

**ROUTEWAYS CENTRE LIMITED**

**VOLUNTEER POLICY**

**POLICY STATEMENT**

Routeways Centre Limited was established in August 1997 as an amalgamation of a number of community benefit economic regeneration projects that had previously been managed by Plymouth City Council. It was set up in an economic environment of high levels of unemployment, continuing economic depression and in a city with significant pockets of extreme social deprivation. In May 2000 Routeways Centre Limited achieved charitable status with newly agreed charitable objects. In May 2003 we achieved Investor in People accreditation and in January 2006 we were awarded Charter Mark accreditation.

Our Mission Statement is:

“Routeways manages a range of projects which serve to enhance the social and economic well being of communities by promoting choice and opportunity for individuals.

Routeways is committed to the development of quality services for its customers and to providing a supportive working environment for its staff.”

It is the aim of Routeways to encourage volunteering. We believe that volunteering should be a happy, productive, safe and beneficial experience – both for the volunteers and Routeways Centre Limited. The use of volunteers within Routeways Centre Limited adds to the diversity of the organisation and brings additional experience to our projects and the beneficiaries of these projects. We are also committed to all volunteers gaining significant personal benefit from their time volunteering with Routeways. Our policy is designed to help volunteers achieve their own personal objectives during their time of volunteering within the organisation.

Other policies that are relevant to volunteering are Recruitment, Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Grievance, Disciplinary and Confidentiality.

**RECRUITMENT**

In recognition of the importance of volunteers within its culture, Routeways' projects will each identify a Volunteer Co-ordinator who will have responsibility for the recruitment, training, support and welfare of volunteers. Volunteers will be expected to abide by the ethos and rules of Routeways which will be explained during the induction process.

Recruitment will be conducted by an information interview with the Volunteer Co-ordinator and/or the person who will supervise the volunteer. Specific task outlines can be drawn up at this interview or at a later date. References will be required but there will be flexibility regarding who can be named as a referee. When Routeways seeks information about criminal records it will be as an aid to appropriate placement, not as a way of excluding anyone with a criminal record from volunteering.

Routeways recognises that volunteering is not a substitute for paid work and should not be presented as such. Routeways will offer the volunteer a supportive atmosphere and practical opportunities for the individual to grow in confidence and skills.

## **INDUCTION AND TRAINING**

There will be an induction and trial period for all volunteers to give them a firm grounding in the values of the organisation as well as general practices. Relevant staff members will deliver more specific training for the volunteer tasks and any external training that might be useful can be discussed at supervision sessions.

All volunteers will receive a Volunteer Handbook, which includes expense forms and other administrative forms, contact lists, and general information about Routeways and information about, or actual copies of, all Routeways' Policies with which they need to familiarise themselves.

## **SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT**

Each volunteer will have a named supervisor who will be responsible for supporting him/her throughout his/her time at Routeways. Supervision sessions will be undertaken regularly and are considered an important part of the volunteers' development.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

Routeways believes that equal opportunities are important for volunteers as well as for paid staff, and that volunteering activities should be accessible to everyone. Routeways undertakes to take all due care to place advertisements in places that are available to everyone, to use easy-to-understand language and to use non-stereotypical images. Wherever possible, Routeways will ensure its premises are accessible to all. Volunteers and staff who work with volunteers are encouraged to be open about their prejudices and will be helped to overcome them.

Routeways is firmly committed to diversity in all areas of its work. We are committed to developing and maintaining an organisation in which differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are supported and valued, and people with diverse backgrounds and experiences are able to participate and contribute.

## **EXPENSES**

Most volunteer tasks require some degree of personal expenditure by the volunteer. To prevent volunteering becoming restricted only to those who can afford it, Routeways will reimburse all out-of-pocket expenses that volunteers incur (such as travel) at the non-taxable rate as specified with HM Customs and Revenue. Expenses forms are provided in the Volunteer Handbook. Expenses must be agreed at the beginning of the voluntary placement and will normally be paid monthly except in extenuating circumstances.

## **INSURANCE**

Volunteers are covered under Routeways Centre Limited Third Party Liability Cover.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Routeways believes that the safety of volunteers is equally important as that of paid employees. Routeways will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that no one is exposed to risks to their health and safety while volunteering with Routeways. A copy of the Health & Safety Policy will be made available to volunteers, and health and safety will be an area covered during the Induction period.

## **DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

Routeways has a Disciplinary & Grievance Procedure in place, which is included in the Volunteer Handbook.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Volunteers are bound by the same confidentiality agreement as paid staff. Any matter of a confidential nature, in particular information relating to clients and their families, individual staff records and details of contract prices and terms, must under no circumstances be divulged or passed on to any unauthorised person or persons. A breach of confidentiality will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.