

VOLUNTEER POLICY

Volunteering with Social Enterprise Kent (SEK)

About Us

Social Enterprise Kent is a social enterprise which has been trading in Kent since 1985. We initially developed as a training business, to help people from disadvantaged backgrounds gain the skills they need to get closer to the workplace, obtain employment, or develop skills to progress their careers. We have always worked closely with other partners in Kent, including charities, statutory organisations and the private sector, as we believe a thriving community needs the skills and support from all sectors.

We now deliver a range of activities which include community projects, commercial training and government contracts, all with the same aims of improving lives and supporting communities.

Purpose of our Volunteer Policy

Our Volunteer Policy has been created to show our volunteers and potential volunteers that we have spent time and care in planning how volunteers will be welcomed at Social Enterprise Kent. It also outlines that all volunteers will be treated in a fair and consistent way. It should also help our volunteers understand what support is available to them and what they can expect from us.

A volunteer is a person who freely gives their time, skills and experience without expectation of financial reward. Volunteering can take many forms. Some tasks require particular skills, such as a language or creative task, whereas other roles may require I.T. skills or perhaps confidence talking to people at events. We will work with you to realise the best opportunity for you personally. Volunteering may be for a limited time to complete a particular project or may be on an ongoing basis.

We recognise the immense benefits that volunteers bring to us and the bridges that they build between SEK and the local community. In return we hope to give volunteers an opportunity to exercise their skills in a different environment and to undertake new experiences.

We try to offer a range of volunteering opportunities and in accordance with our equal opportunities and diversity policies, ensure that the opportunity to volunteer is widely available.

Our Vision and Mission for Volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to share your enthusiasm, skills and ideas whilst having fun and meeting like-minded people. By volunteering for SEK you will be making a positive contribution to community development in your area. Volunteers are vital to our work.

A volunteer is not an employee and will not have a contract of employment with us. 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 agreed volunteering opportunities for the volunteer. However, the volunteer is free to refuse to fulfill the role and SEK is not bound to provide volunteering opportunities.

Recruiting Volunteers and Volunteer Agreement

We have a range of opportunities for volunteers to get involved with. Once we receive a copy of your completed registration form, a member of our team will get in touch with more information on specific opportunities and we can decide together which option best matches your interests, time availability and also our needs. Your help will be greatly appreciated and really will make a difference.

Volunteering Agreement

The volunteer will be invited to enter into a volunteering agreement with SEK.
This agreement will identify:

- ◆ The Volunteer's Role.
- ◆ The Training that the volunteer is expected to undertake in order to fulfill the role.
- ◆ The Expenses that the Company will pay to the volunteer.
- ◆ The Insurance Cover that will be provided for the volunteer.
- ◆ Who will Supervise the volunteer.
- ◆ The Notice that will be given to a volunteer if their role is to come to an end.

DBS Checks

Some volunteer roles will require a DBS check to inform SEK of any criminal convictions that a person wishing to volunteer may have. For example, any volunteer position which involves regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults will be subject to a DBS check.

Induction and Training

It does not matter how much you already know, as there will be opportunities to learn, and we have roles to suit every level of expertise. There will be an induction prepared and delivered by one of our staff.

This will include:

- ◆ Information about SEK, our vision, mission and future plans.
- ◆ The Role of the volunteer.
- ◆ Introduction to other volunteers.
- ◆ Tour around our facilities and see some of our initiatives.
- ◆ Copy of all the relevant Policies including this volunteer policy, our Health and Safety, Expenses, Equality and Diversity and Conflict Management.
- ◆ Essential Procedures such as timekeeping to support our volunteer activities.
- ◆ Information about Training for the volunteer's agreed role.

There will be a trial period of four weeks to give SEK and yourself time to discover if you are suited for the role. A review will be made midway through the trial period and also at the end. This is not an assessment; it is just so we can be sure that you benefit the most from the volunteering experience and maximise the time you are giving freely.

Support

Our Volunteer Manager/Co-ordinator will offer support to you. They will remain your key contact throughout your time volunteering with us. This will include regular meetings with you to discuss how you are getting on, discuss any training needs and deal with any issues arising. This will also ensure that SEK are doing all we can to make your volunteering experience an enjoyable and meaningful one.

Recognition and Reward

We could not do the work we do without our volunteers. To acknowledge this we will always say thank you and show appreciation for a job well done. There will always be a listening ear or shoulder to lean on.

We will hold social events each year to celebrate our achievements, this might be a certificate presentation for volunteers or a celebration at Christmas. During these events you will get an opportunity to meet other volunteers and supporters of our work and share in our plans for the future.

We will take opportunities on our website, Facebook page, annual general meetings, local and national press to praise the achievements of our volunteers.

Each year we celebrate our wonderful volunteers during volunteer's week (1st - 7th June). During this week, volunteers will be thanked and be presented with recognition for their time and effort.

Expenses

We value our volunteers and want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. All reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred will be reimbursed, including expenses for travel. In order to claim expenses, an Expenses Form must be completed with a valid receipt attached and this should be handed in to the Volunteer Co-ordinator. Please note that expenses will only be paid if it includes a valid receipt which proves that the expense was incurred when fulfilling your voluntary role, for example a bus ticket. Where mileage is being claimed, the Expenses Form must show the postcodes being travelled to and from, and what the volunteer activity was.

Insurance, Health and Safety, Accidents and Risk Assessment

SEK has a valid insurance policy so that volunteers are covered by public liability insurance, which you are advised to read. It covers the volunteering activities you will be doing. We will keep reminding you of our Health and Safety Policy and give simple instructions on how to perform each task safely. We have clear procedures for accidents and emergencies and will always have a first aider on field sites. We have a responsibility for the health and safety of volunteers. Volunteers should at all times 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. Volunteers should report all accidents to their supervisor.

We will provide volunteers with appropriate guidance on any health and safety issues that arise. If you feel you need more specific support in order to carry out your volunteering activities, then please discuss this with the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

Resolving Problems

We hope that you will have a very enjoyable experience volunteering with us. However, if your role as a volunteer does not meet with your expectations or with the commitments we have made to you, we want you to feel comfortable about letting us know. First of all, talk to the person who leads the team where you volunteer and they should be able to sort it out with you before it becomes a problem. If you don't feel comfortable doing this, please speak with another member of staff.

Confidentiality

We expect all volunteers to adhere to confidentiality guidelines which will be explained to you before you begin volunteering with us. This also includes the use of social media and contact with any press. You are likely to become aware of confidential information about SEK and its staff, customers and partners. 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.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

SEK is committed to embracing diversity and promoting equality and inclusion. When representing SEK as a volunteer we expect you to support our commitment to promoting equality and diversity.

Supervision

A supervisor (usually the Volunteer Co-ordinator) will be appointed to support you. The supervisor will review the arrangements after one month and thereafter on a regular basis. If you have any queries or would like to change your role this can be discussed with the supervisor.

Volunteer Drivers

Any volunteers who will be transporting equipment or people using a vehicle provided by the Company must have a valid driving license. They will be covered by the Company's insurance policy. Where the volunteer will be using their own vehicle, they must provide a copy of the vehicle's insurance policy and, if appropriate, the MOT certificate.

The volunteer must report any accidents to the Company. They must also report any motoring offences or police cautions to the Company. The Company will not pay any parking fines accumulated by the volunteer.

Volunteering Whilst on Benefits

You can still volunteer with us if you are receiving benefits provided that we all follow the legal guidelines. We have information from the Jobs and Benefits Department which we can talk through with you regarding the hours you can do and what you can claim for expenses incurred through volunteering.

Volunteer's Pack

On commencing their volunteer work, the volunteer will be provided with:

- ♦ General Information about the Company
 - Please visit our website, www.sekgroup.org.uk/
- ♦ A Copy of this Volunteering Policy
- ♦ A Standard Volunteering Agreement
- ♦ Details of where they can access the Company's Policies and Procedures
 - Please ask any staff member for any policy or procedure you wish to read.
- ♦ Information on other available Volunteering Opportunities
 - We communicate opportunities to volunteers regularly via emails and via the main Ageless Thanet newsletter.