



Volunteer Handbook

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Thank you for agreeing to volunteer with EGO. We are so grateful for all the help that EGO's volunteers bring and we are committed to making EGO a great place to volunteer.

Volunteers have always been an integral part of EGO, from our very first day on 7th January 2006. Whether you're delivering leaflets or turning a store cupboard in an old nightclub into Father Christmas's grotto, your help is essential and we really appreciate it.

Volunteering brings people together, and we never feel more connected as an EGO community than when members, staff and volunteers work side by side. By creating great volunteer opportunities, we can benefit individual lives as well as wider society.

Please read all of this document before you begin volunteering with EGO. If you have any questions, please speak to your named contact, or contact EGO on hello@egoarts.co.uk.

Volunteer Charter

Why does EGO have a Volunteer Charter?

Every EGO volunteer is unique. People have different expectations, motivations, personalities and skills. The places we work and volunteer in are different too - at time of writing, EGO's members do activities across two different venues and we stage theatre productions in locations across the country. Some people volunteer remotely too.

Whatever the reason for volunteering, and whatever the team or the role, we want every volunteer to have a positive experience.

This Volunteer Charter has been created so that everyone understands why volunteering is important, and how we can work together to create a great place to volunteer.

Volunteering with EGO

EGO volunteers are involved in all kinds of things, including workshop facilitation, stage management, set construction, painting and decorating, welcoming audiences, surveying, our Board of Trustees, fundraising, chaperoning, photography, selling food and drink, leaflet distribution, making costumes... and much more.

Why volunteering matters

- Volunteers have always been part of EGO's 20-year history. Volunteering is a big part of who we are.
- With the support of volunteers, EGO can reduce social exclusion and change lives with the arts.
- Volunteers bring different skills, experiences and perspectives.
- Volunteering is a great way to bring creativity to more people.
- Volunteering makes a positive difference to people's lives and to wider society, and can help to bring the EGO community closer together.

Benefits of volunteering

People volunteer for EGO for lots of reasons.

- Getting involved in a cause you believe in
- Supporting a local arts organisation that is special to you
- Sharing skills or developing new ones

- Getting social - belonging to a team, meeting a variety of people and sharing memorable experiences
- Having fun and making friends, while doing something positive and worthwhile

If you volunteer, whatever the reason - thank you.

EGO's Values

Our Purpose: To Eradicate Social Exclusion

- Using the arts, culture and creativity to empower and equip the people of the West Midlands regardless of their age, ability, gender, ethnicity, or socio-economic background
- Create a pathway into the creative industries, education, employment, apprenticeships, and volunteering opportunities
- Collaborate with other companies, artists, and networks to maximise our reach regionally, nationally, and internationally and increase our staff skills and knowledge
- Make high quality/distinctive/eclectic/original/innovative work that can be enjoyed by everyone.
- Raise aspirations for our members and inspire our audiences
- Build support networks to reduce social isolation
- Provide a haven where life skills, wellbeing and confidence are nurtured
- Be a torch bearer for inclusivity where barriers are broken down and stereotypes challenged.

Our Vision: Complete and Utter Equality

With foundations built on equity our vision is that all people will have the freedom and the power to shape their world and carve their own path without encountering discrimination, prejudice or political, social, financial, or physical barriers.

Our USP: Redefining the Mainstream

Being authors of radical change. Challenging expectations and preconceptions. Bucking the trend. Tearing up the rule book. Rewriting cultural value. Making art that fits Us.

Our Values: Acting with Courage

Taking action. Taking risks. Acknowledging the power of failure. Acceptance. Listening. Learning. Adapting. Evolving. Kindness. Passion. Generosity. Honesty. When it stops being fun start again.

Our shared volunteering commitments

1. Understanding EGO and our roles

EGO will:

- share a clear outline of your volunteer role, and introduce you to your named contact
- share and promote the work of EGO, explaining our cause and your part in it
- where possible, involve you in changes that affect your volunteer role.

As a volunteer, I'm asked to:

- take time to understand my role, and get in touch with my named contact if I have any questions
- be supportive of the work of EGO and my wider team when I'm volunteering
- help my team respond and adapt to changes when they happen.

2. Valuing everyone

EGO will:

- promote EGO's values, explaining and demonstrating their importance
- show appreciation for what you do, saying thank you regularly and celebrating the difference that volunteers make
- make you feel truly welcome, treating you with kindness, respect and dignity
- create an environment that's built on mutual respect and free from bullying, harassment and discrimination
- where possible, offer you opportunities to develop and share skills and knowledge relevant to your volunteering
- pay your out-of-pocket expenses in line with EGO's Volunteer Expenses policy (below).

As a volunteer, I'm asked to:

- get to know EGO's values, and bring them to life when I volunteer with EGO
- be welcoming, treating everyone with kindness, respect and dignity
- help create an environment built on mutual respect, free from bullying, harassment and discrimination
- consider if there are ways I'd like to develop or share my skills and knowledge, to enhance my volunteer experience or my team's work
- claim any expenses promptly in line with EGO's Volunteer Expenses policy (below)

3. Staying connected

EGO will:

- give you relevant and important information in a way that's clear and accessible, and keep you updated on changes that may affect how you volunteer
- be open and constructive when giving and receiving feedback, and make time to listen when you tell us (either openly or in confidence) about your experiences
- respond to your feedback, and be open and honest if we can't act on it.

As a volunteer, I'm asked to:

- review and act on any information that's important for my role
- find out from my named contact the most appropriate way to share my thoughts and feedback within EGO
- be open and constructive when giving and receiving feedback
- let my named contact know about any changes that might affect how I volunteer, so that I can be supported where possible.

4. Keeping each other safe

EGO will:

- make sure your volunteering experience is safe, with the essential equipment or information to support you and your wellbeing
- make sure all policies and procedures are up to date, clear and accessible
- give you clear, confidential channels to report and record risks or unacceptable behaviour
- give you training and guidance that is required by law or essential for your role, and provide it in a way that's accessible and relevant to your role.

As a volunteer, I'm asked to:

- make my safety and wellbeing a priority, along with that of others around me
- take time to understand and follow the policies and procedures relevant to my role
- report safety risks and concerns, or unacceptable behaviour, through the right channels
- complete all training that is asked of me and put it into practice.

Fire safety

- All volunteers will receive an in-person fire safety briefing on their first day in a new location.

Health and safety

- You will be given an appropriate health & safety briefing at your induction which is relevant to your role.

Safeguarding

- It is EVERYONE'S responsibility to follow safeguarding practice and to report ALL safeguarding concerns as a matter of urgency.
- All volunteers will agree to EGO's Safeguarding Code when signing up (separate document)
- If you are concerned about anyone's welfare, follow training and guidance and report it to EGO's Designated Safeguarding Lead, Corinne Robinson - corinne@egoarts.co.uk
- Remember your 5 Rs: Recognise; Respond; Report; Record; Refer.
- If EGO's Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable, speak to your named contact.
- If someone is at immediate risk of harm, call 999.

DBS checks

DBS checks are essential for all EGO volunteers aged 16+, regardless of whether you will be working around children, young people and/or adults at risk.

- As an EGO volunteer, EGO will order and pay for your DBS check.
- If you have an existing DBS check and are registered with the DBS Update Service, please let us know - as there are different levels of DBS, we will need to check it covers everything we need.

Volunteer Expenses

- All expenses should be submitted via email to hello@egoarts.co.uk.
- Please let your named contact know if you wish to make a claim.
- Claims must be submitted within three months of the initial expense.

Expenses: Lunch

For shifts of 4 hours or more, volunteers can claim up to £5 for lunch. Please save your receipt so that we can reimburse you.

Travel expenses: home to place of volunteering

Volunteers may claim reimbursement for agreed travel expenses, including mileage from home to their place of volunteering. This will usually be discussed with you when you start volunteering in your new role.

- All travel expenses must be agreed with your named contact in advance, in writing.
- The current mileage rate for volunteer's home to volunteering location is 45p per mile.
- For environmental reasons, please use public transport where available and consider cost-effective transport such as car sharing.

Expenses: travelling on EGO business

- 'EGO business' includes any travel you undertake at the request of EGO, and can include training sessions, meetings, or any location outside of your normal place of volunteering.
- Again, all travel expenses must be agreed in advance with your named contact, in writing, and prior to expenditure.
- The current rate for EGO business mileage (using your own car) is 45p per mile.
- Volunteers driving on EGO business (whether using their own car, a hire vehicle or EGO vehicle) must complete an up-to-date EGO Driver Declaration Form (separate document). This will be provided by your named contact and must be signed off by them before you drive on EGO business.
- You must inform your insurance company that you are using your vehicle for volunteering purposes – you shouldn't incur an additional charge, but the notification ensures you are fully covered.