

BCA Volunteer Policy

Introduction

This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers and is relevant to staff, volunteers, and trustees within the organisation. It aims to create a common understanding and to clarify roles and responsibilities to ensure the highest standards are maintained in relation to the management of volunteers.

Our commitments

We recognise volunteers as an integral part of the organisation. Their contribution supports our mission and strategic aims and complements the role of the Trustees and of paid workers. We aim to encourage and support volunteer involvement to ensure that volunteering benefits the organisation, its customers, community and the volunteers themselves.

We are committed to offering a flexible range of opportunities and to encouraging a diversity of people to volunteer with us and to encourage an open, fair and inclusive process for volunteers to get involved.

We recognise that people have a right to participate in the life of their communities through volunteering and can contribute in many ways.

We recognise our responsibility to organise volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of a volunteer's time can be best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

Who is a volunteer?

Volunteers are individuals who undertake activity on behalf of our organisation, unpaid and of their own free choice. Volunteering is undertaken to be of public and community benefit and not for financial gain.

Trustees are volunteers with responsibility for governance of the organisation. Volunteers may be involved on a one-off, short-term or on a long-term, regular basis. They may be involved:

- in the direct delivery of our services
- on our board of trustees
- in community engagement to raise awareness of our work
- in one-off events and promotional activities
- in our community venue

Volunteers are valued for:

- bringing additional skills and new perspectives to the organisation
- enabling us to be more responsive and flexible in our approach
- championing our cause within the wider community
- enhancing the quality of our work and of client experience
- promoting the wellbeing of users of services, staff, local communities, and themselves

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Roles and responsibilities

A designated Trustee (Volunteer Coordinator) has responsibility for the development and co-ordination of voluntary activity within the organisation, including volunteering policies and procedures and the welfare of volunteers.

All volunteers will have a designated person for guidance, support, and supervision.

The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise. However, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged, both in terms of what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the organisation.

The organisation expects volunteers:

- to be reliable and honest
- to uphold the organisation's values and comply with organisational policies
- to contribute positively to the aims of the organisation and avoid bringing the organisation into disrepute
- to carry out tasks within agreed guidelines

Volunteers can expect:

- to have clear information about what is and is not expected of them to receive adequate support and training if needed to be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment
- to be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner
- to be recognised and appreciated
- to be able to say 'no' to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable
- to know what to do if something goes wrong

Recruitment and selection

Equal opportunities principles will be adhered to in recruiting volunteers. Opportunities to volunteer will be open widely and without exclusivity,

Information will be made available to those enquiring about volunteering.

Recruitment will usually involve an informal interview, and the taking of references may be appropriate.

Where it is not possible for applicants to be placed in their preferred role, they will be provided with feedback and given the opportunity to discuss alternative volunteering roles.

For roles which involve care giving and/or sustained and direct contact with young people or adults at risk, volunteers may be required to have a full DBS disclosure check. DBS disclosures are dealt with in the strictest confidence. A criminal record is not necessarily a bar to volunteering.

Induction and training

Volunteers will be given induction and training appropriate to the specific tasks to be undertaken.

Support and supervision

Volunteers will be offered support and supervision as appropriate. Arrangements vary according to the volunteer and the role undertaken, and may include telephone support, group meetings, or one-to-one discussions.

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Recognition

Volunteers will be encouraged to share their views and opinions with other volunteers and Trustees.

Formal recognition of the contribution of volunteers is expressed through annual reports, website articles, social media, and in person.

Dealing with problems

The organisation aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively, and consistently. It seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly.

All volunteers will have a named person to whom they can turn in the case of any difficulty. Where informal resolution is not possible, the organisation's 'Complaints' policy will be adhered to.

Ending the agreement

As a last resort, the organisation may find it necessary to end this agreement if the volunteer commits any of the following:

- gross misconduct or insubordination
- being under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- theft of property or misuse of the organisation's equipment or materials
- abuse or mistreatment of service users or co-workers
- failure to abide by its policies and procedures

Conflicts of interest

Any volunteer who has a conflict of interest with any activity or programme of the organisation, whether personal, philosophical, or financial, must declare this to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Prior to any action or statement that might significantly affect or obligate BCA, volunteers should seek consultation and approval from the Volunteer Coordinator or Secretary. These actions may include, but are not limited to, public statements to the press, lobbying efforts with other organisations, collaborations or joint initiatives, or any agreements involving contractual or other financial obligations. Volunteers are not authorised to act as representatives of the organisation unless this is explicitly stated.

Confidentiality and the Data Protection Act 1998

The organisation is registered under the Data Protection Act 1998. Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves a member of staff, volunteer, service users or other person, or involves the overall business of the organisation.

Expenses

Volunteers will be given clear information about what expenses can be claimed and how to make a claim.

Insurance

Insurance is provided for all volunteers engaged in the organisation's business, excluding motor insurance. In respect of motor vehicle insurance cover, volunteers are responsible for consulting with their own

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insurers regarding the extension to include volunteer work. They may be required to produce evidence of this cover. We do not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage.

Moving on

When volunteers move on from volunteering with us they can provide feedback on the volunteering experience by way of email, phone, in person to their supervisor.

Volunteers who have remained with the organisation for at least three months will have the right to request a reference. Volunteers will be supported to move on to other options.

Organisational policies relevant to volunteers

While volunteers have no employment rights such as paid sickness and holidays, they are covered by the organisation's rules on, for example, health and safety, safeguarding, complaints, and equal opportunities, and should ensure that they are aware of and follow these policies.

Agreed by Trustees: 13 February 2024

Revised by Trustees 8 July 2025