

VOLUNTEERING – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

IS THERE AN AGE LIMIT FOR VOLUNTEERS?

Due to health & safety considerations we do have a minimum age of 18 years old for volunteers. We do not have an upper age limit and actively encourage older volunteers.

WILL I GET TO HANDLE THE ANIMALS?

No, we operate a strict hands off policy with the majority of our animals.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VOLUNTEERING AND WORK EXPERIENCE?

We have a strict criteria for offering work experience placements, details are available via our website. Students are supervised by staff throughout their entire placement and it is very much a learning and assessment opportunity. Whereas volunteering is seen as a more long term commitment and our volunteers come from a diverse range of backgrounds. If you are required to complete a set number of hours as part of a course then this would be classified as work experience.

I DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO A CAR, IS THERE PUBLIC TRANSPORT?

Unfortunately there is no public transport to or from Banham Zoo, however there is a bus service to Africa Alive!, please check the website for further details.

DO YOU OFFER TRAVEL EXPENSES?

Volunteers are eligible to claim out of pocket travel expenses. Please note that this is restricted to a 30p per mile up to a maximum of £5 per day. Claims are processed on a monthly basis.

DO YOU PROVIDE A UNIFORM?

We will provide a polo shirt, fleece and name badge. If required for the role you will also be issued with safety boots. We do require a £20 refundable deposit on issue of the uniform. Volunteers are required to provide their own waterproofs.

DO YOU ACCEPT VOLUNTEERS WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS?

We do have volunteers with additional support needs and they are valued members of the team. However we have a very limited capacity and these opportunities are heavily oversubscribed. Please note that we are unable to offer one to one support to volunteers and they need to be able to work unsupervised. If one to one support is required then we would expect the volunteer to provide their own support staff.

I'M NOT A UK CITIZEN CAN I STILL VOLUNTEER?

If you have the right to work in the UK then you can volunteer. ALL volunteers are asked to provide the relevant supporting documentation e.g. passport.

I HAVE A CRIMINAL RECORD, CAN I STILL VOLUNTEER?

If you have been convicted of an offence which is not spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 you will be asked to declare that offence on your expression of interest form. This information will then be assessed on a case by case basis and a conviction does not automatically mean you will not be allowed to volunteer with us.

DO I NEED TO PROVIDE A REFERENCE?

Yes, we do need to be able to attain a reference from someone who can attest to your suitability to be a volunteer with us. Therefore it is important that the details of your referee are completed in full, including an active e-mail address, on your expression of interest form.

DO YOU HAVE A PROBATION PERIOD?

We have no set probation period for new volunteers. At induction you will be asked to sign the volunteer code of conduct. Any action which may be seen as a breach of this code may lead to the termination of the volunteer position. Volunteering is a relationship based on mutual benefit and can be terminated at any time by either party.

DO VOLUNTEERS HAVE TO GIVE A SET NUMBER OF HOURS?

No, we are very flexible in our approach to volunteers' time commitments. However there are certain restrictions on when people can volunteer due to operational considerations. What we do say is that the more regularly you come and the longer you spend with us the more that you are able to get from your volunteering.

DO I NEED A DBS CHECK?

No. We do have safeguarding procedures in place and volunteers are never left alone with children or vulnerable adults. However if we do feel that due to the nature of your duties a DBS check is required you will be expected to provide all the necessary information for the check to be carried out.

I HAVE AN ANIMAL RELATED FEAR/PHOBIA, CAN I STILL VOLUNTEER?

Where practically possible we will try to make adjustments to accommodate any phobias/fears however this will not always be possible. Please note any such concerns under the 'Are there any duties that you would NOT wish to do' section of the expression of interest form.

WILL VOLUNTEERING LEAD TO A JOB?

Although volunteers are welcome to apply for job vacancies as they become available volunteering does not guarantee you a job.

If you have any other questions then please e-mail volunteer@zsea.org