

Volunteering Policy

Our Policy

MK Gallery's mission is to provide access to high quality, innovative and thought-provoking art from around the world, and through our programme, stimulate participation and debate, building relationships between artists and audiences.

The Gallery delivers an annual programme of exhibitions and events including contemporary film, experimental music, lectures and comedy. It also runs a successful learning programme encouraging curiosity, enquiry and exchange through a direct contact with artists and their practice. MK Gallery works with partners locally, nationally and internationally to bring the best cultural activities into the region. The Gallery is part of the Arts Council's National Portfolio and a member of the Plus Tate network.

At MK Gallery volunteers play an integral role in delivering its mission. MK Gallery recognises the immense benefits that volunteers bring to the business, and the bridges that they build between the Gallery and the local community. In return, MK Gallery hopes to give its volunteers an opportunity to exercise their skills in a different environment and to undertake new experiences.

A volunteer is a person who gives freely of their time, skills, and experience without expectation of financial reward. Volunteering can take many forms. Some tasks require particular skills whereas others require none. Volunteering may be for a limited time to complete a project or may be on an ongoing basis.

MK Gallery tries to offer a range of volunteering opportunities and, in accordance with its equal opportunities and diversity policies, to ensure that the opportunity to volunteer is widely available.

Status of volunteers

A volunteer is not an employee and will not have a contract of employment with MK Gallery. We will agree a role with the volunteer and there will be an expectation that the volunteer will meet the role's requirements and that we will provide work for the volunteer. However, the volunteer is free to refuse to fulfil the role and we are not bound to provide the work. It is also expected that both MK Gallery and the volunteer will give as much notice as possible if unable to meet these expectations.

Volunteering roles

Each volunteer will be assigned a role or roles. Roles may form part of a short term or long-term project, be part of a general volunteering opportunity or be specific to a volunteer. Roles may change over time depending on the volunteer's skills and interests and the needs of the Gallery. Volunteers may be asked to carry out tasks that fall outside their remit to assist with the smooth running of the Gallery, or when required to do so through absence or the lack of other volunteers to fulfil those roles. Roles currently include invigilators, learning support, ushers and events staff. A more complete list of role descriptions is available in the Gallery's documentation. Volunteers will not be used as substitutes for employees.

Recruitment

A person wishing to become a volunteer will be asked to complete an online application form. The applicant will be asked to identify areas in which they would like to volunteer. A genuine effort will be made to recruit and select volunteers from a broad range of backgrounds and experiences to represent the Gallery's local communities. Applicants under the age of 18 must obtain the consent of a parent or guardian to volunteer at the Gallery and be accompanied by a parent or guardian or a volunteer with a clear Disclosure Barring Service certificate.

The Gallery will use appropriate means to advertise for volunteers that take account of the principle of its Equality Policy. Selection of volunteers will be based on actual requirements and pre-determined screening measures. If the role requires substantial training, the Gallery will encourage long-term commitment from the volunteer where possible, which will ensure that the placement is mutually beneficial.

The prospective volunteer will supply the contact details of two referees prior starting their volunteering role.

Volunteering agreement

The volunteer will be invited to enter into a volunteering agreement with MK Gallery. This agreement will set out what is required of the volunteer whilst undertaking their role and the commitment of the Gallery.

Induction and Training

All volunteers will receive an induction to ensure that they understand and can fulfil their role safely and effectively. This will cover a range of issues including:

- A brief history of the Gallery, its work and wider context
- The role of the volunteer within the Gallery
- A tour of the Gallery spaces and shown all fire escapes
- Introduction to other volunteers, particularly team leaders
- Management structure and supervision
- Expectations and requirements in relation to the Gallery's policies including the Volunteer Policy, Health and Safety, Confidentiality, and Copyright. In particular this includes first aid procedures, emergency procedures
- Practical arrangements such as parking, toilets, and refreshments.
- Signing-in on the Fire Register
- Key contact details
- Dress code

All volunteers will receive training that is specific to their role. Where possible it will be provided by the Gallery, including team leaders, other volunteers and on the job training. If training is provided by an external trainer MK Gallery will reimburse out of pocket expenses incurred by volunteers for travel to and from the location.

Health and Safety

MK Gallery has a responsibility for the health and safety of volunteers. Volunteers should always follow our health and safety policies and procedures. Volunteers have a duty to take care of themselves and others who might be affected by their actions. Volunteers should not act outside their authorised area or work. Volunteers must record any accident in the Accident Book and report all accidents to their team leader. MK Gallery will provide volunteers with appropriate guidance on any health and safety issues that arise.

Recompense

Volunteers are unpaid. The Gallery does not usually pay volunteers 'expenses it does however reimburse parking expenses. The Gallery will reimburse out of pocket expenses incurred through the purchase of materials for use in specific Gallery projects, providing these expenses are agreed beforehand and VAT receipts are provided. All volunteers must check with the Volunteer Manager prior to purchasing items for the Gallery.

The Gallery offers a 30% discount in the cafe to all volunteers and 30% discount in the gift shop. Volunteers will be invited to regular social events and preview tours of the Gallery's exhibitions with the artist, a curator or Gallery Director. These concessions may be altered or withdrawn at any time without consultation.

Policies and procedures

Volunteers are expected to comply with all the Gallery's policies while they are on its premises or undertaking any of their volunteering duties. Their induction will include an explanation of these policies and procedures.

Insurance

The Gallery's Public Liability, Employer's Liability, and Professional Indemnity Insurance cover MK Gallery's volunteers. The insurance will not cover unauthorised actions or actions outside the volunteering agreement. The Gallery's insurance does not cover personal effects.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are likely to become aware of confidential information about MK Gallery, its workers, customers, and suppliers. Volunteers should not disclose this information or use it for their own or another's benefit without the consent of the party concerned. This does not prevent disclosure once the information is in the public domain

(unless it has been made public as a result of the volunteer's breach of confidentiality) or where the law permits or requires disclosure.

Supervision

The Volunteer Manager provides support and supervision appropriate to the volunteer's role. The Volunteer Manager will hold informal discussions with volunteers after six months and thereafter on an annual basis, this will be to chat about their progress and volunteering experience plus provide a forum for any new ideas or proposals, difficulties, or concerns with their role. If the volunteer has any queries or would like to change their role this should be discussed with the Volunteer Manager.

Dealing with problems

It is important that the Gallery is able to maintain its agreed standards of service to the visitors and organisations that use it and that volunteers enjoy making their contribution to this service, to facilitate this the Gallery will:

- Endeavour to resolve in a fair and just manner any problems, grievances or difficulties which may be encountered while you volunteer with us
- In the event of an unresolved problem, to offer an opportunity to discuss the issues in accordance with the Gallery's procedures.

The Volunteer Manager will normally try to solve any problems informally, but if this is not possible the formal complaints system will come into operation.

If the volunteer wishes to make a formal complaint they should put the complaint in writing to the Volunteer Manager. If it is not possible to reach a solution the volunteer may raise the matter with the Volunteer Manager's manager. If a complaint is made about a volunteer, this will be notified to them in writing and the Volunteer Manager will decide whether any action should be taken. If the volunteer is dissatisfied with the outcome they may raise it with the Volunteer Manager's manager.

Volunteer information

On meeting at in interview and induction, the volunteer will access to the following information:

- general information about MK Gallery and its programmes;
- a copy of this volunteering policy;
- a standard volunteering agreement to be signed at interview or induction;
- details of where they can access the organisation's policies and procedures; and
- information on other volunteering opportunities that are available.

Additional Notes

This policy does not form part of the volunteering agreement, but it is a condition of being a volunteer that you will abide by the rules and policies made by the Gallery. The Gallery reserves the right to review this policy at any time and to make such changes as it considers appropriate. If this is necessary in order to reflect changes in legislation or sector regulation, such changes or terminations may be made without advance notice.

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