

East Belfast Community Development Agency

Health Development and Connections Programme



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

This handbook is designed to give you, the prospective Lay Information Health Worker an idea of what our responsibilities towards you are and also what yours is towards us as a Programme. It's just a way of making sure that we provide a quality experience and this will enable you to have a positive experience of volunteering with us.

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1.0 Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to the EBCDA Handbook on volunteering designed for Lay Health Information Workers (**LHIW**) who are recruited for the role within the East Belfast and Castlereagh Area. The Handbook outlines the Health Development Programme, how it was established and what we do. The Handbook also provides information and guidelines on the role of a LHIW and what training and support there is.

While we have endeavoured to include all the information and advice required by our volunteers it is by no means an exhaustive source of information. All volunteers are therefore welcome to and indeed encouraged to approach the Volunteer Development Worker or Health Information Workers for clarification on any point.

The mission of EBCDA is as follows

**East Belfast Community Development Agency
exists to provide resources, support and
capacity building programmes for community groups
that are based on partnership,
equal opportunities and sustainable outcomes.**

The mission is defined by recognition of the changing environment of East Belfast and Castlereagh and of the strengths of EBCDA. This mission will be conducted within the framework of a set of common values that inform its work and we envisage that this will mean:

- Greater awareness that the principles of community development are fundamental to successful regeneration in East Belfast and Castlereagh.
- All those living in areas of recognised disadvantage having equal access to a wide range of development opportunities.
- All relevant agencies and organisations are involved in promoting community participation and consultation in developing policy and practice.
- The availability of comprehensive capacity building programmes for communities in East Belfast and Castlereagh.

Background of EBCDA

In 2010 East Belfast Community Development Agency will celebrate 40 years of supporting the community sector in East Belfast. During these years the organisation has existed under various names but has always had the support and development of the community in East Belfast at the forefront of all the work it has done.

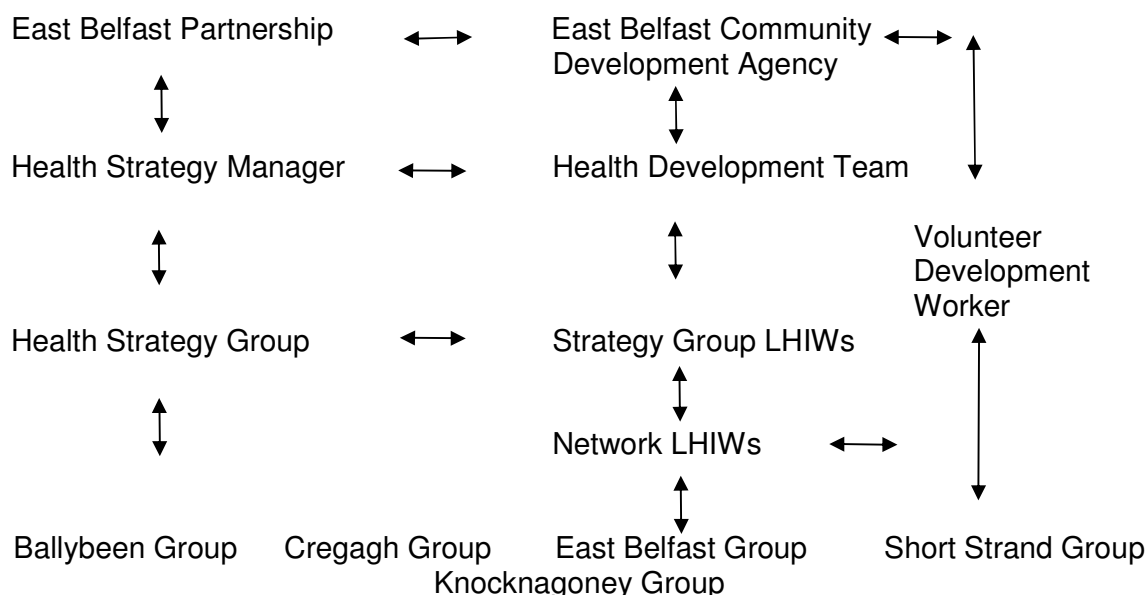
Funding & Policy

Recurrent funding has been provided through the Eastern Investing for Health Partnership/Eastern Health Social Services Board, now the Public Health Agency since 1st April 2009. The Health Development annual programme of EBCDA is funded through the Belfast Health Trust (BHT). It is part of the Healthy Living Centre Programme managed by East Belfast Partnership which was set up by the New Opportunities Fund (now the Big Lottery Fund) in 2002 with the aim of promoting health in its broadest sense, targeting the most disadvantaged sectors of the community and addressing health inequalities.

The programme has provided innovative solutions to local needs, worked in partnership with other organisations and engaged with the community. A key feature was that the programme would work towards a vision of health that encompasses not only physical health but also emotional wellbeing and enhances their quality of life. Evaluation of nineteen Healthy Living Centres throughout Northern Ireland highlighted that they promote a collection of activities, that their activities are responsive to local communities' needs and that they harness the resources of HLC partners, ensuring that their work is imbedded within local infrastructures.

Investing for Health has facilitated and resourced new posts based in East Belfast Community Development Agency. Within 2008/09 further significant investments secured the crucial work of Belfast Health Living Centres, with the East Belfast Healthy Living Centre successfully operating within east Belfast and Castlereagh over the past 6 years.

East Belfast Healthy Living Centre Internal Organisational Chart



Location

We are based at
269 Albertbridge Road, Belfast, BT5 4PY

Management and Staff

Linda Armitage is The Health Strategy Manager. Michael Briggs is The Director of EBCDA who line manages Ian McKee, Volunteer Development Worker. EBCDA has 3 full time Health Development staff, Alan Houston, Chris Deconink and Sharon Traynor who are line managed by Jonny Currie, Community Support Manager.

Confidentiality Statement

The Health Development Programme will treat all information with the strictest confidence. It will only be shared with the funders, management organisations and LHIW Network. It will not be passed onto third parties unless written permission is given by the volunteer. The information given will also be stored in a secure location with access only by the Volunteer Development Worker and Health Development Workers and line managers when required.

2.0 Recruitment and Selection

2.1 Why we have a Recruitment and Selection procedure

Our recruitment and selection procedures are designed not to alienate potential volunteers but to ensure that the quality of the service provided by EBCDA is of the highest quality. While our recruitment and selection procedures may at first seem rather daunting they are not intended to deter you. The recruitment and selection procedures also protect you, the potential LHIW. They ensure that you are suitable for the role that you will be carrying out and if we think that you would be suitable for the role. If you have a difficulty with the application process or indeed any element of the Recruitment and Selection procedure then please do not hesitate to contact the Volunteer Development Worker on 90451512.

2.2 Equal Opportunities Statement

EBCDA operates an Equal Opportunities Policy and aim to recruit volunteers from all sections of the community. We believe that everyone has the right to volunteer and should have equal access to positive volunteering opportunities without experiencing unfair discrimination on the basis of gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, ethnic origin, disability or class.

EBCDA has no upper age limit for volunteers. We appreciate the contribution that older volunteers make as long as there is an agreement between the volunteer and Coordinator that they are fit and able to do their voluntary work. The organisation also welcomes younger volunteers who are **18 years** and over.

2.3 Advertising

EBCDA will actively recruit LHIW widely through local community groups, churches, appropriate agencies, community newsletters, posters, presentations, our website, events and the media for the programme.

2.4 Commitment

It would be beneficial to the Programme if all volunteers were willing to make a commitment to the organisation. We do however recognise that this role will require you to be flexible in your commitment as the hours required will be a minimum of 2hours every week and the times of meetings may vary throughout this time period. To be a possible volunteer for the Programme, we ask that you think carefully about how much time you have to give i.e. on a long-term basis. Be realistic and take into account any other commitments you might have and how responding to changing circumstances could impact on these.

2.5 Application Register of Interest form

Everyone who is interested in taking part in the Programme will be asked to complete a short application form. You will also be asked by EBCDA to complete the induction process before you can begin with the Programme.

2.6 Interview and Placements

The Volunteer Development Worker and / or Health development Worker will interview all potential volunteers. The decision to let you become involved in the programme will be based on the interview. If we don't think that you would be suitable for the programme we will try and place you elsewhere in a role which would suit you better.

2.7 Volunteer specification

What skills do volunteers need to carry out the role?

Have a mature outlook and attitude to get along with other people from different backgrounds and be able to deal with complex issues in relation to health.

When would the volunteer be required?

Attend weekly meetings of your local group and meet as required.

Where the volunteer would be required to go?

Attend a local appropriate venue for meetings and quarterly support meetings in venues throughout east Belfast and Castlereagh.

Communication skills required

The ability to understand the health needs of the community and express these in a group and share responsibility in the organising of events. Be willing to express your ideas and opinions in public forums, conferences and events and have the confidence to lobby and negotiate on behalf of the community sector in East Belfast on health inequalities, disadvantage and local need.

Expenses

As stated in the handbook.

2.8 Volunteer role

Title: Lay Health Information Worker

Attend weekly or fortnightly meetings of a support group, participate in and promote activities of the group and take part in specific training.

What does the role involve?

The role will involve volunteers in improving access to local healthcare services by providing support and signposting to the community and help to establish health checks and assessments.

What hours are required to fulfil the role?

The Volunteers would be required to complete a weekly two hour meeting.

Where would Volunteers be expected to go?

The volunteers would be based in the most convenient local community/health facilities throughout east Belfast and Castlereagh.

Do Volunteers work alone?

The work requires that the volunteer works within a group and reaching consensus on decisions arrived at by all the groups' members but may be required to work on their own initiative on occasions.

What support is there available for the volunteers?

The volunteer will receive support from other lay health information workers as part of a network of lay health information workers who meet throughout the year as well as ongoing support from the health development workers and volunteer development worker.

What the role offers Volunteers?

The Volunteer role offers personal development and training which will equip the Volunteer with the skills and confidence to bring about change in promoting well-being in the community and reducing health inequalities.

3.0 Training and Support for Programme

3.1 Our Commitment to You

EBCDA is committed to developing, promoting and supporting you as a volunteer with the Programme. We appreciate the time, effort and commitment that volunteers give to Programme and their contribution to the community in East Belfast.

3.2 Training

To ensure the quality of on the programme and in order to fully equip you with the necessary skills and knowledge the EBCDA worker will keep in touch with LHIW throughout the length of the Programme and include LHIW in any training which might benefit their role within the Programme.

EBCDA will regularly review the provision of ongoing training and further training for our volunteers. All volunteers are encouraged to provide feedback on the training provided to the EBCDA Worker and to suggest additional training, which they feel, may be of help.

3.3 Volunteer Support

EBCDA will provide regular opportunities for all our volunteers to meet with the Programme team. The following activities are planned in order to achieve this:

Examples of possible support and appraisal

- Regular one-to-one meetings with the Health Development Worker/s
- Focus groups
- Regular training updates
- Network meetings
- Volunteer expenses

All volunteers are encouraged to suggest other ways in which we can improve support given to volunteers. We recognise that every volunteer is different and we will tailor support to meet your needs as far as it enables the Programme to be more effective.

If you ever have any problems in regard to your voluntary work, no matter how small or trivial they may seem, remember you can always telephone or call in to speak to the Volunteer Development Worker. Their role is to advise you, and to help make your volunteering experience more worthwhile and rewarding. If the appropriate member of staff is not available either leave a message or ask to speak to the Receptionist.



4.0 Quotes from Previous Volunteers

These quotes are from real volunteers who are currently volunteering in the East Belfast area from local groups and Programmes. They go to show how volunteering can be a very positive experience and worthwhile getting involved with.

“I had no experience of volunteering before and now I have made new friends and started a keep-fit class”

“Volunteering has increased my confidence to go on and join other groups and I now have more knowledge and can help my family and friends.”

“It has helped me to feel that I am a useful person and that I have a role in my community”

We will help you have a positive experience of volunteering

5.0 Volunteer expenses

5.1 Our policy relating to volunteer expenses

EDCDA will endeavour to pay volunteers expenses but this is subject to the necessary funding being available.

A brief guide to Volunteering expenses and Social Security Benefits

The rule of thumb is that:

- Volunteering will not effect a person's entitlement to benefits as long as they are only receiving the reimbursement of genuine out-of-pocket expenses.
- There is no limit to the amount of hours a person can volunteer when they are receiving benefits as long as they are still deemed to be available for work should the DSS want to contact them.

Volunteers who receive benefits should talk to their local Social Security Office or the East Belfast Independent Advice Centre (Tel. 9096 3003) before they begin volunteering to find out exactly what impact volunteering will have on their benefits, as each individual case will be different. EBCDA will provide all volunteers with the necessary information to do this and ensure that they have written documentation to back up what they are saying.

A brief guide to Volunteering expenses and taxation

There is no tax liability for genuine out-of-pocket expenses. The Inland Revenue advises that expenses must be reimbursed at a reasonable level and that an expense form is completed and receipts submitted for all claims. If you have any queries then Contact the Volunteer development Worker at EBCDA

6.0 Insurance

Public liability and personal accident Insurance

While carrying out voluntary work on behalf of the LHIW network, which is separately constituted, you will not be covered by EBCDA Public liability insurance and personal accident. If you are working at an event which EBCDA are running, Volunteers will be covered by EBCDA insurance in respect to public liability and personal accident.

Motor insurance

EBCDA will not be responsible for any car insurance. **It is the responsibility of the volunteer to inform their insurance company of the use of their car for volunteering** purposes this should not in general increase your insurance premium but it is up to the individual insurance company to make that decision. EBCDA will **not pay** any increased premium that any insurance may charge in regards to the use of their car in relation to the Programme.

6.1 Vetting and Barring Scheme

New legislation will be introduced in July 2010 which will require all LHIW to be registered with Accessni and the Information Safeguarding Authority (ISA) with regards to them working with vulnerable adults. EBCDA will be responsible for applying for registration for volunteers with the scheme. **LHIW cannot start their volunteer role until they have successfully been checked and registered. Until July 2010 normal Accessni checks will apply.**

7.0 Complaints and Grievances

We hope that our volunteers will not have any cause to complain. It is, however, useful to know that if you have a problem the following steps should be taken:

1. Any problem should be raised in the first instance with the Health Development Worker and Volunteer Development Worker. This meeting should take place as soon as possible and certainly within **one week** of a request for such a meeting.
2. If the outcome of this meeting is unsatisfactory the matter may be taken to the Community support Manager.
3. If the outcome is still unsatisfactory then a final approach may be made to EBCDA Committee and their decision is **final**.

8.0 Volunteer dismissal and withdrawing as a volunteer

8.1 Dismissal of LHIW

Volunteers who constantly have problems with their role in relation to completing the work and with aspects of their behaviour will be asked to meet with the Volunteer Development Worker/Health Development worker where the problems they are having can be discussed with a view to helping the LHIW improve their role. If the problem cannot be satisfactorily resolved and should the problems continue, the Volunteer Development Worker will meet with the volunteer again and also with the EBCDA Director to find out why there has been no improvement in behaviour/work.

If the problems haven't been resolved after an agreed period, a final meeting will be called between the Volunteer Development Worker and the Director who will make a decision on the persistent problems and the appropriate action to be taken. It will then be explained in a final meeting with the LHIW why they can no longer continue to volunteer with us. A letter will be sent to the LHIW within seven days of the meeting to confirm the outcome of the meeting.

The exception to this is when it is proven that a volunteer has been involved in gross misconduct. In this instance the volunteer will be asked to leave immediately. A letter explaining the reasons for dismissal will be sent to the LHIW within seven days. The following are considered as gross misconduct:

- Stealing, (including unauthorised removal, possession or misuse of property or that of our clients, volunteers or staff)
- Alcohol or substance abuse
- Violence or threats of violence
- Health and safety offences causing serious injury or which endangers lives
- Serious breaches of volunteer guidelines

Any appeal should be sent in writing to EBCDA committee.

8.2 Withdrawing as a Volunteer

Every volunteer has the right to withdraw as a volunteer. Anyone no longer wishing to volunteer will be invited for an informal chat with the Volunteer Development Worker. This will enable us to gain valuable feedback from the volunteer, to look at the reasons that may have motivated the resignation, or to identify ways in which the project could be improved. Volunteers who have volunteered regularly for a period of five months or more will be given a written reference if requested.

9.0 Conclusion

We hope this has made a few things clearer for you and if you have any queries about the content of the handbook then please contact the Volunteer Development Worker on this number 90451512. We hope you enjoy your volunteering and remember you are a valuable resource to local community organisations and thank-you for showing an interest in the Programme.

10.0 Acknowledgements

EBCDA would like to thank the following organisations for their help and for the information, which they provided for this Volunteer Handbook:

- The Volunteer Development Agency
- Voluntary Services Belfast

EBCDA Board of Directors

Board of Directors

Cliff Kennedy (Chairperson): Director of the Oasis Centre

Janice Cherry (Vice - Chairperson): Castlereagh Local Strategy Partnership

Sammy Douglas (Treasurer): Economic Development Advisor.

Bernie McConnell (Secretary): Short Strand Community Forum

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Des Meredith: The Hopefuls - Island Day Centre

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Rachael Davison: Walkway Community Association.

Rev. Mervyn Gibson: Minister of Westbourne Presbyterian Church.

Sam Lamont: Oak Partnership

Liz Olson: Braniel Community Association

Tommy Sanford: Creagh Community Association

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Staff

Michael Briggs: Director

Kim Briggs: Resource and Finance Manager

Jonny Currie: Community Support Unit Manager

Alan Houston: Health Development Worker

Sharon Traynor: Health Development Worker

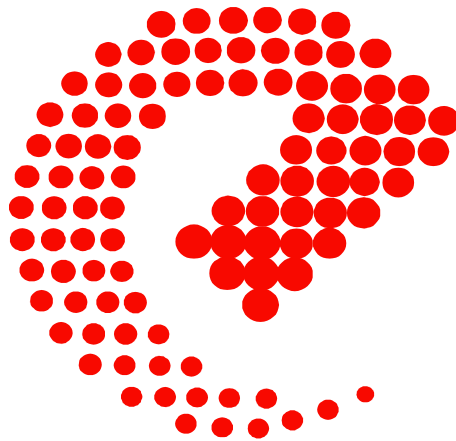
Ian McKee: Volunteer Development Worker

Chris Deconink: Health Development Worker

Joanna Loudoun: Receptionist/Admin Worker

Jean Higginson: Payroll/Finance Administrator

Marie Anne McMillan: Admin Worker



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