



Title: Volunteer Policy

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Volunteer Policy

Signed and Approved by: G.M.Steveson

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Please note: This procedure/policy maybe subject to change where trustees or senior managers of the charity identify reasons underpinning the need for it.

1 Purpose of Policy and introduction

1.1 Our purpose in adopting this policy is to:

- Confirm our commitment to involving volunteers in our work and to reflect the purpose, values and aims of Balance in this involvement.
- Highlight and acknowledge the value of the contribution made by volunteers, recognising the respective roles, rights and responsibilities of volunteers in the charity
- Establish clear principles for the involvement of volunteers, clarify their roles and the relationships between them, those who involve them and those who receive their services or work alongside them.
- Help to maintain the quality of both the volunteering opportunities on offer and the work carried out by volunteers.
- Support volunteers to develop their potential through targeted and appropriate training and supervision.

1.2 The policy is intended for internal management guidance only and does not constitute, neither implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personal agreement.

1.3 This policy sets out the standards and policy guidance that Balance regards as central to good volunteering across the organisation. This is both in terms of what volunteers can do for us as much as what Balance must do for its volunteers.

2 Aims and Objectives of this policy

2.1 Aims

This charity sees volunteering as key to its development and connection to its core communities of interest as well as within the boroughs that it works.

The aim of volunteering at Balance is to strengthen those relationships, increase the independence and sense of control that those using its services have in their lives and increase the stock of resources the charity can call upon to develop its business.

2.2 Objectives

This policy will deliver the following primary objectives:

- Create a framework for the recruitment, support, and development of volunteering in the charity
- Ensure the effective management of any constraints and challenges associated with the use of volunteers across its business
- Set core quality standards against which volunteers will judge how this charity meets its obligations in the recruitment, support, and development of its volunteers.

3 Volunteer Policy Statement

3.1 The Role and value of volunteers at Balance

The role of volunteers at Balance is integral to its position as a community-based organisation. Volunteers provide knowledge, skills and commitment to the organisation that not only add value to what the charity does but help shape its identity and purpose.

Volunteers support our operations in the following ways:

- In supporting the direct delivery of our services
- As trustee's leading the direction and strategic development of our business
- In advocating for and representing the organisation within the wider community
- In advocating for and representing the needs of the people we support

How we value our volunteers is central to our retaining them as a resource, growing and diversifying their role and building a sustainable organisation rooted in its community.

3.2 Code of Practice

In involving volunteers we will be guided by the following principles of good practice:

- Tasks and role descriptions will be clearly defined so that all concerned with volunteers' activities are sure of their respective roles and responsibilities.
- Records will be kept of work done by volunteers as a basis for monitoring and support, and volunteers will have access to their records.
- Volunteer roles will complement, not replace, the work of paid staff.
- The role of volunteers will be made explicit in all Balance policies where appropriate. Where this is not possible a separate policy and procedure covering volunteering will be developed.
- Policy and procedures for involving volunteers in our work will be monitored and reviewed regularly.

3.3 Diversity and inclusion

This charity recognises that creating a diverse and inclusive organisation is key to a dynamic and community connected organisation. We will work to ensure this principle applies to service delivery, recruitment, promotion, training, facilities, procedures and all terms and conditions.

Volunteers as part of the charity's workforce must also recognise their role in guaranteeing our commitment to an inclusivity and diversity. Support and access to training will be provided toward meeting this aim and to underpin positive behaviours in working with those that use our services

3.4 Recruitment and selection

Recruitment of volunteers will be from all sections of the community and in line with the statement above will be subject to the charity policies in equalities and diversity.

Activities to support recruitment from across our communities will include:

- The range of volunteering opportunities within Balance will be included our general publicity, our website and our social media outlets. We will additionally publicise opportunities through local volunteer centres and other on-line recruitment portals
- Volunteer recruitment will be on the basis of specific opportunities arising in defined roles and tasks within the different services and teams.
- These opportunities will be advertised using a variety of means to ensure as wide a range of interest as possible. The effectiveness of this advertising will be regularly reviewed in line with our equal opportunities policy.
- Recruitment to specific volunteer vacancies will be on the basis of a completed application form (including 2 satisfactory references) and informal interview to ensure that the volunteer role is matched to the applicant's goals and expectations; and that their skills match the requirements for the role.
- All volunteers will need to provide references. Where required a satisfactory Criminal Records check through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) will be undertaken before a volunteer is engaged in their role.
- Appropriate targeting may be used to ensure the charity matches both its needs as well as reflecting those using its services.

3.5 Training and development

This charity recognises the importance that training and development play in securing the relevant skills and knowledge necessary to sustain its operations. It additionally recognises the intrinsic role that training and development play in valuing the people that work and volunteer for it.

This charity underlines this commitment by providing appropriate training to meet not only those specific to the task being undertaken by its volunteers but in addition to comply with our core knowledge and quality standards.

Volunteers will be given induction training specific to the chosen field of support to the charity. They will be required to undertake mandatory across 10 disciplinary fields as part of their induction with further elective training additionally provided in support of their broader development within the organisation as well as the needs of their related department.

Volunteers will also be consulted on decisions that affect them in line with the wider commitments across the organisation. This will usually be via the support and supervision mechanisms set out below. But may from time to time involve other tools and group-based activities.

3.6 Support and supervision

Support and supervision for volunteers will be overseen by the line manager or senior member of the department they are working in.

Each department will offer mandatory quarterly group supervisions to its volunteers with a minimum of two one to one support sessions per year. Additional support and advice may be provided outside of the formal sessions as and when necessary.

Whilst group supervisions as well as the one-to-one support will constitute the principle mechanisms for identifying issues and challenges encountered by volunteers, they will not be the sole available resource. We recognise that from time-to-time other issues arise that require discussion and resolution. Volunteers can request additional opportunities for support and discussion if required outside of the timetabled events identified above.

3.7 Rights and responsibilities of Volunteers

In engaging volunteers, we recognise the rights of volunteers to:

- Know what is expected of them and to be given clear information.
- Have clearly specified lines of support and supervision.
- Be shown recognition and appreciation.
- Be insured and have safe working conditions.
- Know what their rights and responsibilities are if something goes wrong.
- Be paid out of pocket expenses.
- Be trained and receive ongoing opportunities for learning and development.
- Be free from discrimination.
- Experience personal development through their participation as volunteers.
- Ask for a reference.
- Be consulted on decisions which affect what they do.
- Withdraw from voluntary work.

We expect that volunteers will:

- Carry out their tasks in a way which corresponds to the aims and values of the charity
- Work within agreed guidelines and remits.
- Be reliable.
- Respect confidentiality and follow our confidentiality policy.
- Attend training and support sessions where agreed.
- Not discriminate against volunteers, staff, users and others associated with Balance in line with the Equalities and Diversity Policy.
- Maintain the good name of Balance (Support) CIO.

3.8 Confidentiality

Volunteers will be bound by the same confidentiality conditions as Balance paid staff. A policy is attached to the volunteer agreement. Training and information will be provided to ensure that volunteers are clear on the charity's information governance and General Data Protection Regulation obligations.

3.9 Safeguarding

Volunteers must observe the charity's safeguarding obligations. Ensuring that they adopt the same responsibilities as paid staff that they actively monitor and report areas of concern when and if they arise. Volunteers will undertake safeguarding training as a mandatory part of their induction.

3.10 Expenses & Insurance

Volunteers will be registered onto the charity's HR management tool Breath HR. All out of pocket expenses will be managed through Breath. Volunteers will not be expected to carry the costs of activities conducted on the charity's behalf. Any claims for expenses will be in line with the charity's expenses policy which will be provided to volunteers as part of their induction.

All volunteer activity is covered by the charity professional indemnity insurance while carrying out agreed duties.

3.11 Health and Safety

All volunteers are covered by the same health and safety policies and provisions as staff. These policies will be made available as part of the induction process, and managers must ensure that volunteers are kept up to date with any changes that impact on their work within the organisation.

3.12 Relations with Paid Staff

Balance is committed to ensuring that volunteers work complements the work of paid staff, and that it will not be used as a substitute for paid work.

We will ensure that paid staff at all levels are clear about the role of volunteers and that good working relationships are fostered between them and volunteers. Appropriate training, support and resources will be provided for those who work alongside volunteers and for those who have a managerial role in relation to them. Volunteers will be given clear information about the roles undertaken by paid staff and of their value to the charity

3.13 References

On the basis of their voluntary work, volunteers will have the right to request a reference.

3.14 Contracts and Service Level Agreements

In entering into contracts or service level agreements, which involve volunteers, we will ensure that:

The role of volunteers is made clear and that satisfactory arrangements are in place for their management and support.

The terms of the contract or service level agreement provide for the necessary resources to involve volunteers.

The impact of volunteering and its benefits are promoted and acknowledged.

3.15 Support for volunteering

In all our relationships with other groups, organisations or partners we will:

- Promote volunteering as an important means of contributing to the building and support of active and sustainable communities.
- Promote good practice in volunteering.
- We will develop relationships with the local volunteering sector (those organisations which support volunteering) on the following principles:
- there is a need for a strategic approach to the development of volunteering locally
- there is a need to support the work of local volunteering development agencies e.g. Volunteer Centres, in providing leadership in developing awareness of and standards of practice in volunteering locally.

3.16 Monitoring & Evaluation

The charity will systemically monitor and evaluate the involvement of volunteers in its activities with reference to this Volunteer Policy. Where complaints are raised against or by volunteers they will be subject to the charity's complaints policy.

Appendix 1