

Gloucestershire Archives @The Hub

Volunteering Policy

1. Policy statement and purpose

This policy explains how Gloucestershire Archives recruits and manages volunteers, and what we expect of them.

2. Scope

The policy applies to people volunteering for Gloucestershire Archives. It also covers those on work experience placements.

3. Terminology

Archives are the record of everyday activities of governments, organisations, businesses and individuals. Archives may take many different forms – handwritten, typed, printed, photographic or electronic – and include audio-visual material such as video and sound recordings. As authentic and reliable records, they are preserved permanently because of their evidential and historical value.

Local and family history resources comprise published information about the history of local areas and their communities, for example, newspapers and locality-based books, pamphlets and journals covering a wide range of topics.

4. Background

Gloucestershire Archives gathers archive collections and local and family history resources to ensure they are kept secure and made accessible.



We are an accredited archive service recognised by The National Archives as the place of deposit for public records relating to Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire.

We are a Gloucestershire County Council service. By agreement, we also provide an archive service for South Gloucestershire Council and are the appointed Record Office for the Diocese of Gloucester.

We are a lead partner in the Gloucestershire Heritage Hub, a network of local people and organisations created in 2017 with a common interest in our historic county's documented heritage. The network benefits from Hub facilities at Alvin Street, Gloucester and a Hub website, and its members support each other to gather, keep and share their personal and community archives.

5. Practice

Volunteers are:

- involved in specific roles to enhance and support the work of Gloucestershire Archives.
- given a role description and/or an explanation of the task they have been allocated, which their nominated staff contact will discuss with them.
- consulted on matters that affect them, including being asked to participate in periodic volunteer surveys.
- encouraged to develop their own skills and areas of interest within their volunteering role
- thanked (e.g. through an annual thank you event)
- informed at the outset that their allocated volunteering task may be time limited
- entitled to request a reference from the Community Heritage Development Manager, or their named contact, in relation to the work they have undertaken as a volunteer at Gloucestershire Archives if they request a reference within 6 months of finishing their volunteer task/s.

6. Principles

- Volunteers will not replace paid staff
- Volunteers may work onsite or off-site, on their own or as part of a group
- Volunteers will offer their time according to their availability and role
- Volunteering will be beneficial to both parties – the volunteer and the service

7. Recruitment

We aim to recruit volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds to reflect the diversity of the communities we serve. Advertisements for volunteers are on the [Gloucestershire Archives](#), and [Heritage Hub](#) websites; on the [Engage in Gloucester \(Volunteer Makers\)](#) website and are publicised through social media.

Recruitment has to be managed in order that the number of volunteers remains sustainable in terms of staff capacity for supervising them. On occasion, this may mean that those enquiring about voluntary work are informed there are no opportunities at present.

We work proactively with partners to seek funding for activities that provide volunteering opportunities.

We reserve the right to not accept a volunteer, or to terminate a volunteering arrangement.

We may request references for volunteers where appropriate and/or for certain roles.

8. Expenses

We offer to reimburse volunteers' reasonable travel expenses to and from the place of volunteering, providing that these are supported by receipts or tickets. Taxi fares would not usually be reimbursed, except in very exceptional circumstances.

9. Equality and diversity

Gloucestershire Archives is firmly committed to the principles of equality and diversity in the workforce and in the service we provide to customers.

We treat all customers, and anyone else we come into contact with, equally and with dignity and respect. We do not discriminate on grounds of age, disability status, employment status, ethnic or cultural origin, gender or gender reassignment, marital status, nationality, religious belief or non-belief, responsibility for dependants, sexual orientation, social background, or any other grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. We will recognise, respect and value difference and diversity.

We have undertaken an equalities impact assessment of our policies. The resultant Due Regard Statement is available on request.

10. Induction and training

Each volunteer receives a basic induction (as appropriate, and relevant to the task being undertaken), background information about the organisation and orientation around the building (including evacuation procedures).

Volunteers are asked to read and sign a Volunteer Agreement form, which constitutes part of the Volunteer Handbook which can be found at

www.goucestershire.gov.uk/archives/working-with-us/volunteering

Volunteers also receive training specific to their role, as appropriate.

11. Supervision and support

Volunteers have a named contact, usually a member of Gloucestershire Archives' staff, who will supervise or support them in their role as appropriate. If there is a dispute of any kind, between the volunteer and their supervisor, the volunteer may seek advice from the Community Heritage Development Manager.

12. Health and safety

We do all we can to ensure volunteers are provided with a safe working environment.

Gloucestershire County Council (GCC)'s Public Liability and Employer's Liability policies provide indemnity to any person volunteering to assist the Council in its business, and this includes those on work experience placements.

13. Confidentiality

Where volunteers have access to sensitive information they are required to treat this as confidential. This is why they are asked to read and sign a copy of the Volunteer Agreement, which makes this requirement explicit.



14. Roles and responsibilities

The Community Heritage Development Manager is responsible for the overall management of volunteers. This officer is also responsible for policy revisions, and ensuring the policy and related procedures are followed.

15. References

This policy should be read alongside other related Archives [policies](#), and the Volunteer Handbook, to be found at <https://www.goucestershire.gov.uk/archives/work-with-us/volunteering/>

16. Review and revision

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

Document control

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Version history

Version	Version date	Summary of Changes
1.0	Sept 2009	New policy approved
1.1	April 2010	Minor amendments
1.2	Jan 2013	Minor changes to update links; government targets and CRB checks removed; administrative requirements reduced
1.3	Sept 2014	Brief review and minor re-formatting
1.4	Mar 2017	Full review and update as part of the new Volunteer Handbook
1.5	Jan 2018	New template to reflect the new Gloucestershire Heritage Hub and brief review

1.6	Mar & Oct 2020	Review, including insertion of section 6. Principles; updated links inserted; added work placements (participants to be treated as volunteers) and where adverts for volunteers are placed.
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Date of next revision: 2023