

Our Volunteer Handbook

We want a world that is Disability Positive



disability
positive

Charity No: 1091744
Company No: 4050994

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Welcome

We are Disability Positive.

Our vision is a world that is Disability Positive.

About Us

We help people with disability and long-term health conditions to live well. We provide services, opportunities and a voice to people living with disability and long-term health conditions, and their families. We know it matters, because we have lived experience of disability, long-term health conditions and caring responsibility too.

This handbook is designed to explain the way in which we work and to set out the key procedures, rules and policies designed to ensure an efficient workplace and a safe and supportive environment for all volunteers. The Company may need to alter or amend any policy or procedure contained in this handbook to ensure that it remains relevant and consistent with the needs of the business. Any such change will be notified to all volunteers and an up-to-date copy of this handbook can be obtained from the Community Engagement Manager and can be found on the online volunteer portal

We do expect you to comply with the requirements set out in this handbook.

Our Values

Positive: It's not just our name, it's how we approach every challenge and opportunity.

Collaborative: We don't believe we can do everything ourselves; we love working with others who think like us.

Representative: We are here to be the voice of people living with disability and long-term health conditions.

Ambitious: We are not going to change the world without thinking big.

Trustworthy: We need to be a place where people feel safe and can come freely for honest and impartial advice and support.

Our strengths are due to the skills and abilities of colleagues like you. We look forward to a long and successful working relationship with you and sincerely hope that your time with us is enjoyable and rewarding.

Lynne Turnbull

Chief Executive Officer



1. Key Principles

This section sets out some of the key commitments made by the Company to its volunteers – and the key commitments expected from volunteers in return.

1.1 Health and Safety

The primary duty owed to you by the Company is to ensure that you are safe while you are volunteering with us. Similarly, all volunteers are obliged to carry out their duties in a safe and responsible manner that does not risk harm to either themselves, their colleagues or any other person.

A detailed health and safety policy/handbook identifying the roles and responsibilities of employees and volunteers for ensuring that the Company meets its commitment to health and safety is available on the online volunteer portal. In addition, a poster setting out important information on health and safety is displayed on the notice board at the top of the stairs.

Detailed risk assessments have been carried out on all aspects of the Company's activities and steps have been taken to ensure that all work can be done safely. Any volunteer who is concerned that any aspect of the Company's activities poses a risk to health and safety, should report this to the nearest available manager immediately. Genuine concerns about health and safety will always be treated with the utmost seriousness and be thoroughly investigated.

Volunteers are required to comply with all instructions rules and procedures concerning matters of health and safety. Failure to do so may result in us terminating your volunteering agreement.

It is our duty and responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 section 2.1 and 2.2 a-e and this policy to:

- Ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare at work of all our volunteers and others who may come into our company.
- provide and maintain safe systems of work that are, so far as reasonably practicable, safe and without risk to a person's health or safety.
- make arrangements for ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety and absence of risks in connection with the use, handling, storage and transportation of articles and substances.
- provide information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the health and safety at work of our volunteers.
- maintain so far as is reasonably practicable any place of work in our control in a safe manner and maintain safe access and egress from it.
- Provide and maintain so far as is reasonably practicable a safe working environment with adequate facilities and arrangements for the welfare of our volunteers and others who enter our workplace.
- To make arrangements for the protection of our volunteers working as outreach workers on other premises.

1. Key Principles

1.2 Ethical Conduct

The Company aims for the highest possible standards of ethical conduct in all of its activities and expects the conduct of individual volunteers to reflect this. Dishonesty of any kind will be treated as a serious matter, which may result in us terminating your volunteering agreement

Gifts and Hospitality

The acceptance of gifts and hospitality from clients/customers, suppliers and potential suppliers must not give the appearance that volunteers or the Company may be unduly influenced in the decisions that they make in respect of clients/customers, suppliers or in any other aspect of their work.

All gifts and hospitality given or received, of whatever value, must be entered in the Register kept by the management team. No personal gifts of a value in excess of £20 should be accepted from a client/customer, supplier or potential supplier without express permission from the Community Engagement Manager. You may also be instructed to return any gifts which the Community Engagement Manager considers to be inappropriate, or to refuse to accept hospitality from a particular supplier or potential supplier.

1.3 Whistleblowing

The Company encourages volunteers to raise any concerns that they may have about any wrongdoing at any level within the business. Wrongdoing in this context means any breach of a legal obligation, risk to health and safety, a criminal offence being committed, a miscarriage occurring or likely to occur or damage to the environment.

Any initial concern should be raised with the Community Engagement Manager. However, if this is not appropriate then you should contact the duty manager who will ensure that your concern is properly addressed.

Volunteers who raise a concern which is in the public interest under this policy are entitled not to be subjected to any detriment as a result, however the volunteer must reasonably believe that the disclosure they are making is true.

Even if your concern proves to be unfounded you will be protected against any reprisals from the Community Engagement Manager, colleagues, or any other volunteer of the business. Making a deliberately false allegation, however, against the Company, a fellow volunteer or any other person will be treated as a serious matter which will usually result in terminating your volunteering agreement.

1.4 Good Faith and Loyalty

The volunteering relationship is one built on trust and we all have a mutual interest in making the relationship a success. The Company has a duty to provide reasonable support to volunteers and volunteers have a duty of good faith towards the Company.

In practice this means not doing anything that undermines the Company's position by acting in competition with it, providing information to competitors or undermining the Company's standing with clients/customers and fellow volunteers.

2. How We Do Things

This section deals with some important administrative requirements to do with your volunteering and sets out the standards the Company expects of volunteers in various situations.

2.1 Personnel Records/Data Protection

In order to administer your volunteering role efficiently the Company will need to maintain a personnel file which contains personal information about your address, date of birth, employment history including periods of sickness absence, disciplinary or grievance issues and any other details which concern your interaction with the Company. You will be asked to give us the name and contact details of someone we should contact in the event of accident or unforeseen event and these will also be kept in your personnel records. You must inform the Company of any changes to this information. Your personnel record may be stored electronically and will be treated as confidential information. It will not be disclosed to any third party without your consent unless the disclosure is needed to protect the legitimate interests of the Company or to comply with a legal obligation. Further information on the data we hold about you can be found in our [HR Privacy notice](#)

The Company is registered with the Information Commissioner and details of its registration can be provided to you on request.

The Data Protection Officer is the Chief Executive Officer.

Should you wish to check or examine the information which the Company is holding about you, you may submit a request for access to a member of the management team who will arrange for you to view the contents of your file. [An administrative fee of £10 may be charged]. Please note that some details may have to be withheld to protect the privacy of others or to safeguard commercially sensitive information.

2.2 Dress Code

All volunteers should dress in a manner appropriate to the work that they do. Key factors include whether or not the volunteer meets clients/customers and whether the requirements of health and safety require particular clothing. How you dress is largely a matter of common sense. Where a volunteer dresses in a completely inappropriate way, for example by wearing clothing with offensive images or slogans or impractical clothing such as flip flops then they may be sent home to change.

ID badges must be kept with you all times during working hours and worn where possible. However, it is acceptable to carry them on your person if required.

There is no objection to the wearing of jewellery, but it should not cause danger or be detrimental to the organisations professional image –small facial, body and tongue studs may be worn but large hoops are not permitted. All tattoos, henna paintings or similar should be covered, where possible.

2. How We Do Things

Personal Protective Equipment

Where volunteers are required to wear personal protective equipment such as masks, gloves and aprons then failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

2.3 Commitment

Good timekeeping is essential in any team. A late arrival for a volunteering commitment can put unfair pressure on colleagues and affect the smooth running of the business. The Company therefore requires all volunteers to work reliably to perform my volunteering role to the best of my ability and to provide as much warning as possible whenever I cannot volunteer when expected.

Where you depend on public transport to volunteer you should allow adequate time, including likely delays, for your journey so that you can arrive on time. Similarly, volunteers who drive to work should make themselves familiar with the level of traffic to be expected and make adequate allowance for rush hour congestion.

If personal or domestic circumstances make it difficult for you to attend on time, then you should discuss this with the Community Engagement Manager.

2.4 Adverse Weather and Traffic Disruption

The Company's primary duty is to provide a safe place of work. If adverse weather means that this cannot be achieved and the workplace needs to close, then all volunteers will be sent home or told not to come in.

Where it is clear that you are not going to be able to attend, you must contact the Community Engagement Manager as soon as possible to explain the situation. You must make every effort to talk to the Community Engagement Manager directly rather than leave a message with colleagues or send an email or text message.

2.5 Rest Breaks

The Company encourages all volunteers to take full advantage of rest breaks i.e. lunch breaks. These are provided not only for comfort, but also to protect the health of volunteers and prevent excessive fatigue from causing accidents. Different areas of the business may have different arrangements for ad hoc breaks such as to make a cup of tea or coffee. You are required to comply with any requirements relating to such breaks as may be in place from time to time.

2.6 Smoking

The Company operates a smoke-free workplace. Smoking (which includes the use of e-cigarettes and personal vaporisers) is therefore strictly prohibited throughout all Company premises other than the designated smoking area at the side of the building. Volunteers should be particularly careful to avoid taking smoking breaks at busy periods or at a time that will cause increased work or pressure for colleagues.

2. How We Do Things

2.7 Computer Use - Including the use of email/Internet

It is very important that the Company is able to keep its data secure. To assist with this, all volunteers are required to comply with instructions that may be issued from time to time regarding the use of Company-owned computers or systems or own equipment used for work purposes.

You should ensure that when leaving your workstation for any lengthy period, that you lock your terminal, or log off if appropriate.

You must not attach any device to Company IT equipment without authorisation from the Community Engagement Manager and you must not open attachments or click on links unless you know you can trust the source. Company portable IT devices must be kept secure and password protected in line with Company policy at all times.

Your computer password is an important piece of confidential information and you should treat it that way. Do not share it with others, and make sure that it is not written down anywhere where an unauthorised person can find it.

Unauthorised access to any of the Company's systems will be treated as a serious matter which will usually result in terminating your volunteering agreement

Internet Use

Volunteers with access to the internet on Company-owned devices should use that access responsibly. From time to time the Company may block access to sites which it considers inappropriate but whether or not a specific site has been blocked, volunteers must not use the internet to view or download offensive or sexually explicit material.

Volunteers must not download any software, plugins or extensions on to Company-owned devices unless this is first cleared by an appropriate manager. Volunteers should also refrain from downloading music, video or any other entertainment content on any Company-owned device. Firewalls and anti-virus software may be used to protect the Company's systems. These must not be disabled or switched off without express permission from management.

Email

All email correspondence should be dealt with in the same professional and diligent manner as any other form of correspondence. If you have a Company email account, you should be mindful of the fact that any email that you send will be identifiable as coming from the Company. You should therefore take care not to send anything via email that may reflect badly on the Company. In particular, you must not send content of a sexual, racist or discriminatory nature, junk mail, chain letters, cartoons or jokes from any email address associated with work.

You should also take care that emails will be seen only by the person intended. Particular care should be taken when sending confidential information that the email has been correctly addressed, marked 'private' / 'confidential', encrypted using Egress, and not copied into those not authorised to see the information. Sending confidential information via email without proper authorisation or without taking sufficient care to ensure that it is properly protected will be treated as a serious matter which will usually result in terminating your volunteering agreement

2. How We Do Things

Privacy

Monitoring of email usage takes place without notice. You should have no expectation of privacy in respect of personal and business use of email and the internet whilst at work.

Your email remains the property of the Company and therefore you should not use your Company email to send or receive any information that you regard as private. The Company may, in the course of its business, read emails that you have sent or received.

2.8 Social Media

A volunteer's behaviour on any social networking or other internet site must be consistent with the behaviour required of volunteers generally. Where it is possible for users of a social media site to ascertain who you work for, then you should take particular care not to behave in a way which reflects badly on the Company.

Photographs or inappropriate or disparaging comments about the Company, colleagues or clients will be treated as a serious matter. Because social media interactions can be copied and widely disseminated in a way that you may not be able to control or that may breach Data Protection/Confidentiality, the Company will take a particularly serious view of any misconduct that occurs through the use of social media.

You must not operate a social media account or profile that purports to be operated on or on behalf of the Company without express permission to do so from the Community Engagement Manager. You should not attempt to access social networking sites, such as Facebook/Twitter or similar on Company computers unless this is part of your role to do so. This includes during break times.

2.9 Telephones

Company telephones must be used for legitimate business purposes only. Personal calls and texts on mobile phones should wherever possible be kept to a minimum.

2.10 Alcohol and Drugs

The Company's approach to the consumption of alcohol, drugs and other substances (including legal highs) that have intoxicating and/or behaviour-altering effects or impair judgement (referred to in this policy as "other substances") is based on the need to ensure a safe and productive working environment. Because of the serious nature of the risks posed by the abuse of alcohol, drugs and other substances in the workplace, any breach of the rules in this area will be treated as a serious matter which will usually result in terminating your volunteering agreement.

Dependency

Volunteers who have a dependency on alcohol, drugs or other substances may be offered support and encouraged to seek appropriate counselling or medical help. Wherever a volunteer informs the Company that they have a drug, alcohol or other substance problem this will, as far as possible, be treated in the utmost confidence. However, the Company may need to disclose particular circumstances to managers, regulatory authorities or others should this be necessary to ensure safety or compliance with legal requirements.

2. How We Do Things

Alcohol and Drugs

The consumption, storage, distribution or sale of alcohol, illegal drugs or any other behaviour-altering and/or intoxicating substance, including legal highs, on Company premises or during volunteering time is strictly prohibited. The Company will report any illegal activities to the police or other relevant authorities. You must not present yourself for work under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or any other substance taken for non-medical purposes.

Medicines and Prescription Drugs

If you are taking prescription drugs or any other medicine that may affect your or your ability to carry out any of your duties, then you must inform the Community Engagement Manager of this so that steps can be taken to ensure that the volunteering can be done safely. It is your responsibility, when beginning any course of medication, to check whether it may adversely affect your ability to volunteer.

2.11 Driving

Where driving is required as part of your role, it is your responsibility to ensure that you are legally qualified to drive. If you use your own vehicle to drive on Company/work-related business, it is your responsibility to arrange to be insured for that business use. The Company may require you at any time/annually to allow a copy of your insurance and any MOT test certificate to be made and kept in our records. You are responsible for any driving offences committed while driving as part of your duties, including any parking fines. Dangerous, careless, inconsiderate, or aggressive driving as well as causing a risk to others can be damaging to the Company's reputation and will be treated as a serious matter.

Volunteers should **never** use their mobile phone whilst driving on Company business unless they use a properly installed hands-free system and traffic conditions mean that it is safe to do so. In most cases, it would be preferable to make any calls when the vehicle is stationary.

2.12 Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

The Company is run and controlled by people with lived experience of disability and long-term conditions, we celebrate and value a strong workforce of volunteers with lived experience and all the insight and expertise this provides. The Company is committed to making reasonable adjustments to a volunteer's duties or working arrangements where they would otherwise suffer a disadvantage arising from any disability or long-term health condition.

In order to make appropriate adjustments the Company needs to know about any disability or long-term health condition the volunteer may have. Volunteers who feel that they may require an adjustment should discuss their situation with the Community Engagement Manager. Any such discussions will be in the strictest confidence although when an adjustment is made it may be necessary to inform other volunteers of the reason for this. The extent to which details of any disability or long-term health condition will be discussed with other volunteers will be agreed as part of the process of making the adjustment itself.

As part of our commitment as a Disability Confident Leader; the Company may require you annually to complete a Reasonable Adjustments Form in confidence, to ensure we have up to date information of any reasonable adjustments required. The purpose of any adjustment will be to ensure that the volunteer can work effectively in an appropriate role.

3. Code of Conduct

The behaviours of volunteers are central to the continued success of the Company. A more detailed **Staff Code of Conduct Policy** can be found in the volunteer portal which sets out what is expected of all employees and volunteers in terms of their personal conduct when working and their behaviour towards colleagues

Any failures to comply with our code of conduct policy may be treated as a serious matter which will usually result in terminating your volunteering agreement

3.1 Dishonesty

It is important to stress that any form of dishonesty, however minor, may be treated as a serious matter. This includes theft of property, whether belonging to the Company, colleagues or any third party. However, it also includes a volunteer seeking to gain any advantage through deception - such as making a false claim for expenses.

3.2 Refusal to carry out instructions

The Company expects volunteers to work in a spirit of cooperation with their colleagues and managers for the good of the business as a whole. Employees are required to carry out their managers' instructions and a deliberate and wilful refusal to do so will be treated as a serious matter.

3.3 Breach of a requirement set out in this Handbook

This handbook sets out a number of requirements aimed at ensuring the smooth running of the Company and the fair treatment of all volunteers. A number of these are so important that any breach of them will amount to gross misconduct and these are clearly identified throughout the handbook. Your attention is drawn in particular to the following:

- The rules on gifts and hospitality
- The policy on smoking
- The policy on alcohol and drugs
- The rules concerning the use of computers, the internet and email
- The policy regarding social media; and
- The policy on conduct.

4. How We Resolve Issues

When problems arise in the volunteering relationship it is important that they are dealt with fairly and promptly. This section sets out the procedures that the Company will follow in such cases

4.1 Performance Improvement Procedure

It is in everybody's interest for volunteers to perform well at their roles and the Company aims to ensure that all volunteers are given the support needed to ensure that they do so. Where there are issues with performance then the volunteer should receive feedback from their manager setting out any concerns. Discussions should take place about how that performance can be improved. Where a volunteer's poor performance is believed to be the result of deliberate neglect, or where serious errors have been made to the detriment of the Company then this will be treated as a serious matter which will usually result in terminating your volunteering agreement

4.2 Bullying and Harassment Procedure

Bullying or harassment in any form is completely unacceptable. Usually what constitutes as capable of amounting to bullying or harassment is a matter of common sense and the Company expects volunteers to consider how their words and actions may be seen by others and avoid behaving in such a way as to cause offence or create an unpleasant working environment.

Volunteers should be aware that what one person considers to be a harmless joke may be offensive to others. It is the responsibility of each individual volunteer to ensure that their behaviour does not cause offence and to stop immediately if a colleague tells them that their behaviour is unwanted or offensive to them. It is also extremely important that the views of those who object to behaviour in this way are respected and that they are not subjected to any adverse comment or behaviour.

Making a Complaint

Volunteers who feel that they are being bullied or harassed in the workplace or that such behaviour is taking place should raise their concerns with the Community Engagement Manager. Every attempt will be made to treat allegations in confidence. All complaints will be taken seriously and fully investigated.

Because of the serious nature of such complaints, the making of any malicious or deliberately false complaint will itself be treated as a serious matter which will usually result in terminating your volunteering agreement

4. How We Resolve Issues

4.3 Grievance Procedure

The Company aims to be responsive to concerns raised by volunteers and if you are unhappy with something affecting you at work you are encouraged to raise this with the Community Engagement Manager. The following procedure is designed to be used when these informal attempts to resolve any dispute have not been successful.

Raising a Grievance

If you feel that the matter needs to be raised formally you should raise a grievance by making a written complaint, stating that it is being made under this procedure. You should give as much information about your grievance, including any relevant dates and times, as you can, so as to allow for any investigation into your concerns to take place.

A grievance will normally be dealt with by the Community Engagement Manager and should be addressed to them directly. Where the grievance is directly concerned with the Community Engagement Manager's behaviour, however, you should submit your grievance to another member of the management team who will arrange for somebody who is not directly involved in the issue to deal with it.

Grievance Hearing

A grievance hearing will then be arranged so that you can explain the issue and suggest how it can be resolved. The manager conducting the hearing will consider what you have said and may either deal with the matter immediately or decide to carry out further investigations. In that case the hearing will be adjourned until the investigation has been completed.

Once the investigations are concluded, if new information comes to light, if it is considered appropriate, you may be invited to attend a reconvened meeting, to have the opportunity to consider and respond to the findings of the investigation. Following this a decision on the outcome of your grievance will be made.

Appeals

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of a grievance, then you may appeal. You should submit your appeal in writing within 5 working days of being informed of the outcome of your grievance. Your appeal should be directed to the person named in the grievance outcome letter. An appeal hearing will then be convened and conducted by an appropriate member of the Senior Management Team. The outcome of any appeal will be final.

5. Related Policies

Please also refer to the following related policies, during your volunteering which can be found on the volunteer portal:

5.1 Conduct Policies

- Volunteering Policy
- Volunteer Recruitment, Induction and Development policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Environmental Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy
- Volunteer Code of Conduct Policy
- Volunteer Expenses Policy
- Zero Tolerance to Abuse or Aggression Policy

5.2 Health and Safety Policies

- Health and Safety Policy
- Covid-19 Health & Safety Policy

5.3 Data Management Policies

- Access Control and Password Policy
- Data Breach Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Data Retention and Erasure Policy

5.4 Complaints Handling Policy

- Complaint Handling Policy

Volunteers are notified by email of any updates to our Company policies and are tracked by version control on the volunteer portal.



For Further Information



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