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Policies

Volunteer Policy

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| **Current Version:** | 0.1 | **Date of Update:** | March 2025 |
| **Updated by:** | Amy Faulkner-Gadd, Volunteer Development Manager | | |
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| **SLT Policy Owner:** | Donna Gooby | **Policy Group:** | L&D |
| **Last Full Review:** | June 2024 | **Next Review Due:** | June 2029 |
|  | | | |
| **Policy Implemented:** | | 31st March 2025 | |
| **Replaces previous policies:** | | n/a | |
|  | | | |
| **If you have any queries in relation to this policy, please speak to your line manager.** | | | |

**Please Note:** This is a controlled document. Always use the current version on INsite. Do not save or print copies, as they may be outdated.

Volunteer policy

**1. Policy Purpose and Scope**

* 1. This policy sets our position in providing opportunities for individuals who have chosen to volunteer their services.

1.2 Volunteering is one way in which people can be involved in the work of our organisation and includes former clients, former tenants, people from local communities, etc.

1.3 Current client/tenants cannot volunteer within a service they currently use. This is to avoid blurring roles of client/tenant and volunteer within the same setting and avoid any difficulty in exercising our duty of care as well as any conflicts of interest that may arise between the two roles. Ensuring that current clients/tenants do not volunteer in services they use will also overcome boundary and confidentiality issues with regard to other client/tenants they may encounter/support. There must be a 12 month gap between leaving the support of the service and volunteering.

1.4 This policy provides a framework to ensure volunteers have a positive experience with a consistent approach across the organisation.

**2. Status of Volunteers**

2.1 A volunteer will not be an employee. They will not be engaged on a contract of employment nor on any type of contract for services. The engagement will be binding in honour only, there being no legal agreement between the organisation and the volunteer.

2.2 A volunteer does not have the same legal protection as a paid employee. It is therefore important to understand the volunteer relationship does not create a legally binding contract and there is no intention to give the benefit of such rights.

2.3 Volunteers are unpaid. The organisation is under no obligation to offer or to continue to offer any volunteering opportunity to any person, irrespective of their carrying out volunteering work currently or in the past. Similarly, the volunteer is under no obligation to accept any opportunity offered, and may withdraw from the agreement at any time.

2.4 The contribution of volunteers is complementary and supplementary to the work of paid employees thereby adding value to the organisation; volunteers are not a substitute for paid employees.

2.5 Before accepting the role of volunteer, the individual concerned will agree with the organisation that they can fulfil the volunteer role expectations.

2.6 We may withdraw the offer at any time, including after the volunteer has started their engagement. The volunteer may also withdraw from the agreement at any time. Both parties are encouraged to give the other as much notice as possible, should the agreement be brought to an end.

2.7 By entering into a volunteer agreement no restriction whatsoever is placed on the individual to carry out volunteer work for any other organisation or to take paid work, either under a contract of service or contract for services.

**3. Engagement Process**

3.1 Any individual who wishes to be engaged as a volunteer must complete an application form for such a role. They will be asked to identify any particular work they would like to undertake, as well as the skills, knowledge or expertise which they believe they could bring to such a role. The volunteer may nominate particular days/times for their volunteering which we will endeavour to accommodate wherever possible.

3.2 All volunteers will be interviewed by at least two paid employees (one of whom will usually be their potential supervisor) who must both agree that the applicant is suitable to volunteer in the area specified by the applicant.

3.3 Selection is a two-way process. It enables the organisation to decide on the suitability of potential volunteers whilst at the same time enabling volunteers to decide whether they feel suited to the organisation.

3.4 The organisation retains a list of roles which are suitable for volunteers. This is kept updated by the People Team.

3.5 At no time will a volunteer be engaged as a substitute for an employee or worker who would be engaged on a contract for services.

3.6 Two satisfactory references will be required at least one of which should be from someone who knows the volunteer from an employment or educational situation. Where a volunteer does not have suitable employment/educational references then a reference from a person in a position of responsibility such as a lecturer, GP, hostel manager or a key worker may be accepted. **Please note** references from friends and family members will not be accepted. If you are unsure if you can obtain the required references, please contact the People Team will be able to help you identify the best people for us to contact.

3.7 On receipt of references, referees may be contacted to verify any discrepancies, anomalies or relevant issues as part of the verification process.

3.8 Please note it is for the organisation to determine if references meet our requirements.

3.9 Due to the nature of the roles all volunteers will be required to undergo a criminal records check. Therefore, all potential volunteers will be asked to complete a Disclosure and Barring application (DBS) Under the Rehabilitation of the Offenders Act (1974), volunteers will be required to declare all previous convictions/cautions. This includes spent and unspent convictions. This information will be treated in strict confidence. Having a criminal record does not necessarily mean exclusion from volunteering. Please refer to DBS Policy.

3.10 Volunteers are required to provide proof of the right to work in the UK in line with the Asylum and Immigration Act 2004 before they start volunteering. This is because some visas do not allow individuals to volunteer even though volunteers do not receive payment.

3.11 If a volunteer is deemed unsuitable at interview they will be informed at the earliest opportunity.

3.12 Once the volunteering agreement is in force, the volunteer will undergo an induction. This will include an introduction to the organisation’s relevant policies and procedures as well as the expectations the organisation has of them in fulfilling their role. Essential training may be required e.g. Health & Safety, safeguarding, boundaries etc.

**4. Reimbursement of Expenses**

4.1 The volunteer is unpaid and will not receive any benefits in-kind. However, they are eligible for reimbursement of reasonable travel and subsistence expenses, payable on submission of receipts on a monthly basis. Sums payable are subject to the organisation’s expenses policy.

4.2 Volunteers who are in receipt of benefits should note reimbursed travel expenses are viewed as ‘income’ by the Department for Work and Pensions and should be declared.

4.3 Volunteers who are in receipt of welfare benefits are strongly advised to seek independent advice from an appropriate agency, prior to commencing volunteering.

**5. Health & Safety and other policies & rules**

5.1 Organisational Health & Safety policy and Safeguarding policies apply in all respects to volunteers these can be found on INsite. The organisation is vicariously liable for the actions of the volunteer in carrying out their authorised role. The volunteer may also be jointly liable for their own wrongful acts. Volunteers are therefore under a duty to follow all the organisation’s policies, procedures, rules

and instructions in relation to health and safety and safeguarding.

5.2 If a volunteer has an accident whilst carrying out their duties, an accident form must be completed.

5.3 Volunteers must not act in any way that is outside their defined role or area of activity, including entering any part of the organisation’s premises that is beyond the agreed scope of their role. Volunteers must also take reasonable care of themselves and other persons who might be affected by their actions, including customers/clients and members of the public.

5.4 All other organisational policies and rules apply to volunteers, where appropriate, whilst the volunteer is on the organisation’s premises or carrying out their role.

**6. Insurance**

6.1 The organisation has personal injury insurance for volunteers. Where the individual is not suitably covered, the organisation will arrange for them to have (where appropriate) professional, public liability and third party insurance cover.

**7. Management of Volunteers**

7.1 All volunteers will have a supervisor usually a Volunteer Co-ordinator or Volunteer Link Worker to whom they should report and direct any questions or queries about fulfilling their role. The supervisor will review the individual’s volunteer arrangements on a regular basis; and, in any case, every three months a full review will take place should the arrangements still be in place at that time.

7.2 A volunteer has a right to complain if they feel they have been treated unfairly. If the problem is with an employee, their first point of contact should be the volunteer’s supervisor. If a volunteer has a complaint relating to the volunteer supervisor, they are to contact the volunteer supervisor’s line manager.

7.3 If a complaint is made concerning the volunteer, their supervisor will ask the volunteer for an explanation. If the explanation is unsatisfactory the manager may recommend the volunteer agreement is brought to an end without notice.

**8. Problem Solving**

8.1 If a volunteer encounters any problems within their role then they should speak to their supervisor as soon as possible to get advice and support around the issue. The volunteer supervisor should arrange to meet with the volunteer as soon as they are able to and listen to concerns raised.

8.2 If a volunteer co-ordinator has any concerns about a volunteer they should arrange to meet with the volunteer as soon as possible to discuss the concerns. Examples of concerns could include not following policy or a breach of the volunteer agreement. The meeting should involve together coming up with solutions to the concerns raised.

8.3 Volunteer Co-ordinators should offer their support to volunteers around adhering to agreements however if this does not work out the Co-ordinator may decide to end the volunteer agreement or support the volunteer to find a more suitable opportunity. Any termination to the volunteer agreement must be agreed with the Service Manager and discussed with the People Team.

**9. Supervision and Support**

9.1 The necessary supervision and support will be provided to enable the volunteer to carry out their tasks competently and to achieve and maintain these standards.

9.2 The volunteer will be allocated a named point of reference usually Volunteer Co-ordinator or Volunteer Link Worker who will meet with the volunteer regularly to review and discuss their role to help them develop. The purpose is also to enable the volunteer to develop positive, constructive relationships with our employees and clients.

**10. Training**

10.1 Volunteers will be provided with a thorough induction to the organisation’s work and provide any necessary training required to meet the responsibilities of the role, including those to comply with Health& Safety.

10.2 The provision of necessary training, to enable the volunteer to develop any other skills required to fulfil their role, will be identified during supervision.

**11. Reward and Recognition**

11.1 It is important to value our volunteers and celebrate achievements. Acknowledging the contribution made by them demonstrating our appreciation of input and commitment to the organisation. Ensuring that volunteers feel rewarded and recognised for their contribution can help volunteers to feel valued. If volunteers feel appreciated, they are more likely to stay with the organisation.

11.2 Volunteering should be:

11.2.1 Positive

11.2.2 Inclusive

11.2.3 Educational

11.2.4 Win-Win

11.2.5 Supportive

11.3 Volunteers give their time for a wide variety of reasons. Volunteer coordinators should spend time getting to know their volunteers’ motivators for volunteering in order to tailor opportunities for reward and recognition.

11.4 Motivators for volunteering could include:

11.4.1 Training opportunities

11.4.2 Gaining work experience

11.4.3 Giving back

11.4.4 Feeling valued

11.4.5 Feeling part of the community

11.4.6 Making a difference to other people’s lives

11.4.7 Social aspect

11.4 The ways in which to best reward and recognise the contribution volunteers make will differ from volunteer to volunteer. Examples could include:

11.4.1 Supporting volunteers to take up training and development opportunities

11.4.2 Offering shadowing opportunities across the organisation

11.4.3 Giving a reference

11.4.5 Obtaining feedback from clients/residents/services and sharing this with volunteers

11.4.6 Consulting and involving volunteers around issues which affect them

11.4.7 Thank you meals or social events for volunteers

11.4.8 Thank you cards

**12. Volunteers Carrying out Driving Duties**

12.1 Before any volunteer can carry out any driving duties for or on behalf of the organisation, The People Team must be satisfied they have a valid driving licence. Where the volunteer’s own vehicle is being used this will include a relevant current motor insurance certificate (and, if relevant, a current MOT certificate) copies will be kept on file.

12.2 Any motor accidents must be reported immediately to the volunteer’s supervisor.

12.3 The organisation will not pay any fines for any motoring offence committed by the volunteer, including parking fines incurred by them.

**13. Confidentiality**

13.1 All volunteers must operate within organisational policies and procedures including Confidentiality Policy., GDPR etc.

13.2 Volunteers are expected to keep confidential and sensitive information they learn during the course of their duties to themselves.

13.3 If volunteers do find something that could put others at risk they must speak to their supervisor immediately.

**14. Volunteer Information**

14.1 The volunteer will be given the following information.

14.1.1 A Volunteer Agreement which will specify:

* The name of the supervisor to whom they should directly report.
* Their specific role, including any restrictions on: their actions, the scope of their work and specify any premises/areas that should not be entered.
* Expenses to be paid.
* The expected duration of the agreement
* Reference to non-disclosure of confidential information to which the volunteer may have access. The disclosure of any information concerning the organisation (unless it is already in the public domain) is strictly not permitted without the express permission of the volunteer’s supervisor.

14.1.2 A copy of this Policy.

14.1.3 Any general information about the organisation and/or about the volunteer’s work/area of work which it is considered helpful to provide.

14.1.4 Details of the means by which the volunteer can access the organisation’s relevant policies and procedures. In particular, the attention of the volunteer will be drawn to the organisation’s Diversity/Dignity at Work policy, and Health & Safety Policy.

**15.** **References**

15.1 A reference may be provided after the volunteer has been with the organisation for a minimum of six months if requested.

**16. General**

16.1 We reserve the right to change the provision by amendment, addition, deletion or substitution of a new policy or procedures at any time at our discretion.