



Volunteers Policy Operations and Resources Policy Statement:

1. Dudley Mind acknowledges the invaluable contribution volunteers make to the organisation. Our service capacity is greatly enhanced by the commitment of individuals who give freely of their time, knowledge, skills and experience.

Dudley Mind recognises that those who volunteer do so for a number of reasons, possess distinct skills, experiences and motivations and wish to volunteer for differing lengths of time.

Volunteers shall be recruited based on the individual's compatibility with the placement respective of race, colour, nationality, religion, ethnic or national origins, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure consistency in the recruitment, development, support and management of volunteers and those involved in the volunteer relationship
- Outline our commitment and responsibilities towards volunteers
- Outline our expectations of volunteers

3. Scope

The policy seeks to ensure a positive experience for all those involved in volunteering and volunteer management throughout the organisation and applies to all Dudley Mind operations and resource functions.

The policy is supported by volunteer documentation for both Volunteers and Volunteer Supervisors.

The policy is supported by relevant Dudley Mind policies and procedures where appropriate and references are made to these documents.

4. Definition of a volunteer

4.1 A volunteer is an individual who wishes to perform duties and tasks at the direction of and on behalf of Dudley Mind. The volunteer enters the relationship with the understanding that there will be no monetary compensation or other compensations other than the reimbursement of receipted expenses incurred in the course of volunteer duties.

4.2 Arrangements such as work placements and student placements will not be defined as constituting a volunteer opportunity and service managers should discuss such arrangements with their manager and the HR officer.

5. Status of the volunteer

5.1 A volunteer is not employed by the organisation and will not be paid a salary. There is no obligation from either party to provide opportunities for placement or for an individual to accept a volunteer placement.

5.2 Volunteers should be treated with respect as a contributor to Dudley Mind's aims.

5.3 Volunteers have the right to approach senior managers to express their views on any aspect of the organisation's work. In the first instance, such an approach should be made through the appropriate team manager.

5.4 Volunteers do not have the same legal status as employees but are owed the same Health and Safety considerations and the organisation must act appropriately to ensure volunteer safety.

5.6 Volunteers are required to adhere to many of the organisation's policies. Each volunteer will be required to sign to confirm that they have read the policies applicable to them and have received a local induction.

5.7 Dudley Mind feels strongly that once a volunteer has made a commitment to the organisation then they should see this through. If a volunteer is unable to attend a shift we request that as much notice as possible is given. If a volunteer commits to undertake a session of work we request that the volunteer see it through. Repeated failure to honour the voluntary commitment may mean that the placement would have to be reviewed.

5.8 If a volunteer placement is closed by their supervisor they have the right to appeal in writing to the operations manager.

6. Scope of volunteer involvement

6.1 Volunteers must seek prior agreement before undertaking any action where they may be seen as acting as a representative of the organisation, unless such an undertaking is agreed with their supervisor in advance. Volunteers should not engage with any external media representatives without prior consent from the Chief Executive.

6.2 Volunteers are obliged to notify the organisation of any potential conflict of interest before placement or when a potential conflict of interest arises.

6.3 Service contracts regularly contain stipulations with regards to the use of volunteers. Service Managers are required to examine contracts for details pertaining to the use of volunteers and plan any volunteer activity accordingly.

7. Enabling individuals to volunteer

7.1 Whenever possible, Dudley Mind will actively encourage individuals with direct experience of mental illness to apply, be placed and be adequately supported in volunteer opportunities. On occasion our service users may wish to apply to be volunteers. This can raise difficult questions around professional boundaries and confidentiality. Many issues will have a bearing on whether or not a service user can become a volunteer such as their continuing social relationships with existing service users and the need to respect confidentiality. Each application will be looked at on a case by case basis.

7.2 Significant care must be taken in recruiting persons under the age of 18 to social care roles, including voluntary opportunities. Considerations must be made to statutory regulations and checks, insurance, increased risk and service contract stipulations. Further guidance can be sought by contacting the HR Officer.

7.3 Asylum seekers and refugees are entitled to volunteer, including individuals

appealing against an asylum decision. Expenses can be reimbursed. Supervisors are advised that there may be difficulties in pursuing criminal records checks and references for individuals in this situation.

7.4 CRB checks must be undertaken on all volunteers (see CRB policy).

7.5 There is no upper age limit for individuals wishing to volunteer. Any issue with regards to fitness to perform or to health and safety requirements should be considered on an individual basis and not linked to age.

7.6 Many benefit claimants are entitled to volunteer. Volunteers in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support or Incapacity Benefit should seek advice from the Benefits Agency prior to undertaking volunteering and those in receipt of Incapacity Benefit should take particular care to emphasise that this is a volunteering opportunity and not 'permitted work' which is categorized differently.

7.7 Volunteers in receipt of benefits are encouraged to declare their voluntary work to the appropriate agency and to keep up to date with any changes that may affect their benefit entitlement.

8. Recruitment and selection to volunteer roles

8.1 We will advertise the volunteer role on our website, at Dove House and through our routine external liaison.

8.2 On acceptance of a volunteer, the community project co-ordinators must receive copies of the completed volunteer application form, role description, signed CRB form (if required) and the HR officer must see original documentation.

8.3 Volunteers wishing to move on from volunteer roles are eligible to apply to vacancies advertised through the internal first system. Volunteers are permitted to apply for all vacancies within Dudley Mind.

9. References and employment checks

9.1 The HR Officer will process CRB clearance (if required), POCA/POVA checks (if necessary) and the community project co-ordinator will request references from two referees. No volunteer shall be permitted to take up placement before reference checks are successful.

9.2 Reference should be made to the CRB disclosure policy when considering new volunteers.

10. Induction and Training

10.1 All volunteers will receive a copy of the Dudley Mind staff Handbook on commencement of placement.

10.2 All volunteers on commencement of placement must receive an organisational induction.

10.3 Volunteers must be assigned a supervisor who will have responsibility for organising a local induction and meeting any immediate and subsequent development needs in accordance with the Dudley Mind training policy.

10.4 It is recommended that the volunteer undertakes training identified in supervision, with a particular emphasis being given to Health and Safety. Supervisors should also consider other ways in which the induction and development needs of volunteers can be

met; for example, coaching from a member of staff, reading, observation, e-learning, workbooks, and discussions with the supervisor, etc. It is not always necessary or appropriate for people to attend courses in order to develop their skills and knowledge. Supervisors should discuss the best way to meet needs with the volunteer and come to an agreement with them based on their preferred way of learning.

10.5 Regrettably resourcing issues mean that Dudley Mind is unable to make any commitment to its volunteers around access to training, however, we will do our best to offer relevant training within budgeted amounts.

10.6 Volunteers should be included in all communication and information that is relevant to their placement. This will help promote team inclusion. All volunteers will have Dudley Mind IT access.

11. Guidance and support meetings and Placement Review

11.1 Each volunteer must be appointed a supervisor who is responsible for the direct management of that volunteer. Volunteers cannot act in the capacity of supervisor for other volunteers.

11.2 Volunteers must have access to regular supervision (see supervision policy and procedure). Volunteer supervisors will have access to those trainings specific to their role.

11.3 All volunteers will be subject to a trial period of one month to see if they are suitable for the service and vice versa. If the volunteer proves unsuitable then their supervisor will attempt to signpost them to alternative volunteering opportunities, for example with DCVS.

12. Re-assignment, resignation and de-registration

12.1 Volunteers may resign at any time. Volunteers are requested to give notice of intention to resign and meet with their supervisor although there is no formal requirement to do so.

12.2 Volunteers are entitled to request that supervisors act in the capacity of referee on their behalf.

12.3 Volunteers should be thanked for the contribution that they have made to the organisation.

12.4 Volunteers must comply with a number of Dudley Mind's policies and procedures. Failure to comply with any relevant policy or procedure may result in the future placement being questioned.

13. Expenses

13.1 Volunteers are permitted to be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the performance of their volunteer duties. There must be no monetary payment of any description other than the reimbursement of expenses.

13.2 Expenses that may be eligible for re-imbusement include; those associated with travel expenses, meals, telephone and postal costs incurred in the performance of voluntary work. Prior agreement with the volunteer supervisor must be sought before an expense claim is made. Volunteer registration is required in order for expenses to be reimbursed.

13.3 We will reimburse travel expenses on a session by session basis, if volunteers have travel cards we will pay the equivalent cheapest day travel costs. If volunteers use their own vehicles they will be paid at the organisational rate of 40p/mile up **(query responsibilities)**

14. Insurance

14.1 Registered Volunteers are included in the insurance cover of Dudley Mind's insurance policies. The insurance policy covers both professional indemnity and personal injury insurance.

14.2 Volunteers must inform their motor insurance company on an annual basis if they are using their own vehicle for activities undertaken on behalf of the organisation.

15. Communication

15.1 All volunteers will be expected to abide by Dudley Mind's confidentiality procedure.

15.2 It is not appropriate for volunteers to have access to all confidential client information, at the same time it is necessary for volunteers to be informed about those issues relevant to their duties, particularly around risk. As volunteers will not work unsupervised it is the responsibility of members of staff to share information on a need to know basis.

15.3 Volunteers will be expected to read their e-mails for updates on organisational issues and personal contacts such as training dates.

15.4 Volunteers cannot be invited to full staff meetings due to issues of confidentiality. However, in order to share common concerns and for the purpose of mutual support we will convene quarterly volunteers meetings.