

# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

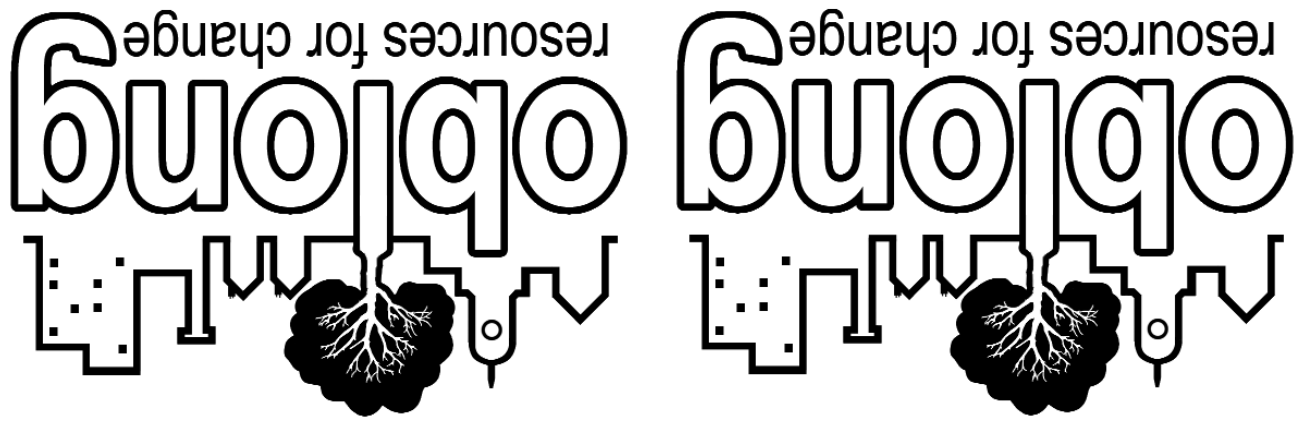
An information guide  
for volunteers at Oblong

**CENTRE  
RESOURCE  
OBLONG**



# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

*VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK was designed by Agnieszka from the Oblong Design Collective*



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There are also books on music, art and DIY.

## Other

Book the computer suite, the art area or the main room for your meeting or event - please ask for charges.

Use Oblong as a PO address for mail.

Rent a storage box to keep you stuff here.

Use the area at the side of the centre for painting etc.

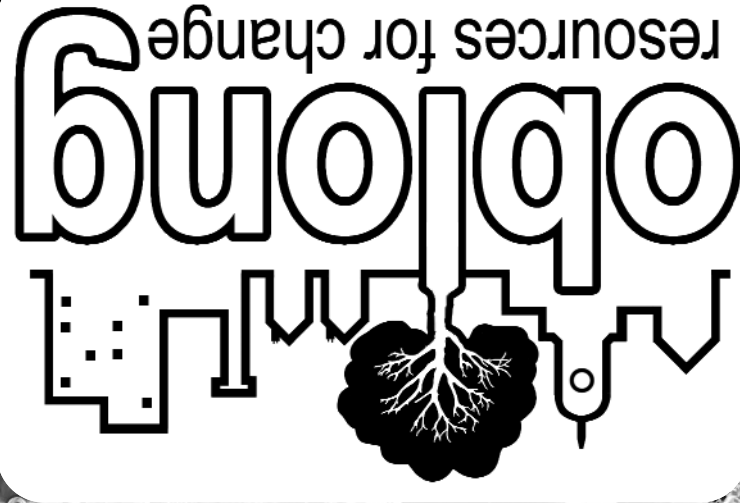
Use Oblong's bank account to look after your grant. We usually charge 5% for this.

Video editing  
Scanner  
Graphics tablet  
**Childcare**

High chair  
Baby-changing mat  
Playpen

## Information

**Oblong's reference library has information on:**  
Local community groups  
Setting up and running your own project  
Finding grants and volunteers.



Beulah Hall; 2 Beulah Mount; Leeds LS6 2JZ; Telephone: 0113 2459610  
Email: [us@oblongleeds.org.uk](mailto:us@oblongleeds.org.uk)

## WHAT IS OBLONG?

Oblong aims to support people and projects to create flourishing, active, communities. We run a resource centre that provides advice, support and facilities for local people setting up and running community groups. We also run a volunteer scheme for local people who want to help run the centre.

Our member projects do all sorts of things including theatre, youth work, arts projects, sports and environmental work. Have a look at the display in the centre or the annual report for more details of members.

## OBLONG BEGAN

In 1996, just like most of our member projects ended up running an existing art studios on Meanwood Road.



We started a small resource centre in the studios and over the years put on hundreds of gigs and club nights.



In 2001 we got some funding to employ paid staff and the following year set up our centre in Westfield Road.



In 2007 we moved to our new address at Beulah Mount and now employ five staff.

thing, hire space or use materials or printing. If you would like more information about the charges then please speak to member of staff.

### Office equipment

Guillotine  
Photocopier with double-sided and automatic stapling  
Laminator (up to A3 size)  
Display boards  
Long-arm stapler

### Audio-visual equipment

Digital camera  
Digital camcorder and stand  
Office equipment

### Art and craft

Glass engraver  
Screen printer and inks  
Various paints, pens etc.  
Sewing machines

### DIY

Hammers, screwdrivers, etc.  
Bike repair kit  
Angle grinder  
Jigsaw  
Drill  
Safety equipment

### Computers

Colour laser printing (A4 size)  
Colour inkjet printing (up to A3)  
Cheap black and white laser printing (up to A3 size)  
Word-processing, spreadsheets and databases  
Graphic and design software

We would suggest that if you have a problem with someone then you should try to sort it out informally with them. If this has been tried and the problem hasn't been solved then you should raise the matter with The Volunteer Co-ordinator personally or put it in writing.

You can download the full policy from: [www.oblongleeds.org.uk/home](http://www.oblongleeds.org.uk/home) < volunteer-ing > policies or ask any member of staff for a copy.

## VOLUNTEER POLICIES

Other Policies that may affect your volunteering at Oblong. These include:

- Confidentiality.
- Health & Safety.
- Disciplinary.
- Acceptable Behaviour & Problem Solving

You can download the full policies from <http://oblongleeds.org.uk/home> < volunteer-ing > policies or ask any member of staff for a copy.

## FACILITIES AT OBLONG

As a volunteer you can have access to all of the facilities we provide at Oblong. This include access to the computers and internet, training on web or print design, the art area, photocopying and printing.

Once you've signed up as a volunteer we'll create you a profile on our server which will mean that you'll have your own username and password and you'll be able to save and store work at Oblong.  
Most of these facilities are free to use in the centre, but you may have to pay a charge or deposit if you would like to borrow some-

## OUR VALUES

Our values inform the way we work. These values and our explanations of them came from our visioning weekend in Settle in 2007. We hope these bullet points will help you get an idea of what Oblong is about!

### Empowerment

- True empowerment comes from gain-ing the skills, knowledge and confidence to participate equally within society.

- Oblong trusts people to identify problems and find solutions about the issues that affect their community.

- We will create an environment that raises peoples expectations of their full potential and helps them fulfill it.

### Collectivism

- Sharing appropriate and timely information to allow transparent informed collective decision making.

- An open and accessible working structure for everyone to get involved in.

- Collective working means paid staff work in a non-hierarchical way and are accountable to all centre users through collective meetings and supervision.

- Collective working makes real our com-mitment to equality in our day to day lives.

### Sustainability

- Oblong strives to be sustainable in every way; environmentally, socially and economically.

- We strive to have the lowest possible environmental impact in our day to day working practice.

- We strive to have multiple income sources and adequate funds to ensure a continued quality service.

- We strive to work with a wide range of people to achieve their full potential and enable them to sustain their communities.

### Directed by People

- Oblong provides the skills, resources, advice and opportunities to individuals and community groups to achieve their aims.

- Through collective working Oblong ensures its services are directed by its members

### Equality

- We believe that people's chances to fulfill their potential are restricted in wider society by discrimination based on many things (including class, edu-cation, gender, race, religion, sexuality, disabilities).

- Oblong actively challenges discrimina-tion by ensuring that our structures do not reflect those that create those inequalities.

### Therefore,

- All paid staff have the same hourly wage.

- No-one in Oblong is too important not to clean the toilets.

- Staff and volunteers have the same voting rights at meetings.

## CLAIMING EXPENSES

- We believe that it should not cost you to vol-unteer at Oblong our Expenses policy allows you to claim travel, lunch and child care expenses.

- You can claim reasonable travel expenses. We will reimburse bus travel, second class train fare and, with agreement, taxi fare to and from Oblong.

- We will contribute £3.00 towards your lunch. We will contribute £5.00 per hour towards any dependent care you may need to arrange when volunteering at Oblong.

- You can claim your expenses using a petty cash pro-forma. You will need to provide a receipt or ticket with your claim. You can obtain a pro-forma and your expenses from any member of staff.

## COPYRIGHT

- All original text, code, images, design, graph-ics, sound and any other original content cre-ated when volunteering at Oblong will be released under the terms of the Attribution-Share Alike Creative Commons copyright license . This means as author of the work you agree to a license which lets others alter, add to, remix, tweak, and build upon your work even for commercial reasons, as long as they credit you and license their new cre-ations under the identical terms. This license is often compared to open source software licenses. All new works based on yours will carry the same license, so any derivatives will also allow commercial use.

### The deeds of the licence state:

- To copy, distribute, display, and per-form the work.

- Make derivative works.

### Under the following conditions:

- Attribution. You must give the original author credit.

- Share Alike. If you alter, transform, or build upon this work, you may distrib-ute the resulting work only under a licence identical to this one.

- For any reuse or distribution, you must make clear to others the licence terms of this work.

- Any of these conditions can be waived if you get permission from the copy right holder.

- Nothing in this licence impairs or restricts the author's moral rights.

## ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR AND PROBLEM SOLVING

We want to create a safe and welcoming space for everyone who uses Oblong.

### We will not tolerate

- Intimidation and harassment.
- Racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination and preju-dice.
- Violence.

- The theft of other peoples belongings.

If you have a problem with someone else's behaviour then we have a procedure, outlined in the "Acceptable Behaviour and Problem Solving Policy", which we hope provides a way of addressing this.

## COMMUNICATION WITHIN OBLONG

### Email

Oblong's email address is info@oblongleeds.org.uk

Mark's e-mail address is: mark@oblongleeds.org.uk

The Design Collective's email is oblongdesigncollective@yahoo.co.uk

We email all members with details of important events, decisions and meetings.

### Oblong's Yahoo Email group

All Directors, Paid Staff, Supervisors and Volunteers can join our email group. This allows us to regularly send messages to each other, including minutes of meetings and notices of events.

To join the e-mail group you will need a Yahoo account. Once you have registered with Yahoo then click on the 'Groups' link on the home page. In the "Find a Yahoo! Group" enter 'oblongcollective' and press enter. Then confirm you want to join by clicking on the 'Join this Group' button.

The address to send emails to this group is oblongcollective@yahoogroups.com

### Website

Our website is at [www.oblongleeds.org.uk](http://www.oblongleeds.org.uk). Once we've allocated you a username and password you will be able to add events, information or links to this site.

### Phone and message book

We encourage all staff and volunteers to answer the phone if they would like to, but please say something like, "Hello, Oblong" if you do.

Please write messages for people who aren't there clearly in the book on the front desk. If there is a funny bleeping tone on telephone, it means that someone has left us a message on our answer phone. Dial 1571 and press 1 to hear the message. Please write it and the message book and then press 3 to delete it. Please don't save messages because we may never hear them!

### Pigeon holes

All staff and volunteers will be given a pigeon hole for messages and mail.

### Meetings

There are a number of meetings you need to know about at Oblong.

- The Staff Meeting, for paid staff to discuss their work.
- The Collective Meeting, for paid staff and volunteers to make decisions. These happen once a month.
- The Design Collective Meeting. These happen on Thursdays at 2pm.
- The Development Collective Meeting.
- Funding Collective meets fortnightly.
- Directors meetings happen once a month and there are occasional long-term planning meetings, which may involve a day or even a weekend out of Leeds.

- Although the law gives ultimate responsibility and power to Board of Directors, that use the centre my have problems walking, be partially sighted, deaf or have other difficulties. Oblong is open to people with any physical disability.

- Services and facilities will be made as accessible to our beneficiaries possible.
- We will continually challenge prejudices and inequality within Oblong and questioning how we work.

### Flexibility

- Our structures allow us to respond quickly to the changing needs of the people that use Oblong its members.
- Oblong takes account of the personal needs of staff and volunteers.
- Oblong hopes that staff volunteers in their practices are flexible to meet the needs of Oblong and its members.

### EQUALITY FOR ALL

Oblong is a place where everyone is valued and everyone is of equal worth. At Oblong we try not to judge others or discriminate against them. We expect all people who are involved in the centre to be sensitive to the needs of others.

### Some of the people you might meet at Oblong

(or you might be one of these people yourself) **People with different sexualities.** Gay men, lesbians, bi-sexual and transgender people all use Oblong. Some people might want to talk about their sexuality, but others may see it as a private matter.

**People of different faiths.** Christians, atheists, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists and people with all sorts of other faiths use Oblong.

**People with physical disabilities.** People that use the centre my have problems walking, be partially sighted, deaf or have other difficulties. Oblong is open to people with any physical disability.

**Refugees and asylum seekers.** A refugee is someone who has run away from another country because their life has been in danger and has been given the legal right to live and work here. An asylum seeker is someone who is applying to get refugee status and is waiting to be given an answer. Asylum seekers are not allowed paid work in the UK and survive off a benefit rate that is 30% less than job-seekers allowance. However, many of them are very skilled and like most of us, want to contribute something to the society they live in.

**People who care for children.** Oblong allows children into the centre if they are being looked after by a carer. People rarely find this disruptive, but if you do, please have a word with staff or volunteers and we will try to find a quiet time or place for you to work.

**Unemployed people.** People are out of work for lots of reasons, but they all come to Oblong to work and learn to better themselves and their community.

### HOW OBLONG WORKS

### Management Committee

The management committee at Oblong is made up of volunteers who have been democratically elected by our members. Contrary to popular belief they aren't actually green-skinned or come from other planets and some of them work at the centre as volunteers on a day-to-day basis, but they all have the interests of the organisation at heart. They come from a broad range of backgrounds with a variety of skills and experience used to steer and advise the organisation. The Oblong

management committee receives ideas from the weekly workers meeting and also makes decisions and recommendations on staffing matters, financial issues and new projects whilst ensuring Oblong is well managed and operates within agreed policies, the law and

## ROLES OF PAID STAFF

We are also committed to train and support them. Anybody can stand for election to be on the committee at our AGM unless they are paid staff.

**DUNCAN**  
**Co-ordinator**  
 Gets the funding and represents Oblong outside the centre.



The roles and who does them change every now and then.

This is who did what when we put this booklet together.



**BEN**  
**ICT Development Worker**  
 Trains staff, volunteers and member projects in computer skills and looks after the network.

**CHRIS**  
**Administrator**  
 Looks after Oblong's money and plans for our future spending.



**ANNA**  
**Small Group Development Worker**  
 Supports our member projects to do their thing with advice and training on funding, planning and running a project. This role is currently being taken up by Jamie.



**MARK**  
**Volunteer Co-ordinator**  
 Recruits and looks after Oblong's volunteers.

its budget.

## INDUCTION, TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Your progress, they will help identify any training and development needs and agree how these may be met. Sessions will be recorded, using the Feedback Session pro-forma, and kept in your confidential personnel file.

### Induction

All volunteers at Oblong have an induction. The aim of the induction is to explain:

- Your role in detail.
- How Oblong does what it does.
- How Oblong is organised.
- The policies and procedures which may affect your work as a volunteer.
- How to use the equipment you will be using.
- What you can expect from us.

### Volunteer Support

On a day-to-day basis a member of staff is allocated the role of centre support, if you need assistance please do not hesitate to ask.

As a volunteer you will be given a supervisor who will be responsible for providing support on a regular basis whilst you volunteer at Oblong.

We believe that volunteers should have all the information they need to be successful in their role. We will therefore provide regular support and guidance through Feedback Sessions with your supervisor.

The regularity of the Feedback Sessions will depend on your level of need, ideally we would like these to be around 6 times a year. Feedback sessions will include a review of

You can request a feedback session with your supervisor outside those scheduled by contacting your supervisor personally. If you are unable to contact your supervisor then please talk to the volunteer co-ordinator. We value your feedback and will use it to directly contribute to Oblong's volunteer programme and, where appropriate, service provision.

### Informal Support

We hope that as a volunteer you will provide and receive support from other Volunteers.

### Training

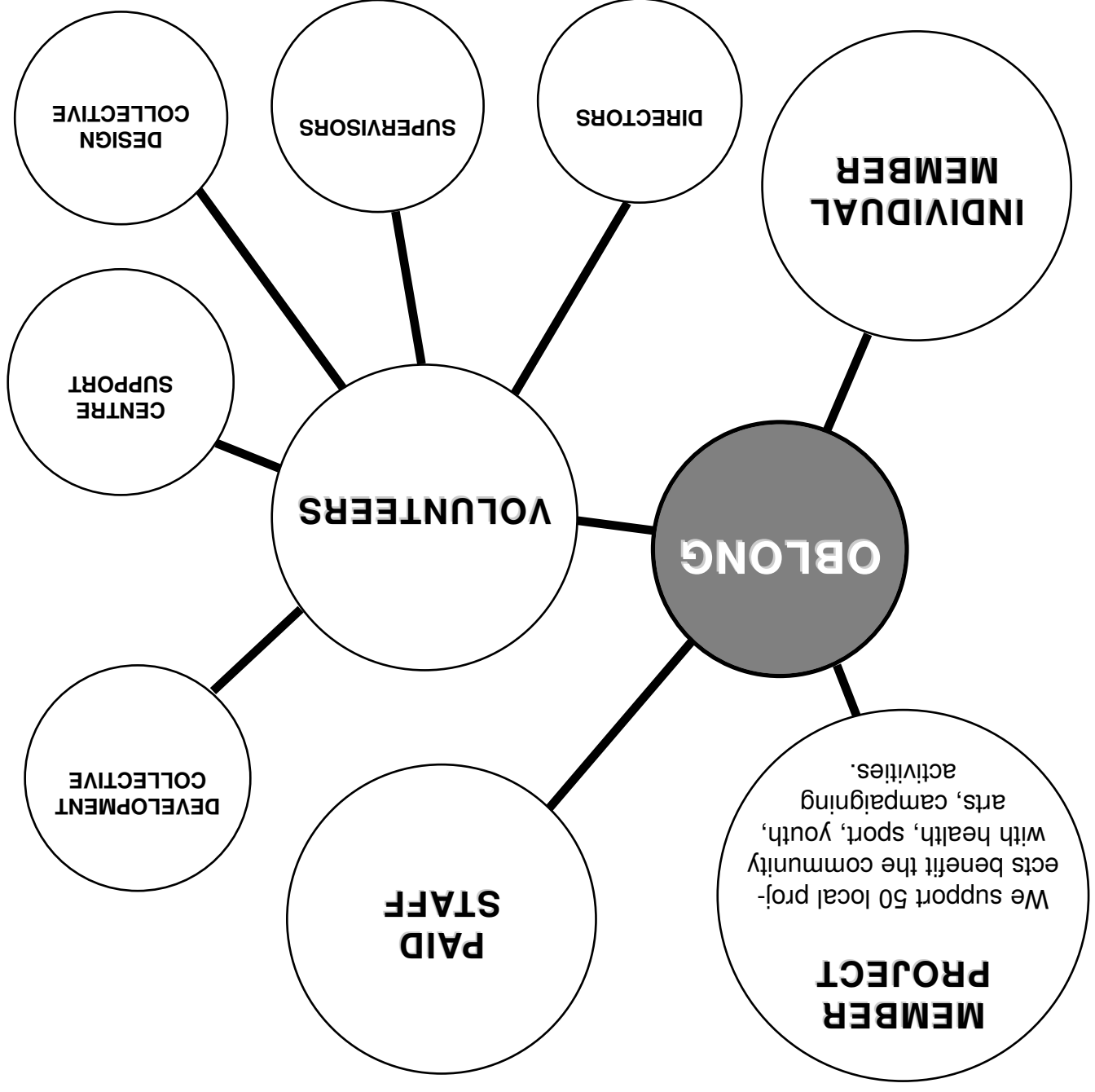
As a part of our support programme for volunteers, we provide access to training which will be useful and effective to our volunteers and the work they undertake for us. This may be on a one-to-one basis, through another organisation who have come to give in-house training at Oblong, or at an external location.

You can request training at any time and opportunities can be identified through discussion between you, your supervisor and the volunteer coordinator. For any information on training provided by Oblong, you can ask a member of staff.

ing. All the people on the management committee are themselves volunteers and any member of Oblong can come to monthly meetings and vote on issues. Not only do we want users to let us know what facilities do they want, we also want to give volunteers the chance to get involved on other committees, if they are interested. In this way, we can try to provide the tools for people at Oblong has the same rights and powers. This means that the control stays with its volunteers, users and staff and on an equal foot-

Although Oblong has a management committee and paid staff, we want to make sure that we stick to the principles which we agreed to when we first set up the organisation. The foundation of these ideals is that everybody involved in Oblong and treated equally. Be valued and respected by everyone involved in Oblong and treated equally. Have your complaints taken seriously and listened to. The Acceptable Behaviour and Problem Solving Policy can be used for issues that can not be resolved informally. Not be given more responsibility than you can cope with. Get a meal every day you work with Oblong. Get travel expenses you spend when travelling for your volunteering. Get the childcare expenses you need when you are volunteering. Be invited to Collective Meetings, where you will be involved in decision making with the same powers as paid staff or other Collective members. Discuss your work and experience of volunteering in Feedback Sessions with your supervisor. These will also give you the chance to plan your work and training and make sure everything is going well for you at Oblong. Be on the Oblong Collective email list for important decisions and discussions. Be invited on occasional trips out.

## HOW OBLONG IS DIFFERENT TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS

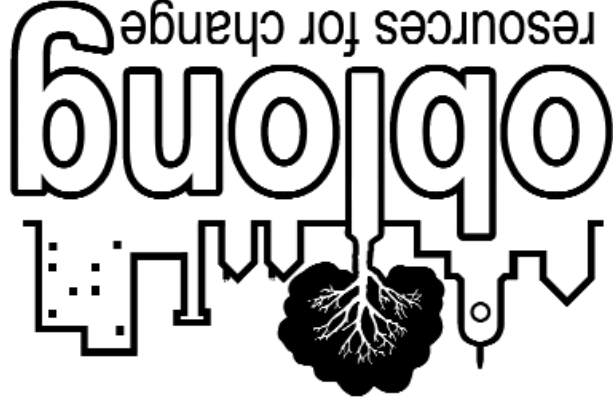


## As a volunteer, you are expected to...

- Be punctual and reliable.
- Let Oblong know if you can't attend when you'd agreed to.
- Be aware and considerate of the needs of everyone who uses Oblong.
- Have your complaints taken seriously and listened to. The Acceptable Behaviour and Problem Solving Policy can be used for issues that can not be resolved informally.
- Not be given more responsibility than you can cope with.
- Get a meal every day you work with Oblong.
- Get travel expenses you spend when travelling for your volunteering.
- Get the childcare expenses you need when you are volunteering.
- Be invited to Collective Meetings, where you will be involved in decision making with the same powers as paid staff or other Collective members.
- Be given a training plan to help develop the skills you need for your role at Oblong.
- Be asked about any important changes that may affect how Oblong runs.
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resources for change

There are a number of core roles within which people volunteer at Oblong. These include:

**Centre Support Volunteer**

This is an important role in ensuring that the centre is welcoming and that support is provided to those who use it. The role includes reception and administrative duties.

**Graphic Design Volunteer**

Graphic designers can do work on such things as the design of newsletters, magazines, business cards, leaflets and posters. It is hoped that in becoming a graphic designer with Oblong you will be able to support other organisations and enable Oblong to achieve its aim to support the development of grassroots organisations.

**Web Design Volunteer**

We need web site designers to work with other not-for-profit organisations in Leeds to help promote their services and activities.

**Video & Animation Volunteer**

Oblong has identified that there is a need for Video & Animation Volunteers to assist in the promotion and business of organisations in the voluntary sector throughout Leeds.

**Small Groups Development Volunteers**

As a Small Groups Development Volunteer you will support Oblong's development work by assisting community groups in creating portfolios of evidence, assisting groups in planning their activities and in making funding applications. In doing so you will be assisting Oblong to achieve its aim of supporting the development of grassroots organisations.

work you have done.

Volunteers are part of the Collective at Oblong. It is our view that volunteers should have an equal say and contribute to the direction of the organisation. As a volunteer you will work as part of the collective, understanding its aims and objectives.

As a volunteer we expect you to fulfill your role to the best of your abilities and to work within Oblong's values, goals and procedures.

**People volunteer at Oblong for lots of reasons, some of these include:**

- To get out of the house.
- To gain new skills.
- To gain experience to get a job you want.
- To have fun.
- To be with friends who already volunteer.
- To gain an insight into the local community.
- To meet people and make new friends.
- To work with particular sections of the community.
- To do something which is recognised.
- To improve the local community.

**OBLONG'S FUNDING**

Oblong is funded through a number of grants provided by organisations such as The Big Lottery, European Regeneration Development

Fund, The Tudor Trust, Leeds City Council and the Scurrah Wainwright Charity. With the funding comes a need to meet agreed targets for things like the number of groups we support, the volunteers who work with us.

We also seek to generate income through activities such as our membership scheme, hiring rooms for meetings or training, photocopying and printing.

**MEMBER PROJECTS**

Is the name Oblong gives to the community projects it supports and, like individuals, they have to pay a small yearly fee to become members. They get access to all the facilities a regular Oblong member has and also gets Oblong style help like:

**If starting up:**

- Help finding volunteers or other groups to work with.
- Training in using computers, book keeping and planning your project.
- Help finding funding.
- Space and the facilities to do their work.

**These projects can help Oblong by:**

- Telling other people what we do.
- Keeping in touch - letting us know how they are getting on.
- Telling us what they need and how we could be even better.

**Oblong's member projects come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. They might:**

- Run a knitting group.
- Produce a newsletter.
- Work with young people.
- Improve the environment campaign against violence.
- Help people to put their own gigs on ♦each martial arts or do something else.

**However, they all have these things in common:**

- They are run by local people.
- Any money they make is given to good causes or put back into their project.
- They don't promote religion or political parties.
- They try to make the local area a better place for all.

**VOLUNTEERING AT OBLONG**

We believe that your volunteering contributes significantly to the work of Oblong and that success in reaching our goals is best achieved through working with you.

We are committed to creating meaningful and productive roles for volunteers which we hope will enable you to gain valuable skills, knowledge and experience.

We believe that as a volunteer you have the right to be given meaningful roles, the right to effective supervision and to recognition for the