

VOLUNTEER POLICY

Date of policy: June 2026 (Approved by Chair of Centrepieces)

To be reviewed: June 2028

Introduction

Centrepieces is a small charity that provides opportunities for local people with mental health issues to participate in art activities, for their therapeutic value and in order to sell art works through the charity to generate income for the individual and the charity. There are classes and workshops, and open sessions where artists can drop in to work using the charity's facilities. We regularly exhibit our members' work, organise events and run projects in local schools.

Centrepieces has no paid workers, and it relies on volunteers to provide its core services and administrative and finance support.

We welcome prospective volunteers with relevant skills to offer. An arts background or experience of mental health issues would be helpful but are not essential. We need volunteers who can teach a creative arts subject to members, or plan and deliver arts workshops and programmes, or help with finance, administration, IT, event management, policy and strategy.

Recruitment

Centrepieces has a number of defined volunteer roles. New roles may be introduced to facilitate and develop new services and projects.

We take equal opportunities very seriously and people interested in volunteering will be considered regardless of disability, race, gender, age, religion or sexual orientation. Volunteers with mental health difficulties are welcome to apply.

Volunteers must be 16 or over, and those under 18 must have written permission to volunteer from a parent, carer or guardian. There is no upper age limit, but it may not be possible to accept volunteers with health conditions that would put the health and safety of the volunteer or others at risk.

Prospective volunteers should be available for a minimum of half a day each week, or for an agreed number of days/hours for specific projects. Roles can be tailored to fit the volunteer's availability and commitments. A 6 month minimum commitment to a volunteer role is essential.

Vacant roles are advertised on the Centrepieces website www.centrepieces.org, and through local volunteer organisations. Many volunteers join through contacts with members and friends.

Prospective volunteers are required to complete a short application form outlining their skills and availability. Help is available to complete the form if needed. All applicants will be interviewed by the Project Co-ordinator and one of the Assistant Co-ordinators. Precise roles and hours of work will be

agreed with successful applicants to meet the needs of the volunteer and the charity.

Unsuccessful applicants will be given feedback and clear reasons why their application could not be accepted.

Safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children is of paramount importance, and Centrepieces reserves the right to carry out background checks where considered appropriate to proposed volunteer activity, for example Disclosure and Barring Checks. Proof of identity and personal references appropriate to the prospective role are required from all new volunteers.

Artist volunteers

Members of Centrepieces who have joined as artists may apply for vacant volunteer roles when advertised, after gaining sufficient confidence and experience. There must be a specific role available before an artist member is accepted as a volunteer. The application process is the same as for external volunteers. If an artist volunteer is accepted, they may only carry out their volunteering role during the agreed hours and must ensure that volunteering and membership activities are kept separate.

Induction/training

Following the initial interview and confirmation of appointment, new volunteers will follow the volunteer induction programme (see Appendix 1). A volunteer agreement outlining the roles and responsibilities of both Centrepieces and the volunteer will be provided.

All volunteers will initially have a taster period of 4 weeks to ensure that both Centrepieces and the volunteer are happy with the description of the role and performance of the duties. A review will be held at the end of the first 12 week period, and any further training and support needs agreed. There will be further regular follow up reviews.

Ongoing supervision and support

All volunteers will have a named supervisor, normally an Assistant Co-ordinator or the Project Co-ordinator, who will provide regular guidance and advice on how to carry out the role and deal with any questions or concerns.

Expenses

Volunteers may request reimbursement of travel expenses to and from their home and the place of volunteering. Travel by car will be re-imbursed at a fixed rate per mile. Other specific out of pocket expenses will be re-imbursed by prior agreement with the Project Co-ordinator. Receipts must be provided for all expenses.

Volunteers who use the art facilities or participate in classes and workshops must pay the standard membership and class fees for artists.

Insurance

Centrepieces holds public liability insurance which covers volunteers during their activities on behalf of Centrepieces.

Volunteers who use personal vehicles on Centrepieces' business are responsible for ensuring that their vehicle insurance covers such activities. This should not involve an increase in premium as most insurers have pledged not to increase premiums for volunteer drivers. Further details are on this webpage:

www.abi.org.uk/products-and-issues/choosing-the-right-insurance/motor-insurance/volunteer-drivers

Equal opportunities and Diversity

Centrepieces is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all, and to ensuring that no individual is discriminated against in the planning and delivery of any of our activities. We aim to create an environment which respects and welcomes everyone, and in which no form of bullying, harassment, disrespectful or discriminatory behaviour is tolerated.

All volunteers are expected to follow the principles of the charity's Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Policy and the Code of Conduct and are entitled to be treated in the same way by other volunteers and members of the organisation.

Health and Safety

The safety and wellbeing of everyone connected to Centrepieces is of paramount importance. We carry out risk assessments on all our activities and take steps based on them to keep volunteers and service users safe.

Volunteers are expected to follow the procedures outlined in the Health and Safety policy and to know the procedures for dealing with emergencies. All reasonable care must be taken of the health and safety of the volunteer and others while carrying out activities on behalf of Centrepieces.

Volunteers should refer to the relevant risk assessment before any potentially hazardous activities are undertaken.

Any accidents must be reported to the Project Co-ordinator or an Assistant Co-ordinator, so that consideration can be given to how to prevent similar incidents in future.

Centrepieces is a No Smoking organisation and no smoking of any kind is permitted in any Centrepieces' premises or grounds.

Dealing with problems

Volunteers have the opportunity to raise issues with their supervisor. It is hoped that any issues can be resolved informally at this stage.

Unresolved issues will be dealt with in accordance with Centrepieces' Complaints Policy.

Safeguarding

Everybody has the right to be safe no matter who they are or what their circumstances. Safeguarding is about protecting everyone from harm, abuse or neglect. This includes the beneficiaries and clients that Centrepieces works with, and volunteers. We are all responsible for the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults and we must ensure that we are doing all we can to protect the most vulnerable members of our society.

All volunteers are expected to follow the Centrepieces' Safeguarding Policies, and to refer any matters of concern regarding the safeguarding of self or others to the attention of their supervisor or the Project Co-ordinator.

If volunteers disclose personal information about themselves that is considered to impact on their ability to work for Centrepieces, further action may be taken to safeguard members and other volunteers and to comply with safeguarding legislation.

Confidentiality

All personal information supplied to Centrepieces will be kept secure and confidential in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and will not be passed on to other organisations or

individuals without the permission of the volunteer. The only exception is where Centrepieces is required by law to provide certain pieces of information.

Volunteers must adhere to Centrepieces' Code of Conduct and Data Privacy Policy and may not disclose, use or pass on any personal information obtained during volunteer activity.

We may wish to use photographs of volunteers for publicity and promotional purposes, but will not do so without the permission of the volunteer.

Feedback and recognition

Volunteers will have regular opportunities to give feedback on their experience and to make suggestions for improvements and alterations to their role and the organisation.

Volunteers will be encouraged to speak about their experiences at the Annual General Meeting and other events, and to provide information for case studies.

Volunteers will be eligible for consideration for the annual Inspire Awards in relevant categories.

Occasional volunteer events will be held to recognise and celebrate the contribution made by volunteers.

Volunteers who move on from Centrepieces will be asked to complete an exit questionnaire about their experience before leaving.

I. One to one with Co-ordinator or Assistant Co-ordinator

Role

- Re-iteration of discussion at initial interview
- Confirmation of the precise role of the new volunteer and what Centrepieces and the volunteer hope to achieve from the placement
- Agreement on the number of hours/days per week and any flexibility
- Any training needs and how Centrepieces can meet them
- Discussion on whether Disclosure and Barring check required, either now or in future
- Confirmation that reference received and checked
- Completion of volunteer agreement

Practicalities

- Tour of The Lodge
- Availability of tea, coffee etc
- Volunteer's working space
- IT and printing arrangements
- Access to wifi
- Explanation of expenses policies
- Confirmation of volunteer's personal and contact details. One proof of identity may be required

Information

- Background and aims of Centrepieces
- Structure - Trustees, Co-ordinator, volunteers, members and an explanation of their responsibilities
- Introductions to other volunteers
- Health and safety - office procedures, fire plan, how to raise H&S concerns
- Brief introduction to the needs of people with mental health issues and the potential difficulties that may arise.

Communication

- Website, blog, Facebook, Twitter, email list, newsletters

Support

- Allocation of another volunteer to supervise or be a buddy to the new volunteer
- How to ask questions and raise any issues and problems that the new volunteer may encounter

2. Information pack for new volunteers

- Copy of signed volunteer agreement
- Centrepieces leaflet
- Who's who
 - List of trustees
 - List of volunteers and their role titles, and information on where to find full role descriptions

- Policies
 - List of Centrepieces' policies and information on how to look at the policy documents
 - Copies of key policies – Health and Safety, Safeguarding, Data Privacy
- Copy of latest Artists Update

Appendix 2

Volunteer agreement

Centrepieces wants to ensure that volunteers have a positive and rewarding experience that benefits both the individual and the charity. This agreement sets out what Centrepieces and its volunteers can expect from each other. It is not intended to create any employment relationship either now or in the future.

Name of volunteer:

Role title and main areas of volunteering:

Start date:

Centrepieces agrees to:

- Provide a clear volunteer role and guidance on how to carry it out
- Introduce you to how the organisation works and your role within it, and provide any training you need through generic and role specific induction programmes.
- Provide accessible information about Centrepieces and its policies
- Provide regular support and supervision and personal development opportunities to ensure a positive volunteering experience.
- Treat you fairly with dignity and respect.
- Apply our diversity and equality policies.
- Provide appropriate insurance for your volunteering work.
- Pay any out of pocket expenses in accordance with our volunteer expenses policy.
- Apply our procedures appropriately should any problems arise.

Signed on behalf of Centrepieces:

Name/Role:

Date:

I(Name of volunteer) agree to

- Treat other volunteers and staff fairly, with dignity and with respect.
- Perform my volunteer role reliably and to the best of my ability.
- Conduct myself in a manner that will not bring Centrepieces into disrepute or incur financial loss, including on social media.
- Treat as confidential all information and records of Centrepieces' operations and members and volunteers and not disclose these to people without authorisation, either within the organisation or externally.
- Read and act in accordance with key policies, procedures and related documents which I have received or been given access to, and raise any issues which I don't fully understand or would like to discuss further.
- Always keep to the Centrepieces' Code of Conduct
- Keep to the agreed working times and hours as far as possible.
- Let Centrepieces know in advance if I am unable to attend or decide to stop being a volunteer. I will give at least one month's notice of ceasing to be a volunteer unless personal circumstances prevent this.

My agreed voluntary time commitment is.....

Signed.....

Date.....