

# **REG COMMUNITY SUPPORT TRUST - Volunteer Management 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 commitment**

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

We are committed to offering a flexible range of opportunities and encouraging a diversity of people to volunteer with us, including those from under-represented groups such as youth, people with a disability, older people and people from black and minority ethnic communities.

We recognise that there are costs associated with volunteer involvement and will seek to ensure adequate financial and staffing resources are available for the development and support of volunteering.

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 the volunteer's time is 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. Trustees are volunteers with responsibility for governance of the organisation.

Volunteers may be involved on a one-off, short term or on a longer term, regular basis. They may be involved:

- in the direct delivery of our services
- on our board of management as trustees
- in community engagement to raise awareness of our work

- in one off events and promotional activities
- in our offices or in community venues

Volunteers are valued for:

- bringing additional skills and new perspectives to the organisations
- 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.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, for the volunteer to attend or to undertake particular tasks or for the organisation to provide continuing opportunities for voluntary involvement, provision of training or benefits.

However, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both 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 make the most of opportunities given, eg for training
- to contribute positively to the aims of the organisation and avoid bringing the organisation into disrepute
- behave in a reputable manner
- respect confidentiality
- 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
- to be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment
- to be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner
- to receive out of pocket expenses
- to have opportunities for personal development
- 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**

Principles of Equal Opportunity will be adhered to in the recruitment of volunteers. Opportunities will be widely promoted, to attract interest from different sectors of the community. Positive action to target recruitment may be used where appropriate. Online application is encouraged but non-digital methods of application are also available.

Information will be made available to those enquiring about volunteering, including written role descriptions which set out the nature and purpose of the volunteering role, key tasks, skills required and benefits. A risk assessment will be undertaken on all volunteer roles.

Recruitment will usually involve an informal interview, application form and the taking of references; the process will be defined and consistent for any given role - for example the recruitment process for trustees, regular volunteers and for volunteers for one-off events will be tailored in each case and may differ from one another.

Where applicants are not able 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 vulnerable adults, volunteers will be required to have a full DBS disclosure check which will be arranged by the organisation. DBS disclosures are dealt with in the strictest confidence. A criminal record is not necessarily a bar to volunteering.

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, and this is discussed during induction. Arrangements vary according to the volunteer and the role undertaken, and may include telephone support, group meetings or one to one reviews.

## **Confidentiality**

The organisation will advise the volunteer on its confidentiality policy and procedures, where relevant. This would include those relating to personal information held by the organisation relating to the volunteer.

## **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.

We will attempt to deal with any problems informally and at the earliest opportunity. All volunteers will have a named person to whom they can turn in the case of any difficulty.

Volunteers will be made aware of the organisation's complaints policy and how to use it. They will also be made aware of how inappropriate behaviour by volunteers will be addressed by the organisation.

## **Expenses**

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

## **Moving on**

When volunteers move on from volunteering with us, they will be asked to provide feedback on the volunteering experience by way of an exit questionnaire. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss their responses to the questionnaire more fully. 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.

## **Other relevant documents**

Organisational policies relevant to volunteers include:

- Health and Safety
- Equal Opportunities
- Confidentiality
- Safeguarding
- Complaints
- Settling Differences
- Grant Making
- Volunteer Management

**This policy has been approved for issue by the board of trustees of REG COMMUNITY SUPPORT TRUST and is subject to change as and when the trustees see fit.**