

HUMANTICS CIC VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Section Contents Page

- 1.0 Introduction.**
- 2.0 Humantics CIC.**
- 3.0 Core values.**
- 4.0 Before you get started.**
- 5.0 So why do people volunteer?**
- 6.0 Who can volunteer?**
- 7.0 Volunteering and Benefits**
- 8.0 Volunteer positions currently available.**
- 9.0 What should you expect from our organisation?**
- 10.0 About us.**
- 11.0 Guidelines for volunteers.**
- 12.0 Policies and Procedures.**
- 13.0 Induction, training, supervision and support arrangements.**
- 14.0 Reimbursement of expenses.**
- 15.0 General Information.**
- 16.0 Volunteer agreement.**
- 17.0 Useful contact details.**
- 18.0 References.**
- 19.0 Log Book of Activities.**

1.0 Introduction

This handbook will give you all the information you need to help make life easier as a volunteer and will also give you an idea of day to day life in our organisation. If you are not sure – don't be frightened to ask.

2.0 Humantics CIC

Humantics CIC is a Social Enterprise that owns and manages the Forum Music Centre in Darlington County Durham.

Our aim is to ensure that music continues to grow as a cultural lifestyle choice, for all members of the community, in the following ways.

1. We create and develop digitally equipped facilities that are accessible for all, and support music education, artist development and community entertainment in the Darlington and surrounding area.
2. We aim to enrich the diverse needs of individuals, groups and organisations by providing working partnerships and professional relations within the music industry, including the private, public and educational sectors. As an independent hub, Humantics operates as a commercially driven and sustainable social enterprise, which is guided by a strong sense of social responsibility.
3. We strive to provide opportunities for the public, regardless of their age, infirmity or disability, financial hardship or social circumstances, to participate in arts and culture

3.0 Core Values

Humantics is a social enterprise based on the following principles:

- Inclusivity
- Quality of Services
- Openness and Accountability

4.0 Before You Get Started

So you've decided to volunteer? Great news! But just before you get going, please take a few minutes to read this guide. It contains vital information about what you can expect from Volunteering and will give you a better understanding of what our organisation will expect from you. We will also give you tips and advice on staying safe, recording your experiences and making the most of your volunteering placement.

If you have the internet – there is more information on our website:-

www.theforumonline.co.uk

You can also get more general information in relation to volunteering on

www.evolutiondarlington.com

5.0 So Why Do People Volunteer?

There are lots of reasons to volunteer. Here are just a few:

- To become more confident
- To learn new skills and practice the skills you have
- To undertake training or obtain qualifications
- To gain skills and experience that you can put on your CV which could lead to employment
- To show employers you can keep regular hours and stay committed to a task and have things to talk about in a job interview
- To meet new people
- To pick up good ideas from other people
- To try something new and find new interests
- To stay active and healthy
- To get involved in the community and help others
- To have fun

6.0 Who can volunteer?

The simple answer to this is everyone. A volunteer is an individual who gives their time, abilities, skills, experience and enthusiasm freely, with the aim of benefiting others in their community. Anyone can volunteer, regardless of their ethnicity, faith, sexuality or culture and whether they have a lot of time to give or just a little. We will welcome the time and enthusiasm that you can give.

7.0 Volunteering and Benefits

You can volunteer and be in receipt of **Job Seekers Allowance** as long as you:-

- Are still actively looking for a full-time paid job
- Are available for work (or treated as being available for work)
- Are still able to go to an interview at 48 hours notice
- Are still able to start a job at one week's notice
- Let Jobcentre Plus know before you start volunteering, and tell them about any expenses you may get. You will be asked to fill in a simple form telling Jobcentre Plus about the volunteering you plan to do.

If you have been unemployed for six months there may be extra help if you're thinking about volunteering, speak to your personal adviser at the Job Centre to see what's available.

You can still get **Carer's Allowance** if you volunteer and care for a disabled person for at least 35 hours a week and they get the right disability benefit.

Volunteering won't affect your **Disability Living Allowance** or **Attendance Allowance**.

You can still volunteer and get **Employment and Support Allowance** as long as you:

- Follow the basic rules above
- Can still go to a work focused interview when asked to do so

You can still get **Housing Benefit** or **Council Tax Benefit** if you follow the basic rules above and tell your local council about any volunteering you do or any expenses you get.

For more information go to www.direct.gov.uk

8.0 Volunteer positions currently available at the Forum Music Centre can be found on the website – www.theforumonline.co.uk

If you are interested in any of these positions, please contact Kath Matthews or Allison McKay at the Forum to request an application form. Telephone 01325 363135 or e-mail

kath.matthews@humantics.co.uk

allison.mckay@humantics.co.uk

9.0 What should you expect from our organisation?

We will provide:

- A formal introduction to the organisation including the aims of Humantics and the roles and functions of the Volunteer Committee plus an introduction to the type of activity your role will involve

- A Volunteer Agreement, which states the commitment the organisation will make to you and the commitment you will make to the organisation
- A written role description that clearly outlines your duties and responsibilities
- Regular supervision, i.e. time for you to discuss your role
- Suitable training to enable you to fulfil your role if applicable
- Protection by relevant Public Liability Insurance
- Information regarding the organisation's policies and procedures which apply to you

10.0 About Us

Humanatics CIC was set up and started trading as owner and manager of the Forum Music Centre in January 2011. It has a board of three directors who are advised and guided by Forum Live Team members and the community group Friends of The Forum. All these groups hold regular meetings where all ideas and opinions are sought and acted upon.

11.0 Guidelines for Volunteers

You should take some time to read your role description and ensure you know the role you are doing and the responsibilities you may be required to undertake. If you decide that a particular role is not for you then please notify the Volunteer Committee. For many of the roles a further specific crib sheet will be developed and will be shared with you prior to volunteering in that area.

The dress code of Humanatics is casual but in keeping with the specific role of the volunteer. A name badge will be provided by Humanatics but you will wear your own clothing as specified above. This will enable us to present a professional image to the wider public.

If you choose to, you can keep a record of your attendance and a log book is provided in section 12 of this handbook for that purpose.

If you are unable to attend after you have agreed to do so, we ask that you notify the Volunteer Committee as soon as possible. This will enable us to offer you any support you may require and also find another volunteer to take your place at the event.

If your personal contact details change you should inform us as soon as possible so we can amend your personal file. This information will be kept in confidence.

You are advised not to bring any valuables with you when volunteering. If you do need to bring something of value please endeavour to keep it on your person.

12.0 Policies and Procedures

The following list of Policies and procedures are given here as a guide only. Humanatics have a full Health and Safety and Policies and Procedures Manual which must be adhered to at all times.

1. Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure
2. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights
3. Safeguarding (children and vulnerable adults)
4. Health and Safety
5. Disclosure and Barring Service Code of Practice
6. Policy on the Recruitment of Ex Offenders
7. Data Protection Act
8. Confidentiality
9. Manual handling
10. Bullying and Harassment

11. Young Volunteers 16/17 years

12.1 Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure

We will always be open to feedback from our users and encourage them to tell us when we get things wrong so we can put them right. We also want them to tell us when we get things right, make comments about the things we do and suggest new ways of doing things. Our approach is to engage with the public and where possible deal with the issue straight away to the satisfaction of the member of the public.

Humantics requires that you record the contact details of the person providing that feedback, either positive or negative, and pass it on to the Volunteer Committee or management.

We understand that sometimes it is difficult to complain. If someone needs to make a complaint we will take their concerns seriously. We will treat them fairly and with respect and they can be confident that they will not receive a poorer service as a result. If we uphold their complaint they can expect an apology and for us to put things right quickly. What we ask in return is that the public treat our staff with respect.

We want to make it as easy as possible for people to tell us what they think. We will listen to them and if the issue relates to the running of the event then you are asked to put them in touch with the event organiser to speak to them about the problem. It is possible to use the website darlingtonforculture.org to give feedback.

12.2 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The success of Humantics and the Forum Music Centre depends on our people. We are committed to valuing diversity and promoting equality for everyone. Competent and motivated volunteers are essential in today's competitive environment and therefore Humantics needs to ensure the best use of human resources in its workforce.

We recognise the varied contributions that a diverse workforce brings to the organisation and we are committed to drawing on the different perspectives and experiences of individuals which will add value to the way we operate.

12.3 Safeguarding (children and vulnerable adults)

Humantics recognises that child and vulnerable adult protection is a shared responsibility for all. We will take all reasonable measures to ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults welfare is promoted and risk of harm is minimised.

12.4 Health and Safety

Humantics has a duty of care towards its volunteers. In practice this means taking all reasonable steps to avoid harm coming to them, either through action or inaction. Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 also places a duty on employers (i.e. an organisation that employs at least one paid member of staff) 'to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that persons not in their employment (i.e. volunteers) who may be affected by their undertaking, are not exposed to risks to their health and safety' and 'to give information as might affect their health and safety'. Humantics remains aware of any potential risks to volunteers, and will take steps to reduce them where they are unacceptable. On acceptance of a position at the Forum, you will be expected to adhere to the Humantics Health and Safety and Policy and Procedures and the advice of management.

12.5 Disclosure and Barring Service Code of Practice

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, Humantics complies fully with the Code of

Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal Disclosure information. It also complies fully with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosure information and has a written policy on these matters. We are required to dispose of the paper copy of the check we receive, in a confidential manner, within 6 months of receipt. We will do this immediately on receipt and simply keep a record of the date it has been received. Disclosure and Barring checks are required to be renewed every three years.

12.6 Policy on the Recruitment of Ex Offenders

Humantics undertakes to treat all applicants for volunteer positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of Disclosure on the basis of a conviction or other information received. Humantics Volunteer Handbook 1st April 2014.

12.7 Data Protection Act

Humantics respects the need to protect all personal data held within the organisation. A full summary of our policies regarding data protection are available in our Policy and Procedures Manual.

1. At no time will we provide any of your details to a third party without your permission.
2. You have the right to see any information about you that we hold in a retrieval system such as a computer database or paper index system.
3. You have the right to challenge us about any information relating to you we hold in a retrieval system and have this changed.
4. You have the right for your details to be removed from a retrieval system and if you cease to be a volunteer they will be removed from the system.
5. The data will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis as part of your annual review
6. We may compile statistical data from time to time but this will never include references to a particular individual.
7. In order to keep you up to date with information and events we will include you in our mailing list or email list.
8. We will never sell or give our mailing lists to a third party.

We will hold your information confidentially. Using the information we will try to match you with volunteering opportunities that appear to suit your preferences and availability. If we find a match we will contact you with the details of the volunteering opportunity; you can then decide if this is something you would like to become involved with as a volunteer or not.

12.8 Confidentiality

You are required as a volunteer to sign to say that you will keep any sensitive or personal information that you become aware of, during the course of your volunteer duties, entirely confidential.

Volunteers are not permitted to share personal details of other volunteers such as home telephone numbers and addresses without the permission of the person concerned. If this information is requested by a third party a volunteer should refer the matter to a volunteer supervisor.

12.9 Manual Handling

Advice and guidance regarding all types of manual handling is held in the Humantics Policy and Procedures Manual.

If in doubt always get help, it is far better to be safe than sorry.

12.10 Bullying and Harassment

Humantics is committed to ensuring a working environment in which the dignity of individuals is respected. To this end any kind of harassment is unacceptable.

Harassment in certain circumstances may be unlawful.

Bullying and harassment can take many forms and involves action, behaviour, comment, or physical contact which is perceived by the individual concerned to be objectionable or which causes offence and subjects an individual or group to unwelcome attention, intimidation, humiliation or ridicule, or violates a volunteers dignity.

12.11 Young Volunteers 16/17 years

There are specific requirements for working with volunteers under the age of 18 years which ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to ensure that the young person's welfare is promoted and risk of harm to young people are minimized. The main issue is to ensure that young volunteers are always listened to, supervised and work in teams with more than one other volunteer.

13.0 Induction, training, supervision and support arrangements

Once you have been accepted as a volunteer and decided which role you are taking on, you will receive a description of the duties you are required to undertake. Before you start you will receive an induction and for each assignment will be briefed by the Volunteer Committee/relevant member of staff to ensure that you understand what is required of you. If at this time you feel that you have any training needs please inform that person.

You will work on a day to day basis under the direction of the appropriate member of staff/Volunteer Committee member, who will ensure that you understand your role and work as part of a team to ensure the smooth running of the service. If you have any concerns on a day to day basis you should inform any of these people.

14.0 Reimbursement of expenses

At this time Humantics is unable to reimburse any expenses you may incur while volunteering. The exception to this are young volunteers i.e. those under 18 years who are able to claim their travelling expenses. This situation will be kept under review and if you are suffering any hardship due to the expenses you incur please do not hesitate to discuss it with a Humantics representative.

15.0 General Information

When you are reading this handbook you will already have completed a volunteer application form, had a chat with a volunteer co-ordinator and have undertaken/be undertaking induction. Before you can start to volunteer we will require two character references and a Disclosure and Barring Service check. You will be given an identity badge and will be in regular touch with a Volunteer co-ordinator. Thank you for choosing to volunteer at the Forum Music Centre.

16.0 Volunteer agreement

Before you volunteer you are asked to sign a volunteer agreement to state the commitment the organisation will make to you and the commitment you will make to the organisation. This will be provided as part of the induction process.

17.0 Useful contacts

www.evolutiondarlington.com

Add any more you will find useful:

Name Contact

18.0 References

Volunteering While Getting Benefits (February 2010) – Job Centre Plus part of the Department for Work and Pensions DWP 1023

19.0 Log Book of Activities

By keeping a record of your voluntary placements in this log book you may be able to offer it as an accreditation in volunteering which may be accepted by a higher education establishment or potential employer and will enable you to demonstrate where you have previously used your skills.

Date Activities Hours Worked Supervisors Signature