



# MERCi

## Volunteer Policy

### 1.0 Volunteers at MERCi

The existence of MERCi and Bridge 5 Mill is due to the hard work of volunteers. Since MERCi was set up in 1996 over one hundred volunteers have contributed to the success of the project. Volunteers have played a wide variety of roles throughout the history of the organisation, from founding the project, research and outreach work, to painting and gardening.

#### 1.1 Value

Given this history it is not to be forgotten that volunteers play an important role in MERCi.

MERCi values volunteers highly for the variety of qualities they bring to the organisation.

These qualities include time, enthusiasm, a wide variety of skills and expertise, varying life experience, all of which contribute to the diversity and vitality of the organisation.

#### 1.2 What is a volunteer at MERCi?

A volunteer is someone who contributes his or her time to the organisation without being paid (but are reimbursed for agreed travel and lunch expenses). A MERCi volunteer is someone who works in Bridge 5 Mill or on a project that is being run by MERCi. There are projects that MERCi has helped to establish, but are now independent, such as MEEN and SCENE (the latter run by MPAC). Whilst people volunteer for these projects are the responsibility of the project. MERCi has no responsibility for people volunteering on projects that are independent of MERCi.

- We aim to respect the dignity and individual wishes of volunteers and to do our best to meet them.
- All volunteers should be treated as equals to MERCi workers. This means that they should:
- be kept informed of decisions and structural changes within MERCi.
- take equal part in the relevant stream meetings as MERCi workers if they choose to.
- have equal access to resources MERCi provides to its workers, when work is equally urgent.
- Long term volunteers should also get their own pigeon hole.
- All MERCi's policies apply equally to workers and to volunteers.

### 2.0 How do volunteers fit into MERCi's structure?

- Each volunteer is part of one of five areas of work: building, community, education, enterprise or development.
- Within each stream volunteers may or may not be part of a project with other people, depending on the stream.
- If a volunteer is part of a project with other people then they should attend project meetings if necessary.
- If a volunteer is working independently on a project they should attend meetings of the relevant stream if necessary.



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### 3.0 Volunteer Support

#### 3.1 Allocated person within stream to act as point of contact.

Each volunteer is allocated one named person within the relevant stream to act as their “point of contact”. This person works with help from the stream if necessary to draw up a project description form and personal action plan. They are responsible for carrying out the one month and then three monthly reviews, or as necessary.

Review sessions should be on a one-to-one basis, be recorded and are confidential between the volunteer and the worker allocated.

Review sessions should include discussions around successes and areas for development, identifying relevant training needs, and setting future goals if necessary.

MERCi workers should use the standard review form to be found in the volunteer folder.

#### 3.2 Group managed by stream/project.

Apart from initial support from one allocated person within the stream (this is different to the “point of contact”), the volunteer should be supported through stream or project meetings.

#### 3.3 Volunteer Training.

- All volunteers should receive the Basic Induction and also the part of the induction which will brief them on key policy issues at MERCi and introduce them to the project.
- All volunteers should attend a sustainability training session at MERCi.
- All volunteers are entitled to attend in-house training that MERCi organises, where space on the course allows. Dates are to be advertised on the MERCi notice board and through stream meetings.
- Volunteers who have committed or are willing to commit to MERCi on a long term basis are entitled to go on training courses provided by outside providers as relevant. It is up to the appropriate stream to decide on relevancy of training and on budget.
- Volunteers should also be encouraged to attend conferences and events appropriate to their work where possible. Again this is to be decided by the stream.

#### 3.4 Expenses.

To repay travel to and from home to MERCi and during your work, plus any other reasonable travel expense incurred while working for MERCi (for example train fare to a conference). The Volunteer Handbook provides further details on expenses.

#### 3.5 Health and Safety.

To provide adequate training and feedback in support of our health and safety policy, a copy of which is in the Volunteer Handbook.

#### 3.6 Child Protection.

To ensure that the volunteer complies with the Child Protection Policy at MERCi if they will be coming into regular contact with children. A copy of the Child Protection Policy is available in the Volunteer Handbook.

#### 3.7 Insurance.

To provide adequate insurance cover for volunteers whilst undertaking voluntary work approved and authorised by MERCi.



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### 3.8 Equal opportunities.

To ensure that all volunteers are dealt with in accordance with our equal opportunities policy, a copy of which is set out in the Volunteer Handbook.

### 3.9 Problems.

To try to resolve fairly any problems, grievances and difficulties you may have while you volunteer with MERCi. In the event of an unresolved problem, to offer an opportunity to discuss the issues in accordance with the Complaints and Grievances procedures.