**Volunteer Policy**

The Advice Centre seeks to involve volunteers

* To allow more clients to access advice, through increasing hours of sessions, appointments, casework and outreach.
* To improve services provided by increasing staff available.
* To build stronger connections within the local community
* To provide training and work experience for people from the local community, with an aim to increase volunteers’ employment opportunities.
* To provide new skills and perspectives.

Volunteering opportunities are available at through:

* The volunteer advice work training project which recruits and provides training in advice skills to residents of Tower Hamlets. Participants carry out one day per week of classroom training and another day of voluntary work in an advice centre in the borough carrying out basic advice on benefits, housing, debt, immigration and employment problems.
* The volunteer law student recruitment which refers law student volunteers to advice centres for one day per week for 6 months to one year in order to gain knowledge and experience in advice
* Admin volunteering under the supervision of the Centre Administrator/Finance Officer.
* Management Committee/board of trustees – applications for membership are invited at the IAC Annual General Meeting.

The Advice Centre’s values the high level of motivation and commitment to social justice that volunteer can bring to the service.

Advice Centre’s volunteer policy is underpinned by the following aims and principles:

* Volunteers are not employees but are valued as staff and are encouraged to attend all staff and management committee meetings. Details of meetings and minutes are made available to all volunteers.
* All work by volunteers is supervised by a paid member of staff.
* Advice Centre volunteer vacancies are advertised in the local community.
* Volunteers receive an induction, supervision and training.
* All paid staff is to be involved in training, support, professional development and supervision of volunteers.
* All volunteers will have a named supervisor and monthly supervision sessions with their supervisor.
* Social events are to be made as accessible as possible to all volunteers. Volunteers’ costs incurred will be reimbursed.
* Trainee advisors are encouraged to gain first-hand experience of working with client groups from the outset.

**Additionally**

* All prospective volunteers will be interviewed by either the volunteer supervisor or a specialist casework supervisor or Centre Administrator (admin volunteers).
* All volunteers will agree to a Volunteer Agreement, outlining in details Advice Centre’s expectations, and what volunteers expect form the Advice Centre.
* Advice Centre will reimburse out of pocket expenses as detailed in the Appendix
* All volunteers will receive an induction and training will be provided as detailed in the Volunteer Task Description and as identified in supervision.
* Volunteers are covered by the Advice Centre’s health and safety policy as detailed in the office manual.
* The Advice Centre has an equality and diversity policy, as detailed in the office manual. This operates in relation to all staff, paid and unpaid, and to clients and external organisations.
* Volunteers will be expected to carry out induction and sign a confidentiality agreement. Details of the confidentiality policy can be found in the “volunteer section” of the office manual.
* All volunteers are covered by the Advice Centre’s insurance policies whilst they are on the premises, or undertaking tasks in association with the Centre.
* You are not covered for loss of personal possessions.