



South London Botanical Institute

Volunteering Policy (Version 5.11.19)

1. Introduction

The South London Botanical Institute (SLBI) aims to involve a broad range of people in volunteering to help run its activities effectively and to help enrich the local community.

It does this by:

- Supporting its volunteers in all their activities at the Institute
- Regularly publicising volunteer opportunities
- Working with volunteer involving organisations to improve the diversity and quality of volunteer placements
- Providing potential volunteers with the means to access volunteering opportunities, including those who might otherwise have found themselves excluded from taking part in their communities.

The SLBI is committed to involving volunteers directly within the organisation to:

- Contribute to the delivery of our services
- Form our board of trustees
- Make sure we are responsive to the needs of our users (members, visitors, etc)
- Provide different skills and perspectives
- Offer opportunities for participation by people who might otherwise be excluded.

This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers.

2. Principles

The SLBI:

- Recognises that voluntary work brings benefits to volunteers themselves, to SLBI users and to paid staff.
- Will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to the SLBI's work.
- Will not introduce volunteers to replace paid staff.
- Expects that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work.

- Recognises that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training for them to do their work effectively.
- Will endeavour to identify and cover the costs of involving volunteers.
- Recognises that the management of volunteers requires designated responsibilities within specific posts.
- Will endeavour to involve volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities and ensure our volunteering opportunities are as accessible as possible

3. Recruitment

Recruitment of volunteers will generally be from all sections of the community, and will be in line with the SLBI Equality & Diversity Policy. Positive action in recruitment may be used where appropriate.

People interested in becoming volunteers with the SLBI will be asked to complete a simple registration form appropriate to the role that they are applying for and to supply two references. They will then be invited for an informal talk with the appropriate contact person. They will be given general information about the organisation, specific information on the volunteer post in which they are interested and a short tour around the Institute. Potential volunteer trustees will be given a specific information pack.

Applicants will be told if there is a suitable placement for them either during their visit or within one week. Where applicants are not placed in the role applied for, they will be provided with feedback and given the opportunity to discuss alternative volunteering roles with the SLBI and where appropriate with other similar known organisations.

Every volunteer role will undergo a risk assessment. For volunteer roles which involve 'regulated work' such as sustained and direct contact with children or vulnerable adults, the SLBI has a legal obligation to ensure that volunteers are not barred from working with children or vulnerable groups. Potential volunteers for such roles will be required to undertake a DBS check. This information will be dealt with in the strictest confidence and will not necessarily prejudice the person being accepted for voluntary work.

4. Volunteer Role Descriptions

Volunteers will receive a role description containing full information about their chosen area of work, a clear idea of their responsibilities and what they can expect from the SLBI.

5. Induction and Training

Volunteers will be given induction and training appropriate to the specific tasks to be undertaken. An induction checklist will be used when they start at the SLBI, to ensure that all appropriate areas are covered - including familiarisation with relevant policies such as Complaints, Health & Safety, Safeguarding and Volunteering. This will be signed off by the volunteer and relevant line manager (see 6 below).

6. Support

Volunteers will be assigned a line manager or other named contact person who will provide regular support. Support sessions will provide the opportunity for ongoing dialogue about the development of the volunteering role and any advice and guidance as needed.

7. The Volunteer's Voice

Volunteers will be consulted about decisions which are likely to affect them, either individually or in groups. Volunteers' views will always be welcomed and given full consideration.

8. Records

With the volunteer's consent, personal data will be kept securely by staff in the SLBI office. This will include the registration form, references, placement details, crisis contact, correspondence and any other relevant information in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations and personal privacy considerations. See SLBI Privacy Policy for further details.

9. Expenses

Volunteers can claim agreed out of pocket expenses such as travel and lunch. The SLBI will ensure that there is a clear and accessible system to enable claims to be made via the Administrator.

10. Insurance

Volunteers will be covered by insurance while carrying out agreed duties.

11. Health and Safety

The SLBI will take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the volunteers' health, safety and welfare while at work in accordance with the SLBI Health and Safety policy.

12. Equal Opportunities

Volunteers and staff will work in accordance with the SLBI Equality & Diversity Policy and will prevent discrimination on any grounds.

13. Problems or complaints

The SLBI has a Complaints Handling Policy to help deal with complaints or concerns that volunteers may have. In line with this policy volunteers have the right to discuss any concerns they may have with their named contact at any time. If concerns are not resolved, these may be referred to another SLBI representative.

With regard to a disciplinary issue regarding a volunteer, this should be dealt with by the named contact in consultation with a staff member.

14. Endings

When volunteers move on from their role at the SLBI they will be asked to provide feedback on their volunteering experience by way of an exit questionnaire. They will also be given the

opportunity to discuss their responses to the questionnaire more fully with a member of staff or trustee.

On the basis of their voluntary work, volunteers will have the right to request a reference. Volunteers will be supported to move on to other options.

15. Recognition

The SLBI will recognise the contribution made by its volunteers, including providing regular opportunities to thank, reward and celebrate – for example, with an end-of-year party, occasional volunteer outings and free attendance at SLBI events.

16. Expectations of volunteers

In response to the commitments made by the SLBI above, the Institute would expect the following from its volunteers:

- Commit to our aims and values and be a positive advocate for the SLBI
- Aim for high standards of efficiency, reliability and quality in your volunteering; giving the best of your skills and abilities
- Treat everyone you come into contact with through your role with dignity and respect, understanding that no form of harassment, bullying or discrimination will be tolerated
- Work in partnership with other volunteers, staff and the general public
- Support and act in accordance with our organisational policies, guidelines, procedures and management decisions - including all aspects of equality & diversity, health & safety, finance, data protection, safeguarding and use of our brand - and to ask if something isn't clear
- Ensure that any funds donated to the SLBI are handled appropriately
- Respect and maintain confidentiality
- Always consider and protect the SLBI's reputation in your actions and conduct, acting responsibly and within the law
- Be accountable for your behaviour and actions and be open to receiving feedback
- Let your named contact know first if you have any problems so that we can find a solution together
- Let your named contact know if there are changes in your personal circumstances that may affect your volunteering

17. Monitoring and Evaluation

The SLBI will systematically monitor and evaluate its involvement with volunteers with reference to this Volunteering Policy.

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

Signed on behalf of SLBI Trustees:

Name: 

Date: 5.11.19

Date for review: 5.11.21