



A Rebuilding the Foundations Resource

Fitting it all Together

How a museum's approach and responsibilities to these three areas fits together: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI); safeguarding, and volunteer involvement

This resource is designed to help you 'fit together' different aspects of your policy and procedural framework to help your volunteer involvement and your audience engagement to go from strength to strength. It was written as part of *Rebuilding the Foundations: Gloucestershire's Museums* – a project supported by funding from National Lottery Heritage Fund and Arts Council England which supported 10 Gloucestershire museums to invigorate their approaches to audiences and volunteering.

Do you want to expand your visitor offer to make it more accessible and attractive to a wider range of people from across your communities? You may want to offer events and programmes for people of different ages, or with different expectations and needs (and, potentially, barriers to their participation).

This may mean re-thinking:

- 'How we do things' – your processes
- The knowledge and skills of your team – how confident is the team to provide a safe welcome?

As a volunteer-involving organisation, do you have a clear vision of the role volunteers play in your museum? Perhaps your organisation came into being because of the enthusiasm of volunteers, or volunteers have always been critically important to being able to open your doors.

Keep in mind: volunteers can bring a range of other motivations, beyond and distinct from a passion for your museum's subject. These motivations might include meeting others, building or rebuilding confidence, building skills or job-readiness, getting out of the house, making a real contribution locally, using a skill, or simply experiencing something different.

To help ensure that you don't always recruit volunteers 'in your own image', but welcome volunteers with all sorts of reasons for volunteering, your museum needs a clear, consistent, transparent and welcoming approach to volunteer involvement. You need to consider different age groups and specific needs, as well as different motivations. This resource helps you to look at the policy commitments and ways of working that can make this possible.



Welcome Desk at the Museum of Gloucester

Volunteering and safeguarding:

Volunteer Policies should indicate your Museum's 'expected behaviours' – sometimes called a **code of conduct or volunteer charter**. By having this in place, people who come into contact with your organisation will understand clearly that you value a safe environment and expect everyone to uphold this.

Linked to your commitment to providing a legally compliant, safe environment for users, staff and other volunteers, you should **risk assess volunteer** roles in relation to safeguarding, as well as in relation to physical risk.

Volunteer policies should set out commitment to **appropriate levels of supervision** and **workforce knowledge and skills**: to providing information updates and supporting volunteers with safeguarding awareness and following the safeguarding policy – for example, your commitment to safeguarding awareness training and updates.

Last but not least, your volunteer policy will make clear the way you **recruit safely**, by describing how, as appropriate, you ask for proof of identity, references, disclosure of previous convictions, or DBS checks. Whilst taking a consistent approach, you should avoid a 'blanket approach' to safe recruitment and screening; the approach should differ according to the role a volunteer wishes to help you with. It should follow your safeguarding policies' commitments to safeguarding and be informed by the activities your organisation carries out.

Volunteering and EDI

In your volunteer policy, your **expectations of volunteers** should include the expectation to follow and uphold your organisation's commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, as set out in your organisation's EDI statement and policy. **Induction and training** updates that you offer should cover EDI awareness and responsibilities.

In your volunteer policy, the specifics of **your recruitment process** should reflect your commitment to reflecting the diversity of your community in your volunteer team as stated in your EDI policy. This will ensure that you then consider carefully: where and how you choose to advertise; accessible formats in which offer volunteering information; alternative options/formats for applying to volunteer; considering and offering adjustments for interviews, and commitment to considering adjustments to roles themselves for those who need them (including volunteering with a carer or buddy, for example.)

In your volunteer policy, your statement on **gathering and protecting volunteers' data** should reflect your commitment to understanding diversity in your team. You should make clear the fact that, at point you take on a volunteer, you may ask for anonymised diversity data, in line with your commitment to monitoring diversity in your volunteer team in your EDI statement/policy. You need to both explain why you gather the data, what you will do with the data and how and for how long you will store it, in line with GDPR.

In your volunteer policy, your position on **recruiting ex-offenders** should mirror your commitment to this as part of your EDI statement. You should set out how you will manage this consistently and sensitively. Your volunteer policy should also clarify the fact that you welcome **refugees and asylum seekers** as volunteers. You should in general welcome **non-British nationals** seeking to volunteer: if their involvement meets the definition of volunteering (as opposed to voluntary/unpaid work with contractual obligations and in kind payments), they will be able to volunteer with you, but there may be some restrictions depending on exactly which type of visa they hold. Be clear why you are asking for information about this; seek advice from gov.uk where needed.

Volunteering, safeguarding and EDI

Your commitment to broadening volunteer recruitment to include people of diverse ages (specifying a lower age limit based on your circumstances) and with disabilities needs to be in line with your safeguarding as well as your EDI policies. You need to think through what you do (processes) to safeguard vulnerable adults, young people and children who volunteer, and how you manage these volunteers safely. Your volunteer policy needs to show your commitment to maintaining and reviewing these processes. This includes your approach to ensuring safe

environments when volunteers go online. Your insurer should have up to date information about your volunteer involvement and, with your insurer, you should review any clauses relating to upper age limits, in discussion with your governing body.

What next?

Think about all the roles at your museum that are involved in recruiting volunteers and delivering visitor offers to target audiences. Work with these roles to start to recruit volunteers in new ways and to try new visitor offers. Evaluate and review how you get on – including reviewing policies. Remember, policies are working documents that you review when circumstances change. Be aware that a new approach to audience development or volunteer involvement may impact on your policy commitment in more than one of these areas – they're interlinked. Check through your policies **at least** every 2 years to check they are up to date.

Use this resource alongside the following resources from SWMD, including:

Introduction to Safeguarding in Museums. <https://southwestmuseums.org.uk/resources/safeguarding-in-museums/>

Volunteer Recruitment Cycle. A tool with links to resources, templates and examples to help museums get things right on the ground. <https://southwestmuseums.org.uk/resources/Volunteer-Recruitment-Cycle/>

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Road Map. This can be used with museum colleagues, governing bodies and stakeholders to take an organisation-wide approach to change and placing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the heart of what <https://southwestmuseums.org.uk/resources/edi-roadmap/>



Craft activities for families at Dean Heritage Centre, Gloucestershire, 2022



Creative Commons Attribution-Non-commercial-No Derivatives 4.0 International Public Licence



South West Museum Development
Bristol Museum & Art Gallery,
Queens Road,
Bristol, BS8 1RL

museum.development@bristol.gov.uk
[@swmuseums](https://twitter.com/swmuseums)
southwestmuseums.org.uk

