



Volunteering Policy

Families Need Fathers Both Parents Matter Cymru

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1. The charity's Commitment to Volunteers

FNF Both Parents Matter Cymru (hereafter “the charity”) recognises volunteers as an integral part of the organisation. Volunteers’ contributions are essential to our mission and strategic aims and complement the role of paid staff. We aim to encourage and support volunteer involvement to ensure that volunteering benefits the organisation, its service users and the volunteers themselves.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers. Volunteers will not be used to replace staff.

We offer a wide range of volunteering opportunities and to encouraging a diversity of people to volunteer with us, including those from under-represented groups such as younger adults, people with a disability, older people and people from ethnically diverse 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.

2. What is a Volunteer?

Volunteers are individuals who undertake activity on behalf of the charity, unpaid and of their own free choice. The [Welsh Government Volunteering Policy](#) (2015) defines volunteering as activity which

- is undertaken freely, by choice
- is undertaken to be of public/ community benefit
- is not undertaken for financial gain

Work experience placements and internships are not the same as volunteering.

Trustees are volunteers with responsibility for governance of the organisation.

3. Volunteering is Voluntary

A volunteer is not an employee and will not have a contract of employment with the charity.

A volunteer can leave the charity at any time without formal obligation. However, as a matter of courtesy, giving some notice would be appreciated.

The charity will agree a role with the volunteer and there will be an expectation that the volunteer will meet the role's requirements and that the charity will provide work for the volunteer.

However, the volunteer is free to refuse to fulfil the role and the charity is not bound to provide the work.

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.

4. Valuing Volunteers

The charity is heavily dependent on volunteers to carry out its activities. Consequently, we genuinely value our volunteers as an essential part of our charitable work. Some of the reasons we value volunteers are,

- Bringing new skills and perspectives to the charity
- Enabling us to manage our workload
- Championing our cause within the wider community
- Enhancing the quality of our service users' experience
- Promoting the wellbeing of service users, staff, local communities and themselves
- Providing volunteers themselves with an opportunity to exercise their skills in a different environment and to undertake new experiences.

5. Where Does the Volunteering Take Place?

These days almost all our volunteer roles are carried out either online or by phone. We do also run face-to-face meetings and social events which would require physical attendance, but the vast majority of our work is online or by mobile phone.

6. Equipment Needed

Volunteers will usually require a PC, laptop, tablet - or a good quality mobile phone. For some roles (e.g., helpline) you will use your own device, but using software which prevents your personal contact details being shared. For other roles (buddying and outbound calling) you would be lent a charity mobile for the purpose.

7. Volunteering Roles

Roles suitable for volunteers are identified in a maintained procedural document, Volunteer Roles. This lists the different volunteering roles and sets out the broad requirements of the role and the skills or experience needed, as well as any training that is required before the volunteering work is undertaken. As a minimum this will always include an Induction process before a volunteer is authorised in a specific role. The Volunteer Roles will be provided to prospective volunteers so that they can consider to which roles they may best be suited.

In addition, each specific role has a more detailed Specification and also a role-specific Induction Brief.

8. Safeguarding

This is dealt with in the charity's Policies on Safeguarding (Adults) and Safeguarding (Children). New volunteers will have these policies explained to them at induction. Safeguarding arrangements reflect our commitment to protect our staff, volunteers and service users – and anyone else involved in the charity's work.

9. Recruitment

A person wishing to become a volunteer will be asked to complete an application form. The applicant will be asked to identify areas in which he/she would like to volunteer and to itemise areas of relevant experience, training and education.

This will be followed by an online “interview” (actually an informal chat) to explain the available roles and explore the volunteer’s experience and wishes. This will, hopefully, end with an agreement regarding what role the volunteer wishes to take up.

Depending upon the role, the charity reserves the right to ask for references, though this is not usual. However, because we work with vulnerable adults, as from January 2023 a prospective volunteer will be required to undergo a basic criminal records check (Basic DBS check).

Finally, the volunteer will go through the Induction process before being set to work.

10. Induction

The Induction process consists of (i) the provision of various induction documentation for the volunteer to read, then, (ii) an online “interview” at which the volunteer has the opportunity to ask questions to clarify the role and how it is carried out. The Induction will also cover the volunteer’s key responsibilities under various policies such as the Safeguarding and Confidentiality policies, and the suicide awareness guidance.

11. Volunteering Agreement

The volunteer will be required to enter into a Volunteering Agreement with the charity. This agreement will identify the volunteer's experience and contact details, the sort of role in which the volunteer is interested, the induction training that the volunteer is expected to undertake, and who will supervise the volunteer. By signing the Agreement the volunteer undertakes to abide by the charity’s confidentially requirements and policies.

Whilst there can be no formal obligation, volunteers are asked as a guide to commit to doing at least ten hours of volunteering for the charity per month. Finding, interviewing and training volunteers is a significant overhead for the charity so we naturally wish to benefit from that investment of time.

12. Confidentiality and Legal Restrictions

Volunteers are likely to become aware of confidential information about the charity, its staff, its service users, its volunteers and third parties. Volunteers *shall not* disclose this information or use it for their own or another's benefit without the consent of the party concerned.

The charity commits to its service users that the information they provide to us, often highly personal issues, will be treated in the strictest confidence. Volunteers *must* respect that confidence. Typically our service users reveal details of ongoing family law cases, the confidentiality of which is protected in law. Revealing such details, especially the names of involved children, is likely to be an illegal act.

This does not prevent disclosure once the information is in the public domain (unless it has been made public as a result of the volunteer's breach of confidentiality) or where the law requires disclosure.

Certain service user data may be used for research/publication/PR purposes but only in fully anonymised form, and subject to service user agreement (see “Service User Pack”).

13. Training

The charity will provide induction training required for the role before the volunteer is set to work. The charity will offer further training on an *ad hoc* basis, e.g., on suicide awareness and our safeguarding policies.

14. Health and Safety

The charity has a responsibility for the health and safety of volunteers. Volunteers should at all times follow the charity's health and safety policies and procedures. Volunteers have a duty to

take care of themselves and others who might be affected by their actions. Volunteers should not act outside their authorised area or work. Volunteers should report all accidents to their supervisor. The charity will provide volunteers with appropriate guidance on any health and safety issues that arise.

15. Recompense

Volunteers are unpaid. The charity is currently unable to reimburse volunteers for travel and subsistence expenses unless these are pre-approved by the National Manager. Any reimbursement of expenses will be made on completion of an expenses claim using the charity's paperwork and with production of original receipts.

16. Policies and Procedures

Volunteers are expected to comply with all the charity's policies while they are on its premises or undertaking any of their volunteering duties regardless of location. Their Induction will include an explanation of these policies and procedures.

17. Insurance

The charity will ensure that volunteers are covered for insurance purposes in respect of personal injury. The charity will also ensure that volunteers are provided with professional and public liability insurance. The insurance will not cover unauthorised actions or actions outside the volunteering agreement or actions outside the volunteer's authorised role or actions which violate the charity's Health & Safety or Safeguarding policies.

18. Support and Supervision

Volunteers have a well-defined line-management or supervisory arrangement specified in the corresponding role specification document. The supervisor/line-manager will generally be one of the following: National Manager, Assistant Manager, Volunteer Coordinator, Buddy Coordinator, Workflow Coordinator or Helpline Coordinator. The Volunteer Coordinator retains responsibility for personnel/HR/well-being issues for all volunteers, whilst line-management of function is via the other charity officers.

All line managers should arrange regular support sessions, either individually or in a group, to address difficulties that arise and share best practice. If this does not happen – ask!

19. Dealing with Problems

The supervisor will normally try to solve any problems informally, but if this is not possible the formal complaints system will come into operation. The complaints policy can be accessed with the other policy documents on the charity's website. If the volunteer wishes to make a formal complaint, he/she should put the complaint in writing to his/her supervisor. If it is not possible to reach a solution, the volunteer may raise the matter with the Volunteer Coordinator or the National Manager. If a complaint is made about a volunteer, the responsibility lies with the line manager to address the matter according to its merits. The line manager may be able to resolve the matter; if not, he/she should escalate it to the management team who must decide whether any action should be taken. If the volunteer is dissatisfied with the decision he/she may raise it with the Chair of Trustees.

20. Volunteer's Pack

Prior to commencing his/her volunteer work, the volunteer will be given the following information,

- The Volunteering Agreement (for signature);
- A copy of this Volunteering Policy;

- The General Induction Brief (general information about the charity and volunteering);
- The Role-Specific Induction Brief relevant to the role in which the volunteer is to be approved;
- Notification & recording of approval in the allotted Role;
- Details of where he/she can access the charity's policies and procedures;

Other issues such as provision of a charity email, charity mobile, access to the CircleLoop or Teams systems, etc., will depend upon the specific role.

21. Booking Hours and Tempo Time Credits

The charity needs to know how many hours work is being done by volunteers. We ask volunteers to enter the number of hours they have worked for the charity in a spreadsheet each month.

Volunteers are entitled to join our Tempo Time Credits system. This allows volunteers (but not staff or Trustees) to be allocated Tempo Credits according to how many hours they work, on a monthly basis. These credits can then be used to obtain discounts on a range of goods and services. Credits will be awarded only for time recorded on our Volunteers Hours spreadsheet.

This policy was reviewed and approved by the charity on 9 December 2022