*Part one of this document is to give guidance on what should be included in an organisations’ Volunteer Policy and the second part provides a guidance document for staff to follow when involving volunteers. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact the Volunteer Centre team on* *wolunteering@ehcvs.org..uk*

# Sample Volunteering Policy

## Introduction

Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community: the environment of individuals outside one’s immediate family. It is undertaken freely and by choice without concern for financial gain.

(Organisation Name) takes responsibility for ensuring that volunteers within its own organisation are appropriately involved, valued for their contribution and respected as colleagues.

In issuing this volunteer policy (Organisation Name) wishes to:

* recognises that voluntary work brings benefits to volunteers themselves, to service users and to paid staff.
* ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to the organisation’s work.
* confirm volunteers will not be introduced to replace paid staff.
* encourage staff at all levels to work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, to actively seek to involve them in their work.
* recognise that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training for them to do their work effectively.
* identify and cover the costs of involving volunteers, including refunding agreed out-of pocket expenses for volunteers.
* recognise that the management of volunteers requires designated responsibilities within specific posts.
* endeavour to involve volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities and ensure our volunteering opportunities are as accessible as possible.

(Organisation Name) Equal Opportunities

* As an employer and engager of volunteers (Organisation Name) is committed to a policy of equal opportunities. This principle will apply to service delivery, recruitment, promotion, training, facilities, procedures and all terms and conditions.
* Volunteers will be expected to adhere to (Organisation Name) Equal Opportunities Policy, a copy of which can be found within the Volunteer Handbook.

*Recruitment & Selection*

* Recruitment of volunteers will be from all sections of the community, and will be in line with (Organisation Name) Equal Opportunities Policy. Appropriate targeting may be used.

*Information & Training*

* Volunteers will receive full information about their chosen area of volunteering and will be given a clear idea of their responsibilities to (Organisation Name).
* Volunteers will be given induction and training in the specific tasks to be undertaken.
* Volunteers will be consulted in decisions which affect them.

*Support & Supervision*

* Volunteers will be assigned a named contact person for supervision and support.

*Problem-Solving*

* (Organisation Name) recognises that problems do arise and we aim to identify and resolve these problems at the earliest stage. Volunteers who have a problem of any kind should discuss it in the first instance with their named contact person.

*Confidentiality*

* Volunteers will be bound by the same confidentiality conditions as (Organisation Name) paid staff.

***Records***

Minimum details will be kept on volunteers. This will include the registration form, placement details, crisis contact, correspondence and any other relevant information in accordance with (Organisation Name) Data Protection Policy. After an individual has left (Organisation Name) records will be kept for a maximum of one year.

*Expenses & Insurance*

* (Organisation Name) will endeavour to identify and cover the costs of involving volunteers and recognises the value of designated responsibilities within specific posts for the management of volunteers.
* (Organisation Name) will ensure that there is a clear and accessible system to enable volunteers to claim out of pocket expenses.
* (Organisation Name)values its volunteers and is committed to ensuring there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. All agreed out-of-pocket expenses are reimbursed, including expenses for travel by the cheapest means of public transport, and reimbursement of meal costs, up to a maximum value, when volunteering over a meal period.
* Volunteers will be adequately covered by appropriate insurance while carrying out agreed duties.

*Health and Safety*

* All volunteers are covered by the same health and safety policies and provisions as paid staff.

*Relations with Paid Staff*

* (Organisation Name) is committed to ensuring that volunteers work complements the work of paid staff, and that it will not be used as a substitute for paid work.
* Steps will be taken to ensure that staff at all levels are clear about the roles of volunteers and to foster good working relationships between staff and volunteers.
* (Organisation Name) recognises the need for training for all those working alongside and managing volunteers.

*References*

* On the basis of their voluntary work, volunteers will have the right to request a reference after they have been with the (Organisation name) for a minimum period of six months. This will be provided for up to a year after the individual leaves (Organisation Name).

*Monitoring & Evaluation*

* (Organisation Name) will systemically monitor and evaluate its involvement of volunteers with reference to this Volunteer Policy.

*Review*

* This policy comes into force on (Date) and (Organisation Name) commits itself to review the policy as and when changes in legislation or other factors make this necessary. The policy will be subject to a comprehensive review two years after its introduction and every two years after that. (Review date: XXXXXX)

Guidance for Involving Volunteers

*These guidelines are intended for use along with the policy statement, but do not form part of the policy itself. They give further detail on recommended good practice in the involvement of volunteers within (Organisation Name).*

*Preparation*

Prior to recruiting volunteers, full consultation and discussion should take place with paid staff and unions to satisfy that there is a genuine need for volunteers and to develop a clear description of their role. A contact person within the section proposing to involve volunteers should be identified and the staff time and expenses to train, support and reimburse volunteers determined.

*Recruitment*

* (Organisation Name) has an Equal Opportunities Policy and will prevent discrimination particularly on the grounds of gender, marital status, disability, race, colour, religious belief, political belief, sexuality, nationality, ethnic origin, age, trade union activity, responsibility for dependents or employment status. (See statement and policy for details)
* In order to reach a wide section of the community, recruitment should be by a variety of means.
* Positive action in recruitment may be used for specific voluntary tasks. For example, specific work with minority ethnic groups.

*Initial Contact*

* People interested in becoming volunteers with (Organisation Name) should be invited for an informal talk with the appropriate contact person. They should:
* Be given written information to take away
* Have their role explained and how it fits in with (Organisation Name) overall aims and ethos
* Have the next stages of becoming a volunteer with (Organisation Name) outlined
* If the volunteer wishes to proceed with the application at this stage, the contact person should fill out the application form with the volunteer (getting referees’ details) and ask the volunteer to sign.
* If the volunteer is undecided, agree the next step e.g. for the contact person to phone the potential volunteer in a week’s time.

*Selection*

* All volunteers should complete an application form. Two written references will be required. If the volunteer is to carry out specialised work (e.g. IT support) at least one reference should relate directly to this.
* If volunteers may be working with vulnerable people, or in positions of trust, they should be asked to provide information on their application form about any criminal convictions that they may have.
* All information should be dealt with in the strictest confidence and should not necessarily prejudice the person being accepted for volunteering.

*Records*

* Minimum details should be kept on volunteers. This will include the application form, references, placement details, relevant information regarding the person’s health, correspondence and any other relevant information such as emergency contact details. Records should only be kept for a year after an individual has ceased volunteering with (Organisation Name)
* Record keeping must be secure but accessible to other members of staff if you are absent.
* The Data Protection Act and GDPR legislation enables people to access information held about them.

*Induction*

* Induction sessions should be provided for all new volunteers and should cover:
* Role of volunteers
* Responsibilities of volunteers
* Arrangements for training, support and supervision
* Contact person
* Need for confidentiality
* Organisational ethos/values, etc
* System for payment of expenses
* Problem-solving procedures
* Background to (Organisation Name)
* Building orientation
* Health and Safety
* Meeting staff
* During induction, volunteers should receive the (Organisation Name) Volunteer Handbook. Separate guidance is available on writing a Volunteer Handbook.

*Placement*

* Once a suitable voluntary placement has been identified details about the frequency and length of commitment and nature of the voluntary activity should be determined and an established trial period agreed.
* (Organisation Name) reserves the right to ask volunteers to leave and will give reasons in writing if requested.

*Support, Supervision and Problem-Solving*

* Regular support/supervision should be available to each volunteer. The type and level of support will depend on the needs of the volunteer and the nature of their role. Full information on this will be provided during induction.
* Each volunteer should have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for the day to day management and guidance of the volunteer and who will be able to offer advice, support and feedback on a regular basis.
* If a complaint about a volunteer arises, refer to the problem solving process.

*Expenses*

* The procedures for claiming expenses should be clear and accessible.
* All agreed out of pocket expenses should be reimbursed on production of receipts.

*Insurance*

* It should be ensured that volunteers have appropriate insurance cover in terms of employers and public liability.

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