EastSide Partnership aims to:

* Contribute to physical regeneration in east Belfast by developing key properties through **EastSide Property**
* Ensure the Connswater Community Greenway is developed and maintained as a destination for all and deliver similar initiatives through **EastSide Greenways**
* Deliver **EastSide Arts** festivals, community arts project and support local arts groups
* Help schools and communities work together to deliver better opportunities for children through **EastSide Learning**
* Develop the **EastSide Tourism** product to encourage more visitors
* Develop a strategic approach to alleviate the effects of poverty in east Belfast through the **Scaffolding Project**

To find out more about the organisation and what we do visit [www.eastsidepartnership.com](http://www.eastsidepartnership.com)

**Our Values**

As a charitable organisation we have adopted the [NI Charity Commission Code of Good Governance](https://www.diycommitteeguide.org/introducing-code) principles and the Nolan principles- Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership. We expect all those acting on the Partnership’s behalf to subscribe to these values. Specific to the work of the Partnership we have also adopted the following core values:

1. **Alleviating poverty and disadvantage** – we seek to ensure that we alleviate poverty and disadvantage through social, economic and environmental regeneration
2. **Entrepreneurship** – we seek to take an entrepreneurial approach to developing our organisation and its activity, seeking out opportunities, taking well managed risks and focussing on effective outcomes
3. **Economic Sustainability** – we are committed to being as financially sustainable as possible through an entrepreneurial approach whilst aiming to reduce dependence on grant aid and having resources to test ideas which may not initially attract public support
4. **Environmental Responsibility** – we commit ourselves to policies and practices that will reduce the negative impact of our activity and positively promote environmental responsibility
5. **Respect for heritage** – we respect the rich heritage of east Belfast and its contribution to making the community and the wider world a more inspirational place to live
6. **Inclusivity** - we promote a welcoming ethos, are respectful of difference and seek to reflect the diverse demographic and culture of contemporary east Belfast in all our projects and structures
7. **Collaborative working** – we are committed to working collaboratively, both within our own organisation and with other external stakeholders, in order to achieve our desired outcomes.

EastSide Partnership recognises volunteers as a core part of our team. Without the continued support of a dedicated team of volunteers, EastSide Partnership would be unable to deliver the range of events and activities we currently deliver. Volunteers are, therefore, critical to delivery of change in east Belfast. Through volunteering with EastSide Partnership in our various activities, events and festivals, local volunteers have: demonstrated the welcoming, warm and humorous side of east Belfast to local, national and international visitors; contributed to keeping our local area clean and tidy; engaged with local people during events and activities; represented EastSide Partnership and shared our regeneration story and much more.

EastSide Partnership also believes that volunteers gain personal benefits from the experience. Volunteering is a great way to share your enthusiasm, skills and ideas whilst having fun and meeting likeminded people. By volunteering with EastSide Partnership you will be making a positive contribution to your community, showcasing east Belfast locally, nationally and internationally and helping to deliver real change that will benefit the whole of the city.

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

EastSide Partnership is committed to embracing diversity and promoting equality and inclusion. When representing EastSide Partnership as a volunteer we expect you to adhere to these principles.

**Roles of Volunteers**

EastSide Partnership has a range of volunteer roles to get involved with such as marshalling, ticketing, arts and craft workshops, tour guiding, greeting visitors, cycle leaders, setting up equipment for events and workshops, community clean-ups etc. Volunteers are involved at every level of the organisation in roles which compliment, but never substitute the work of paid staff.

All volunteers will be provided with a written role description, outlining the purpose, tasks and main expectations of their role.

**Expenses**

To try and ensure we reduce barriers to volunteering **we will endeavour** to meet all reasonable out of pocket expenses for volunteers including travel and meals.

* Travel to and from home to events and during your volunteering (with prior approval by ESP)
* Reimbursement of meal costs to a maximum of £5 (with receipts) where a meal is not provided (with prior approval by ESP). To be eligible you must work around meal times or for at least 4.5 hours a day
* In order to claim expenses an expenses form must be completed with valid receipts for personal expenditure. This should be handed to the Volunteer Manager/ ESP Staff Member on the day.

**Insurance, health and safety, accidents and risk assessment**

EastSide Partnership has a valid insurance policy so that volunteers are covered under employers’ liability insurance. This covers the volunteer activities you will be undertaking and a copy can be provided should you wish to read it. We carry out risk assessments ahead of events and activities and will provide a health and safety briefing ahead of each volunteer event advising how to perform your role safely and what to do in the event of an accident/incident. We will have clear procedures for accidents and emergencies and will have a first aider available at all larger events.

**Support**

Our staff are there to support you throughout your volunteer experience. The dedicated Volunteer Manager/ ESP Staff Member for each department (e.g EastSide Arts, EastSide Greenways, EastSide Learning, EastSide Tourism, Scaffolding Project etc.) will be your key contact within the organisation. They will be available to meet if/when necessary to discuss how you are getting on and help resolve any issues that may arise during your volunteering with EastSide Partnership. Part of their role is to ensure that your volunteering experience is both enjoyable and meaningful.

**Volunteer Recruitment**

EastSide Partnership is committed to representing the people of east Belfast and wishes to see all sections of our community represented among our volunteers. We endeavour to make recruitment materials available in a format accessible to any individual or group upon request.

Volunteer recruitment will be advertised in as wide a variety of ways as is practicable, in order to ensure that all potential volunteers are informed. This will include advertising through our various websites and social media outlets.

We require all volunteers to complete a registration form. Once received a member of our team will be in contact to discuss specific opportunities and to decide what best suits you as a volunteer in terms of experience, interests and availability and what also meets the requirements of EastSide Partnership. New volunteers will then be asked to attend one of our volunteer induction events.

**Induction, Briefing and Training**

Once recruited, volunteers are asked to attend one of the EastSide Partnership induction events for new volunteers. EastSide Partnership will endeavour to host four volunteer induction evenings per year on a quarterly basis. If a potential volunteer wishes to volunteer at an upcoming event or activity which takes place before their induction evening a request may be made to meet the relevant Volunteer Manager/ ESP Staff Member for a one to one induction.

We are committed to ensuring that all our volunteers are fully equipped to carry out their roles at our events and activities. Where a training need is identified as required we will endeavour to provide the appropriate level of training.

When volunteering for an event, you will be fully briefed ahead of the event by one of our staff. Briefing will include:

* Information about the event or activity, why we are doing it and what we hope to achieve
* The role of volunteer on the day
* Introductions to staff and other volunteers
* Site tour/event outline
* Copies of relevant documentation such as site/event plans, emergency contact details, risk assessments, expense claims etc.
* Essential procedures such as timekeeping, rotas, emergency procedures etc.

**Communication and Feedback**

Relevant volunteer managers/ staff members within EastSide Partnership will endeavour to communicate with volunteers appropriately through regular e-bulletins, emails, and Volunteer Updates. EastSide Partnership also recognises the importance of seeking volunteers’ ideas and opinions and will conduct annual volunteer surveys as well as welcoming regular volunteer feedback.

**Data Protection**

All volunteers’ details are held in line with data protection regulations.

**Resolving Problems**

Our aim is to try and ensure that our volunteers get as much enjoyment out of events and activities as the general public and that volunteers are an integral part of the team. If your role as a volunteer does not meet your expectations or issues arise during your volunteer experience, we want you to feel comfortable about letting us know. In the first instance, talk to the staff member in charge on the day and if that is not possible feel free to talk to any of the partnership staff involved with the event/activity and we will do our best to resolve.

**Access NI checks**

An Access NI check is a criminal history check. Given the nature of volunteering within EastSide Partnership and the various events and activities delivered we require an Access NI check to be undertaken for the protection of you, as a volunteer, and the people you are in contact with. We hope that this does not put you off volunteering with EastSide Partnership but this is a statutory requirement where volunteers may be working with children and young people. If you have any concerns or queries in relation to this, please get in touch.

**Confidentiality**

We expect all our volunteers to adhere to confidentiality guidelines which will be explained to you before you begin volunteering if required. These guidelines also include the use of social media and contact with the press.