

# Volunteer Agreement

## Welcome to A Collective



**This document is intended as both a warm hello and a practical agreement. It is not a contract of employment and does not create any legal employment obligations between us.**



This agreement tells you:

- who we are,
- what we stand for,
- what you can expect from us,
- and what we ask of you.

It also sets out practical things to protect you, us, and the people we work with.

We want this document to be easy to understand and to feel safe and useful. If anything is uncomfortable or unclear, we're happy to talk it through.

We don't expect you to know or understand everything we do and talk about from day one, but we want you to feel comfortable.

## About Us

A Collective is an autistic-led arts organisation, based in South Croydon. We devise and deliver participatory and public art projects, creative health programmes and community spaces. We believe in the power of creativity to change lives, challenge injustice, and build belonging.

Our full name is A Collective (SW London) CIC. We are a Community Interest Company limited by guarantee. That means we are a non-profit organisation, but we are not a registered charity.

We aim to balance commercial and charitable work to ensure our financial stability and offer a breadth of opportunities for our team, with a focus on neurodivergent people of all ages.

We partner with commercial, charitable, and public sector organisations to deliver a wide range of creative commissions and tenders, including participatory and community arts events and workshops, site-specific installations, and longer-term creative wellbeing programmes.

We also devise our own projects; these are supported by grants and bursaries.

Our major project is our Autistic Youth Hub, a hybrid (online and in person) community for young adults aged 18-30 who do not have learning disability.

We are developing our physical home at The Story Sanctuary: a creative wellbeing hub in the decommissioned Sanderstead library building. This is a community venue for everyone, not just neurodivergent people, but led by some of us as custodians of the space.

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## How We Work

Jill is our operational co-director, working with a team of freelancers and senior volunteers in a lightweight management structure. We work with the values of a collective wherever possible. This means transparent communication, participatory decision-making, respect for the voices of everyone involved, and a balance between structure and flexibility: making sure things get done but leaving room for ideas to grow from anywhere in the group.

## Harm-free Work

Part of our mission is exploring how to make work work for neurodivergent people. We aim to examine the reasons behind high unemployment and poor mental health in our community. We also rethink structures, expectations, and environments so more of us can thrive.

We believe our learnings and ways of being can support all people, particularly in times of need. We are exploring the concept of "harm-free work". This is nascent; we get things wrong. You can hold us accountable for our mistakes. As part of our team, you should always feel able to give feedback, ask questions, and seek support. We will listen and respond.

## Inclusivity and Felt Safety

We ask everyone to approach their contribution with care, reliability, and respect for others. You'll be working in secular spaces led by neurodivergent and LGBTQIA+ people, from different ethnic and cultural heritages and lived experiences.

### We ask that you:

- Use respectful language and avoid derogatory or deficit-based terms (e.g., "suffers from," "disorder," "low-functioning," or any language that frames neurodivergence, gender identity, or sexuality as a problem to be fixed).
- Listen to and respect each person's own identity and language preferences, use people's correct pronouns and names, and avoid making assumptions about gender or identity.
- Be mindful of language and behaviour that may perpetuate racial or anti-faith bias, listen to and respect the voices of people from marginalised racial and cultural backgrounds.
- Recognise lived experience as valid expertise and avoid making assumptions about ability, needs, or behaviour.
- Challenge ableism, homophobia, transphobia, racism, ageism and other forms of discrimination if they arise in our spaces, if you feel safe and confident to do so. Otherwise, do let us know and we will address this without involving you.

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## What is Volunteering?

## The Difference Between Volunteering and Employment



As a volunteer:

- you give your time for free and without reward, but you can claim expenses.
- you do not have an employment contract or employee rights, but you have an agreement and can expect to be treated well and kept safe.
- you decide when you come. You cannot be forced to work specific hours, but we can ask that you clearly communicate the hours or times you can commit to, so we can run services safely and well.
- you are required to follow our Code of Conduct, you will not be subject to disciplinary procedures, but we can ask you to stop volunteering.

## How We Engage with Volunteers

Where we can, we offer both clearly defined, structured roles and less structured, flexible volunteering. You can drop in and out of flexible opportunities as needed.

We do this because we are a neurodivergent and neuro-affirming organisation. We know that many people who choose to volunteer live with parental and caring responsibilities, physical or mental health conditions, disability and/or chronic illness, anxiety or demand avoidance.

We understand many talented, willing people have been excluded from work and need a gentle introduction to volunteering, with time to adjust and a low-stress, supportive environment.

For those reasons, this volunteering agreement is generic.

We will discuss and agree specific roles or tasks with you over time, based on our needs and constraints, and yours. Please ask us questions or give feedback at any time. We want a good experience for everyone.

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## Practical Terms

### Your Role and Activities

For each project we invite you to participate in, where possible we will agree your volunteer role, specific activities and any hoped-for time commitments before you start.

Sometimes we undertake exploratory projects, these can be vague and evolve whilst we are delivering them. If this lack of structure is stressful for you, we will endeavour to break it down into small and tangible chunks, or you can opt not to take part.

Your perspective matters, and you are invited to shape what we do as much as help to deliver it, within a culture of care and belonging. We want you to feel part of something without feeling a burden to participate beyond your capacity.

Cultures of care include personal responsibility: communicate clearly, tell us if something isn't right for you, alert us as soon as possible if you cannot meet a commitment, and avoid overcommitting to us so that the work remains sustainable for you and for everyone.

### Support and Expenses

All volunteers will have a named contact/supervisor. Reasonable adjustments and accessibility needs will be met, within the limitations of our physical and virtual spaces.

We will reimburse agreed out-of-pocket expenses (e.g., travel, meals) in line with our expenses policy. To claim, please submit receipts to your named contact within 30 days. If you're unsure whether something is covered, just ask before you spend it — we're happy to clarify.

### Changes to Personal Details

We may need to contact you in an emergency so please remember to notify us of any change of address, mobile phone number, email address, emergency contact details.

### Insurance

A Collective has public and employer liability insurance that covers you whilst volunteering.

No liability is accepted for any loss of, or damage to personal property. We ask that you leave high value personal items at home. Essential personal possessions should be safely stored in our locked office or staff area.

If you use your own equipment during your volunteering activities, you do so at your own risk and should ensure it is covered by your own insurance, if applicable.

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### Code of Conduct

As a volunteer with A Collective, you represent our organisation and our community.

This means acting in ways that reflect our values, protect our reputation, and build trust with everyone you interact with – the public, our partners, and your fellow colleagues. Please approach every situation with respect, care, and a commitment to safety and support for all.

#### We hope that you can:

- Be on time and prepared for each volunteering session. If you are running late or unable to attend, we prefer if you contact a member of the team, so we know you are safe.
- Foster a respectful, welcoming environment – listen without bias or judgement, make space for all voices, use clear and respectful language and model positive, collaborative relationships with everyone in the room.
- Stay fully present during activities, attending to your own needs as they arise, taking care of your wellbeing and following agreed instructions or group agreements.
- Dress appropriately, in clean clothing suitable for the tasks or role you are undertaking.
- Respect our spaces, equipment and tools, ensuring they are kept clean and tidy.

#### We ask you not to:

- Attend under the influence (or smelling) of drugs or alcohol; smoke or vape on or near the premises, including in our gardens and grounds.
- Touch or make physical contact with members of the public and workshop participants, their possessions, or their creative work, materials or tools without clear consent, and in line with safeguarding guidelines.
- Take photographs of participants or members of the public under any circumstance; take photos of fellow volunteers and staff without explicit informed consent.
- Use offensive or exclusionary language, in-jokes that not everyone understands, or behaviour that could be experienced as mockery, sneering or intimidation.
- Make promises you can't keep, give advice outside your role, or share your personal problems or private details with participants, or other volunteers who may be vulnerable.
- Make or receive personal phone calls whilst also supporting others: if necessary, please wait for a break or alert a colleague and move to a private area.
- Buy or sell goods, or undertake fundraising or collections for other causes, from our premises, on your own behalf.

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### Confidentiality

You agree to keep private any non-public information about A Collective, its participants, staff, freelancers and volunteers both your time with us and after your volunteering ends.

This includes but is not limited to personal information, finances and revenue, contracts and agreements, internal communications, strategy and any other information shared in confidence.

Please do not speak on behalf of A Collective to third parties, official bodies or the media without prior authorisation.

### Data Protection

If your role involves handling personal data, you agree to follow A Collective's Data Protection Policy and relevant legislation, including GDPR. This includes:

- Only processing data relevant to the task or role you have been assigned,
- Keeping devices password-protected and secure,
- Never storing personal data on your own devices or removing data from our premises.

### Health and Safety

You must not take any action that could threaten the health or safety of yourself, other staff and volunteers, partners, participants or members of the public.

Please follow all health and safety procedures, risk assessments, and instructions given for specific activities or spaces. Please use any materials, tools, or equipment only as instructed, and report any faults or hazards immediately.

You should report all accidents and injuries sustained while volunteering, and near misses, in the appropriate books. We can then review and update our risk assessments.

Please always inform us of any temporary or chronic illness, conditions or disabilities that may impact your ability to volunteer safely.

We're happy to adjust things to help you volunteer comfortably, within the limitations of our physical and virtual spaces. Let us know what support helps you participate best.

We work with and support people who live with compromised immune systems: if you are suffering from an infectious or contagious disease or illness you must not attend for volunteering without clearance from your doctor and your named contact/supervisor.

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### Safeguarding Requirements

We see safeguarding as a shared responsibility. If you have any questions or concerns about safeguarding, please talk to us right away – we will always support you in taking the right steps.

If your role involves working with children, young people or vulnerable adults, you will need:

- **A valid enhanced DBS check** (with barred list checks if required): if you don't have this in place, A Collective can arrange it for you before you start volunteering.
- **Safeguarding training**: if you haven't completed relevant training, you must complete the free CSCP Safeguarding Children Level 1 from Croydon Council (or equivalent) and send us the completion certificate before your volunteering can begin.

### Intellectual Property

Unless otherwise agreed in writing before starting:

For creative projects you contribute to as a volunteer, that are co-produced collaboratively with A Collective, copyright will belong to A Collective. You may use extracts, photographs, or descriptions of the work for personal, educational, or portfolio purposes, provided this does not involve selling, licensing, or otherwise commercially exploiting the work, and that you attribute it as created with A Collective.

For creative projects that you produce independently for A Collective as a volunteer, you retain the copyright but grant A Collective an exclusive, perpetual, royalty-free licence to use it for the agreed purpose only.

Where your voluntary role involves project management, programme management, creative producing, facilitation, or similar roles, you acknowledge that the primary outputs are organisational, logistical, or administrative in nature and do not usually attract copyright.

Any creative output you produce in these roles will follow copyright and licensing arrangements outlined in this agreement, as applicable to either co-produced or independent creative projects.

### Ending or Pausing Volunteering

Either you or we can end or pause this volunteering arrangement at any time. We'd appreciate as much notice as possible – ideally 14 days – which can be given verbally or in writing.

### Status of This Agreement

This agreement sets out mutual expectations and is binding in honour only. It is not intended to create a contract of employment. This agreement reflects good practice in England and Wales.

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## Next Steps

We're so pleased to have you on board and look forward to working together. Please read this agreement carefully, and if everything feels OK, please complete the form below, then sign and date to confirm your acceptance of the agreement.

## Your Details

**First Name:** ..... **Last Name:** .....  
(please also state preferred name, if different)

**Pronouns:** ..... **Age Range:**  Under 18 (*Under 25 with moderate+ SEND*)  
 18 or over

**Address:** .....  
.....

**Mobile No:** ..... **Email:** .....

**Allergies & Medication:** .....

**Access & Support Needs:** .....  
.....

## Emergency Contact Details

**First Name:** ..... **Last Name:** .....

**Relationship to you:** .....

**Signed:**

**Date:**