

Volunteer Policy

Our mission statement

All young people have a powerful voice and a right to be heard.

Lewisham Youth Theatre (LYT) nurtures and inspires young people's voices through free participatory theatre activities, helping them to develop enduring and transferable skills that lead to increased chances of life and long-term well-being. We bring young people together from across the Lewisham community to create outstanding theatre in an environment of high expectations and collaboration. We work from the core belief that artistic excellence is key to expanding young people's horizons and creating lasting transformation.

Why we involve volunteers

At Lewisham Youth Theatre we are committed to involving a diverse range of community members, further & higher education placements and work experience placements through volunteering activity. We do this because we believe that:

- By utilising the skills, knowledge and experience of local people we can provide a better service to young people
- Volunteers can bring a different perspective to that of paid professionals, which is valuable in developing our work
- By involving volunteers, we can offer opportunities for genuine learning and development to individuals, and contribute to the strengthening of communities
- And most importantly without the input of volunteers we would not be able to achieve as much, or offer young people as many opportunities

What areas of our work are they involved in?

Volunteers are active in all aspects of the organisation, including projects and our Council of Management. LYT will not use volunteers to replace paid staff, whether permanent employees or for lead roles for which freelance staff would otherwise be paid.

Recruitment of Volunteers

LYT's IDEA Policy will be adhered to when recruiting and selecting volunteers (See IDEA Policy). Volunteer opportunities will be promoted through the appropriate channels to ensure wide accessibility.

When volunteers enquire about opportunities available with LYT, they will be provided with dates and role descriptions for potential opportunities. Volunteers can then apply through the submission of an application form, followed by an interview between LYT and the proposed volunteer. As per our Safeguarding Policy, volunteers will be asked to provide two references, along with an enhanced DBS check.

Several factors will be considered in accepting an application from a potential volunteer including the applicant's suitability for the role. The placement of a volunteer on a project will be confirmed by email, which will be accompanied with copies of LYT's volunteering, safeguarding, IDEA, Anti-Bullying and Data Protection policies.

LYT reserve the right to refuse the offer of volunteering from an applicant.

Disclosure & Barring Service

All volunteers over 18 working with young people will need to undergo an enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service check. LYT will facilitate and pay for this check through an online system. The DBS check will be valid with LYT for 2 years, and volunteers will be able to use the check with other organisations during this time.

Youth Volunteering

LYT encourages young people over 18 and those who have been involved as participants, to contribute to LYT's programmes and develop their skills through the volunteering programme. All volunteers, whether they are known to LYT, must complete an application form and have an interview. Young people aged 18-25 who feel they may need support to complete this process should contact the Volunteer Coordinator who will be able to assist the candidate.

LYT only provides volunteering opportunities to young people under 18 if they have taken part in an LYT project. We currently provide the following youth volunteering opportunities for under 18s:

- Peer mentors, supporting in sessions with younger age groups
- Technical crew, supporting backstage in productions
- Year 10 work experience
- Members Committee (youth leadership board) for participants in Year 7 and above who have taken part in an LYT production

Under 18s interested in youth volunteering opportunities should contact the Participation Manager on participation@lewishamyouththeatre.com

Induction and Training

LYT believes that volunteers should be given the necessary skills and knowledge to be able to carry out the role being asked of them.

All volunteers will receive an induction before the start of their volunteering. The induction will include a tour of the premises and training in LYT's policies including safeguarding, health & safety, anti-bullying, IDEA and data protection. Therefore, all volunteers will be allocated a member of staff who will be responsible for welcoming, inducting and supporting them into the organisation.

Volunteers will sign a Volunteer Agreement Form, setting out their responsibilities and commitments. They will also need to provide an emergency contact in case of emergency.

Volunteers' contact details will be kept both in paper format on this form, and in electronic format in a volunteer database, in line with LYT's Privacy Statement and Data Protection Policy.

Supervision and Support

LYT is committed to seeing volunteers develop within the organisation and will provide appropriate training and ongoing support to enable them to carry out their role effectively.

As well as initial induction, volunteers are encouraged to talk to the lead staff member on their project about their learning goals and how they want to contribute to the project.

Volunteers will have a named staff member, usually the Volunteer Coordinator, to supervise their volunteering. In longer projects, the supervisor will contact the volunteer for a mid-project check-in to reflect on their experience and to highlight any issues that can be addressed before the project finishes. At the end of a project, we will also receive an exit interview, to seek feedback from volunteers to help improve our volunteering programme.

Expenses

LYT believes that paying out of pocket expenses to volunteers removes one of the many barriers to people getting involved in their local community. Reasonable out of pocket expenses including travel and meals, can be reimbursed on presentation of receipts, up to a maximum of £19 per day. Those volunteering on projects can claim up to £9 in travel expenses per session on presentation of a receipt. Those volunteering for a full day will be able to claim up to an additional £5 per day for meals on presentation of a receipt.

Complaints & Grievances

LYT recognizes that there may be occasions when volunteers have concerns or grievances. In the first instance, volunteers should talk to the lead facilitator or core member of staff of their project about their concerns to see if a reasonable solution can be found.

If the volunteer does not feel able to speak to the facilitator on the project, they should raise their concern with the Volunteer Coordinator (or named supervisor), who will try to find a solution to the problem.

If the volunteer cannot agree solution informally, they should follow LYT's Complaints & Grievance Procedure, which includes the following steps:

1. Put the grievance into an email to the Senior Producer, who will call a meeting with yourself and a member of the Council of Management to discuss the grievance.
2. If, following the outcome, the volunteer is unhappy with the decision made by the Senior Producer and Council of Management, they may request a meeting with another member of Council of Management to appeal the decision.

LYT's full Grievance Procedure is available online at:

<http://www.lewishamyouththeatre.com/about-us/policies/>