

## Volunteer Policy

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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Trust recognises that volunteering has the potential to bring a range of benefits – for individuals, for the Trust, and for the wider community. Volunteering is one way the Trust hopes to engage with members of the Trust and the general public. Volunteering in the Trust can also be a powerful way of addressing the stigma of any long term health condition. Volunteering can be an important step also in a service user’s wellbeing.
- 1.2 East London NHS Foundation Trust values the role of volunteers and recognises the importance of the contribution which they make to the organisation and its services. This policy sets out a standardised approach to the recruitment and support of volunteers within the Trust. It is based on evidence from good practice and directed towards ensuring that the mandatory requirements of the Trust are met.

## **2.0 Definitions of a volunteer**

- 2.1 For the purpose of this policy, the Trust uses a definition of volunteering taken from former Volunteering England’s “The Compact Code of Good Practice on Volunteering” (2005). It states that volunteering is “...an activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or individuals or groups other than, or in addition to, close relatives”.
- 2.2 The emphasis is on the fact that volunteering opportunities are:-
- of a voluntary nature
  - a matter of personal choice
  - unpaid

From the organisations perspective, volunteers can enhance the work of the Trust, **but they cannot replace paid workers.**

- 2.3 Volunteers will gain valuable skills and experience whilst volunteering and these may be important motivations. Volunteering may also help with future employability and may also be a key focus for participation. As stated above, volunteers receive no payment; they are reimbursed any reasonable and pre agreed out of pocket expenses that they incur during their volunteering only.
- 2.4 Therefore it follows that those who are not volunteers and hence are not guided by this policy are:-
- student placements (students who attend as part of their studies with **linked** universities working in partnership with the Trust)

- work placements (those who are unemployed and attending as part of their skill building and provided via **linked** employment supporting agencies working in partnership with the Trust)
- staff seconded placements – staff who are employed with another NHS provider who are released to spend an agreed time gaining career development within the Trust
- experts by experience – service users who use their experience to assist on consultations, interview panels for the Trust, carrying out surveys and audits
- permitted and supported permitted work – who receive money and support in line with allowances in line with benefits received
- this Volunteer Policy does not cover governor activity

### **3.0 Who can volunteer?**

- 3.1 Anyone from the community can volunteer if they are mostly over the age of 18 years and do not fall into the categories in 2.4 above and who successfully complete the selection process and the relevant DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks. Service users, their carers as well as interested members of the public are welcomed and encouraged to bring their skills and life experiences. Trust staff are invited to volunteer should they wish to develop their skills having discussed this with their line manager.
- 3.2 However NHS England is keen to use the NHS's 70th birthday celebrations as a milestone 'to increase volunteering and social action by young people in health and care by supporting the development of new opportunities for volunteering for under 18's.'  
Therefore under 18's, in particular 16-25 age groups can also apply for volunteering at the discretion of the Volunteer Coordinator. Most of the roles will be directed at group activity, campaigns and not towards lone volunteering.
- 3.3 There are however some restrictions on who can volunteer that do not apply to everyone in that category.
- 3.4 Volunteers from Overseas – There are rules for potential volunteers from outside of the European Union or EEA (European Economic Area) are advised to check with the UK Border Agency if they are unsure if this is allowed on their visa. There are a number of visas or types of entry clearance conditions and potential volunteers will need to check if they are permitted to volunteer in addition to their main purpose for entering the country. Volunteers who have refugee status or who have exceptional leave to remain are permitted to volunteer. There are issues for people who wish to volunteer if there are restrictions on their visa such as “No re-course to public funds” – as the training and experience that is given via the NHS constitutes funding in kind in the eyes of the UK Border Agency. Asylum seekers are permitted to volunteer in certain types of organisations and this needs to be checked with the relevant authority.

- 3.5 Current Service Users – although encouraged to apply to undertake a volunteering opportunity service users will not be placed to volunteer within a department who are currently providing a service to them. This is to avoid blurring roles that may cause difficulty in the responsibility of exercising our duty of care when an individual is acting in two different capacities in the same setting. This is also to overcome boundary issues with regard to other service users they may then encounter whilst volunteering who may have been receiving services alongside the volunteer. In some cases service users can volunteer within a service that they have received support from in the past, however, it is advised that there is at least a 3 month gap between leaving the support of that service and volunteering. In the interest of the volunteer this must be discussed with the Trust Volunteer Coordinator before final agreement can be given.

#### **4.0 Where can people volunteer and the support mechanism**

- 4.1 The Trust Volunteer Coordinator will liaise with departments within the Trust to become volunteer involving departments. A Role Description of the various tasks to be undertaken by volunteers will be agreed between the staff and the Trust Volunteer Coordinator ensuring that the role description is volunteer appropriate, does not replace what should be a paid post, and fits with the legislation and good practice guidelines about involving volunteers. This Role Description will then be entered onto the Trust Volunteer Role Database.
- 4.2 The Trust Volunteer Coordinator will support the various departments in recruiting volunteers and within the various teams will support one member of staff to become the Volunteer Lead who will take the overall responsibility for the volunteers on a day to day management of the role and support. Training will be offered to Volunteer Leads in order to facilitate this.
- 4.3 Overall the Trust Volunteer Coordinator will support volunteers who have any issues regarding their placement, will provide the compulsory training for all volunteers and will also support the teams with regard to day to day volunteer management.

#### **5.0 The benefits of volunteer participation in the Trust**

- 5.1 Volunteers bring with them positive qualities such as commitment, skills, interest, energy and enthusiasm and they can enhance the Trust's work in a variety of ways. At a service delivery level, they can add value to statutory services by providing practical support to service users, helping to overcome social isolation and facilitating participation in their local community. Volunteers also bring their own life experiences and can bring into light coping mechanisms/strategies which maybe unconventional but therapeutic. They also introduce a different perspective from the wider section of the

community which may include different values, attitudes and motivators. Through training, building knowledge from their volunteering experiences they will be able to raise mental health awareness to others within their community, thereby breaking down barriers, reducing stigma and discrimination.

5.2 As a Foundation Trust, volunteering affords important opportunities for community involvement at different levels and in different capacities within the organisation.

5.3 Volunteers benefit from their involvement in a number of ways. There are many reasons that people give up their spare time for volunteering. For some, volunteering can be a route to employment, or a chance to try something new which may lead to a career change. From this perspective, volunteering can be a way of:

- Gaining new skills, knowledge and experience
- Developing existing skills and knowledge
- Enhancing a CV
- Improving one's employment prospects
- Gaining an accreditation
- Using one's professional skills and knowledge to benefit others (usually described as pro bono)

5.4 For others, volunteering appeals because of its social benefits. These include:

- Meeting new people
- Making new friends
- A chance to socialise
- Getting to know the local community

In addition, many people volunteer for a variety of other reasons, such as:

- Giving something back to an organisation that has impacted on a person's life, either directly or indirectly
- A desire to make a difference to the lives of others
- Feeling part of a team
- Feeling valued
- Having quality time away from work or a busy lifestyle
- Building up trust
- Gaining confidence and self-esteem

## **6.0 Volunteer Recruitment**

6.1 It is important that volunteers are recruited following an equal opportunities process and the Trust will encourage the diversity of the volunteers by positive advertising and meeting a range of groups to encourage participation. The Trust will aim to ensure that its' Equality Diversity and Human Rights Policy is followed during the recruitment of volunteers. The Trust will promote

and ensure the involvement of the following groups as volunteers. The demographic data of volunteers will be reported to the Workforce Committee.

- All ethnic minority groups
  - Women and Men
  - Older people
  - Young people over the age of 18 years
  - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual people
  - Disabled people
  - People who follow a particular religion
- 6.2 Volunteering within the Trust must not be 'prescribed' to service users as part of their care plan. It can be suggested to service users but ultimately it must be an activity that is freely undertaken. Service user volunteers will be supported and reasonable adjustments made with the agreement of the department and Volunteer Lead.
- 6.3 The volunteer has the choice and the freedom to cease volunteering at any time giving as much notice as possible.
- 6.4 Entry into the recruitment process can be in two ways. The first, and preferred entry process, is via the Trust Volunteer Coordinator by email, telephone or face to face. The Trust website will have details of the volunteering programme and contact points but we do also recognise that volunteers sometimes approach specific departments.
- 6.5 Entry points for volunteer recruitment via particular departments who are approached by the potential volunteer (a) because they have a particular interest in that sphere of work or (b) because they know someone who is involved either as a staff member of service user are also accepted. Staff members in the department concerned should explain the volunteering role if there is one already in existence, but then refer the person to the Trust Volunteer Coordinator to ensure all the correct recruitment processes are followed and to ensure that the details are recorded by the Trust Volunteer Coordinator on the Trust Volunteer Database to ensure all good practice steps are followed.
- 6.6 The starting point for recruitment will be an application form to be completed by the potential volunteers/candidates. This will be sent out as part of an application pack via the Trust Volunteer Coordinator. The application pack will have some basic information about the Trust, information about the volunteer programme within the Trust, the recruitment and training process and an application and training booking form.
- 6.7 Upon receipt of the application form a discussion will be held between the Trust Volunteer Coordinator and the Volunteer Lead to continue the process to include an informal interview, if acceptable to begin the process of DBS disclosure check, take up two references, invite to basic standard volunteer training and at completion of the process to arrange a start date and have local induction. Volunteer Leads will be provided with a Starter Pack covering



all aspects of setting up a volunteering opportunity and the various templates for the recruitment process.

- 6.8 Once a DBS application is made, the candidate should then submit an online application to join the Update Service. The application for the Update Service must be received by the DBS within 28 days of the candidate's initial DBS application using the application form 'E' reference number generated when the DBS application is made. Alternatively, if the candidate waits for receipt of their DBS certificate, they must join the Update Service within 30 calendar days of their DBS certificate issue date.
- 6.9 The link to register for the Update Service is:  
<https://secure.crbonline.gov.uk/crsc/apply?execution=e1s1>
- 6.9.1 Registrations last for one year and there's no charge for volunteers. The registration starts from the date the DBS certificate was issued and must be renewed yearly.
- 6.10 All DBS certificates must be viewed either by the Volunteer Coordinator or Volunteer Lead, and the certificate reference number to be recorded on the Volunteer database.
- 6.11 Once the volunteer has been recruited and is starting within their role they will be asked to complete a Volunteers Agreement. This is **not an** Honorary Contract which applies to different roles within the Trust.
- 6.12 All volunteers will be issued with a photo ID badge, by the Volunteer Coordinator once the volunteering role(s) have been agreed. All badges will remain valid for 6 months unless agreed otherwise.
- 6.13 In the event that the volunteer applicant does not have the skills required for a particular opportunity or decides that the role is not what they are seeking, then the Volunteer Lead must inform the Trust Volunteer Coordinator. The Volunteer Coordinator will contact the person to ascertain whether another opportunity within the Trust would be appropriate and if so the paperwork would be sent to that Volunteer Lead to continue with a recruitment process. If there is nothing available or suitable opportunity within the Trust the Volunteer Coordinator will signpost the volunteer applicant to other opportunities via the voluntary sector.
- 6.14 The volunteer database will be consistently checked and any inactive volunteers will be contacted.

## **7 Volunteer Training**

- 7.1 All volunteers will attend a basic volunteer training programme to consist of elements of the Corporate Trust Induction e.g.: Safeguarding, information governance, health and safety issues, equality and diversity. Other training will include rights and responsibilities of volunteer, expectations of the Trust and of the volunteer in their role, working within boundaries, communication skills and basic mental health awareness. All of these modules will be mandatory.
- 7.2 Other training will be available and mandatory for particular roles but will be optional for all volunteers to attend. These additional training sessions will be developed and implemented as roles prescribe as they will be role specific.
- 7.3 It is important for volunteer training to be monitored as training that is not relevant to the role can be classed as a monetary benefit and the volunteer could be liable to pay tax on the worth of the course, and the Trust could be held responsible under the legislation regarding minimum wage. Therefore all volunteer training **must** be approved by the Trust Volunteer Coordinator who will facilitate the majority of the training.

## **8.0 Volunteer Handbook**

In conjunction with the training programme for volunteers a Volunteer Handbook will be provided by the Trust Volunteer Coordinator which will include handouts relating to the training programme, local induction checklists, role and task descriptions, any other paperwork relevant to the volunteering opportunity as well as the relevant Trust wide policies and procedures. Each volunteer will be issued with an ID badge which will last for 3 months, unless stipulated otherwise by the Volunteer Lead.

## **9.0 Confidentiality/General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**

Volunteers are expected to respect the confidentiality and GDPR legislation with regard to any information gained whilst volunteering in a role within the Trust. A clause regarding the need for confidentiality is stated in the Volunteer Agreement.

## **10.0 Support**

- 10.1 Every volunteer will be supported in their volunteering opportunity by a Volunteer Lead who will either support directly when they are within their allocated role or this support can be devolved to another staff member. Details of the support person will be written into the Volunteer Agreement. The designated support person will meet as appropriate with the volunteer at the start of their regular attendance to ensure the volunteer has no problems with regard to their plan for the volunteering session.

10:2 A feedback system will be designed to capture satisfaction/experience of volunteers (annually for continual volunteers and at the end of a time limited placement).

10.3 The Volunteer Lead will also receive support from the Trust Volunteer Coordinator with regard to any of the processes regarding recruitment, any problems or concerns and a regular forum for Volunteer Leads will be held to enable peer support; facilitated by the Trust Volunteer Coordinator.

## **11.0 Expenses**

11.1 A volunteer should never be out of pocket as a result of undertaking volunteering activities. Every volunteer should be encouraged to claim any costs with regard to reimbursement for travel to and from their volunteering venue. Volunteers will be encouraged to utilise public transport and use of a car will be by prior agreement with the Volunteer Lead (specifically in a situation where the volunteer has a disability) and in which case mileage rates will comply with the guidance laid down by the Inland Revenue and Trust policies. Reimbursement for meal provision up to a maximum of £4 is allowed if they volunteer for more than a 4 hour period, any reimbursement for any other out of pocket expenditure that relates to their volunteering but which must be agreed with their Volunteer Lead in advance. Volunteer expenses will be paid from the departmental budget of where the volunteer is allocated.

11.2 Volunteers should complete the Volunteer Expenses Claim Form and submitted on a regular basis. Volunteers should be paid from local petty cash facilities.

## **12.0 Reward and Recognition**

The time given freely and the commitment to attending as a volunteer to assist within the Trust must always be recognised which in turn motivates and enthuses the volunteer to continue in their role. The Trust will provide events around National Volunteer Week, 1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> June and utilised to promote the reward, recognition and recruitment of volunteers as led by Volunteering England. Certificates of thanks will be provided at local or Trust wide events. However, showing appreciation on a day to day basis is a great motivator for volunteers to continue in their role.

## **13.0 Problem Solving Procedures**

13.1 The document regarding Problem Solving Procedures for Volunteers is shown at Appendix 1. It is important that volunteers are aware that there are processes to follow in the case that they are not happy with something or

someone within their volunteering role. It is also important for the volunteer to understand the processes if the Volunteer Lead or other staff have a particular issue with the volunteer. It is important that the volunteer has full details of where they need to go and who to speak with if they wish to complain about a situation and this Problem Solving for Volunteers Procedure will give full details of these processes.

#### **14.0 End Meeting**

14.1 It is important that the Volunteer Lead has the opportunity to meet with the volunteer when the volunteering role is about to come to an end. The role may end because it was time limited or, for a variety of reasons, the volunteer wishes to end the relationship. After completion the Volunteer Lead should send this form to the Trust Volunteer Coordinator to update and remove the volunteer from the Trust Volunteer Database and to have discussions with the Volunteer Lead about future recruitment to the role and to assess the impact that the volunteer had made for use in future reports on volunteering within the Trust.

#### **15.0 Equal Opportunities and Diversity**

15.1 The very act of volunteering is an excellent way of bringing people together whatever their background, life experiences or culture. The Trust's equal opportunities and diversity policies apply to volunteers within their role and this will be included as part of the volunteer mandatory training when volunteers will be made aware of their responsibility to follow the letter and spirit of such policies.

15.2 This volunteer policy and volunteer involvement will be subject to monitoring via the Trust Volunteer Coordinator who will ensure that relevant sections of the community who are not involved are encouraged to volunteer and represent the diversity of the community the Trust serves.

#### **16.0 Health and Safety**

16.1 All volunteers have an obligation to comply with Health and Safety legislation and to report any issues. Training in general on a range of Health and Safety issues will be mandatory for volunteers. As part of local induction relevant requirements will be explained and covered by the Volunteer Lead.

#### **17.0 Duty of Care**

17.1 The Trust recognises its duty of care towards its volunteers. The duty of care is a common lay duty to take reasonable care to avoid causing harm to others. Depending on the circumstances, apart from the mandatory training

on health and safety issues, the Volunteer Lead must complete a Risk Assessment for the particular volunteer role and ensure that the volunteer is aware of the details to include provision for evening volunteering roles and therefore late journeys home.

- 17.2 The volunteer has a responsibility to take their own welfare seriously. The volunteer is entitled to make use of the Trust's occupational health service in the event of a volunteer-related injury occurring. Any other health concerns should be dealt with by the volunteers' own General Practitioner or health care team.

## **18.0 Insurance**

- 18.1 Volunteers are covered under the terms of the Trust's Liability to Third Parties Scheme which insures as "relevant persons" anyone whom the Trust authorises to act on its behalf – whether employed by another agency or in a voluntary capacity. Volunteers who are **not** recorded on the Trust Volunteer Database will therefore not be registered and therefore not entitled to make any claim against the Trust's policy but could in that event take legal action against the Trust.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **1.1.0 Problem Solving Procedure**

#### **If a volunteer has a problem with the organisation**

This part of the problem solving procedure gives the volunteer the opportunity to complain if they feel they have been unfairly treated or if they have an issue or a cause for concern within the organisation.

#### **Stage 1 – Talking about the problem**

Initial problems, whether with a member of staff, the organisation or another volunteer, should be discussed with the **Volunteer Lead**. If the matter is about the Volunteer Lead, then the matter should be discussed with the **Volunteer Coordinator- Marie-Michelle Mousse**

During this meeting the volunteer can be accompanied by a nominated person of their choice. If the issue cannot be resolved at this stage then the volunteer should proceed to stage 2.

#### **Stage 2 – Writing about the problem**

If the volunteer is not satisfied with the outcome in stage one, they should write to the Volunteer Lead (or in the case of the problem with the Volunteer Lead then you should write to the Volunteer Coordinator). This should be submitted within 14 days of Stage 1. The letter will be acknowledged within 2 working days and then looked into. A full written response to the problem will be made within 14 days.

#### **Stage 3 – Opportunity for independent outlook**

If the volunteer is not satisfied with the outcome, then they can ask for an independent outlook to the Volunteer Coordinator within 5 working days of the notification of the written response, who will arrange for the matter to be looked into independently. If a meeting to discuss the problem is required the volunteer can have a friend or another volunteer present at the meeting with them. The Volunteer Coordinator will respond on the outcome of that meeting within 5 working days, and their decision is final. Unfortunately, volunteers have no legal rights unless they can prove that they are in fact employees, or that the organisation has been negligent in its duty of care towards the volunteer.

### **1.1.1 If someone has a problem with a volunteer**

This part of the problem solving procedure gives the volunteer the opportunity to be told what problem has arisen, the opportunity to state their case and the chance to ask for an independent outlook at the problem.

Sometimes minor issues can arise during the course of volunteering, such as a volunteer not fitting into the team as well as was expected, not meeting the required standards when undertaking tasks or being unreliable.

Such issues are usually detected during regular support or supervision, and may be quite easy to resolve. This checklist suggests how some issues can be dealt with:

- We may need to remind the volunteer of the policies, ground rules and their roles etc. within the organisation.
- Check if the volunteer has training needs.
- Does the volunteer need extra support or supervision?
- Is the volunteer feeling unfulfilled in their current role? Have their needs changed, or would they like to use different skills to help the organisation?
- Is the volunteer suffering from burnout or unable to cope with the demands of the role anymore? Maybe the volunteer needs to take a break from volunteering? We will always aim to find the best solution for the volunteer. If the issue isn't resolved through regular supervision, or if a problem is raised by a third party, then the problem will need to be dealt with as set out below.

### **Stage 1 – Talking about the problem**

The first step is to discuss the problem with the Volunteer Lead. There could be external factors influencing their ability to carry out tasks, their behaviour or their attitude. We will try to identify goals that will help the volunteer to fulfil their role, and offer extra support, supervision and training where necessary. We will agree a timespan for reviewing the situation with the volunteer.

If the problem was raised by someone else, we will keep them informed of the measures the volunteer is taking to rectify the situation.

### **Stage 2 – Putting the problem into written form**

If the problem hasn't been resolved by talking about the matter or the review, then the Volunteer Lead can issue the volunteer with a letter outlining the reason for the problem. The volunteer should be given the opportunity to state their case, to the Volunteer Lead. The volunteer should also be allowed to be accompanied by a person of their choice. Depending on the nature of the problem, further objectives could be set, and help offered to the volunteer. However, if the Volunteer Lead (on behalf of the Trust) decides to ask the volunteer to leave, then the volunteer should be given the opportunity to appeal. The decision to ask a volunteer to leave should be a last resort.

### **Stage 3 – Opportunity for independent outlook**

If a volunteer has been asked to leave then they should write to the Volunteer Coordinator within 5 working days of being informed that they are being asked to leave. The Volunteer Coordinator will look into the matter and if a meeting is arranged the volunteer should be invited to have a nominated person present at this meeting who can be either a friend or another

volunteer. The Volunteer Coordinator will give a written response within 5 working days and that decision will be final.

To note that in all stages of the Problem Solving procedure if the Trust Volunteer Coordinator is the person that the volunteer is making a complaint about or disputes her decision then the volunteer would need to contact the Trust Volunteer Coordinator's line manager to a final independent decision.