***TEMPLATE* Volunteering at \*INSERT ORGANISATION\***

*This template is intended as a guide for your organisation to create a suitable culture document for your organisation. It should always be checked to ensure that all systems, activities, or considerations are covered by this document.*

*This document must reflect who you are as an organisation and what you do to manage your services and support those that engage with you. This policy should outline accurately and honestly how you do that. This is purely a recommendation / guideline, make sure it reflects your work.*

*The sections in* **\*RED\*** *are yours to edit to tailor the organisation’s details.* **\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** *is for the name of the group / organisation.*  **\*INSERT ROLES\*** *is for the different categories within (e.g. staff, volunteers, trustees, committee, board)* **\*INSERT POSITION\*** *is the person acting as the lead for the piece of work (e.g. Volunteer Manager, Line Manager etc.)*

Sections in black are usually not for editing. Only edit these if it contradicts an existing system or policy that you already have. Think clearly before you edit those areas.

Sections in orange are discussion points for your organisation. Areas in which a decision will need to be made on the best way of doing it for your organisation and all those involved.

*Sections in italic purple are guidance notes. The purple sections should be deleted and the orange text you are keeping should be coloured black once the document is completed.*

**Volunteering at \*INSERT ORGANISATION\***

##### Introduction

At **\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** we believe that *Put your mission statement or aims and objectives to clearly illustrate your work.*

In line with this mission **\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** wants to involve volunteers to:

* ensure our activities / services meet the needs of our service-users
* ensure that we are sensitive and appropriate to a range of experiences and communities
* provide appropriate skills and perspectives to further our mission
* represent and support the community
* represent us to the community and maintain a positive reputation

Are there any more things you want to add? This list isn’t exhaustive. Try to not make it too long and avoid ‘obvious’ statements such as ‘we couldn’t run without our volunteers’. Make the statements positive, empowering and inspirational!

# **WHAT WE BELIEVE**

1. **Definitions**

The culture we have developed around volunteering is based on experience, and knowledge and influenced by our mission. Here we have collected some ways in which we discuss volunteering at **\*INSERT ORGANISATION\***

Volunteering - We define volunteering as any activity undertaken through choice to provide support or activity to further our mission. Volunteering is unpaid and adds value to our existing offer.

Mission – the reason the organisation / group exists and the beliefs it has. The difference or goals of the group.

Service-users – the people that access the service / the people that benefit from the work of the group. *You can change this term if you use something else like participants, clients.*

Volunteering at **\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** is grounded in the following standards:

* We will endeavour to recruit volunteers that believe in our mission and ethos and then spend time with you finding the mutually beneficial way(s) that you can be involved in.
* We will never introduce volunteers to replace paid staff but to compliment and provide added value to our service
* We will make sure your voice is heard and your position is respected

You may have different elements you want to add. Think of this as promises or the stance that you are making when you are thinking about volunteering.

### HOW WE WORK

The following guidelines deal with practical aspects of volunteering with us.

#### Support

All volunteers will have a named person as their main point of contact. This person is likely to be the lead person for recruitment and support during your time with us. They are the central point to ask questions, raise issues and discuss challenges.

You will have access to a regular meetup to discuss your role which is a chance to talk about anything on your mind, any ideas you have about your role and ways in which we can help make your volunteering more satisfying.

#### Recruitment

**\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** will create and define a strong and appropriate recruitment process to ensure that the activities and needs of the organisation are being met by the contribution of the volunteer. The recruitment process will take into account:

* The ethos and ideology of the organisation
* The tasks involved to further the mission of the organisation
* Being able and resilient to fulfil the role and cope with the pressures
* Having the necessary skills and capacity to deliver without harm to themselves or others
* Safeguarding and other protections of the service user and team members
* The time and availability of volunteer managers / supervisors
* The technical resources of the organisation determine the recruitment tools used.
* Any legal / logistic requirements or criteria that must be met
* The ‘average’ volunteer and how to target recruit to encourage more or to diversify the cohort.

#### Volunteer agreements

You will be given and encouraged to adhere to a volunteer agreement establishing what support and guidance **\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** will provide you. It outlines our pledge to you as a volunteer and also contains some simple expectations we would like you to fulfil. You can discuss your agreement at any time with your named contact.

This document isn’t a contract and isn’t a promise of employment. It is flexible and can be ended at any time, all we ask is that you inform us that you want to end the agreement.

1. **Records**

As part of our data protection measures, we will have clear guidance on the personal information we keep. All our information is kept encrypted or locked away. You can ask to see the information we hold on you at any time and are free to follow our protocol on data removal or amendment. Contact your named person for support on this.

#### Health and safety

As a volunteer, you are included in the **\*INSERT ORGANISATION\***’s Health and Safety Policy and are expected to play a role in making sure everyone is safe. If you want more information on this, talk to your named contact.

1. **Problem Solving**

At **\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** we want to address any issues anyone has efficiently whilst taking them seriously and giving them the respect they deserve.

We will do this by engaging our Problem Solving procedure. The stages of the procedure are:

**Informal Verbal** – a chat which allows the issue to be raised undocumented and a plan created to move forward.

**Formal Verbal** – the traditional ‘warning’ which is recorded and any plans revisited and revised.

**Information Written** – some written guidance and information on a matter, behaviour or issue which isn’t officially recorded.

**Formal Written** – the traditional ‘notice / warning’ letter which outlines the concerns and requests action to be taken

**Dismissal / Part Ways** – a chance for either party to end the volunteer / group to end the relationship and the volunteering ceases.

Note: this procedure can be picked up at any stage of the system and can be used to deal with multiple issues at once.

1. **Equity**

Equity is about giving people the tools and support they need to reach their goals; these will be different for each person. It’s about giving people what they need not treating everyone the same.

We will endeavour to make any necessary adjustments to account for your situation but we can’t always provide what everyone needs through equipment or technology. What we can do is listen and adjust your tasks, hours, and venue (if we can) to make your time with us fulfilling and as stress-free as possible.

We will endeavour to represent the local community as much as we can where appropriate in our volunteer team but understand for multiple reasons this isn’t always feasible.

If at any point in time you feel uncomfortable about any situation, talk to your named contact. If you feel like you cannot talk to your named contact, you can reach out to another member of the leadership team that you trust.

#### Financial Reimbursement / Expenses

We will let you know if we can provide you reimbursement / expenses and will give you the necessary paperwork / system to claim them. We will keep you informed of any changes in the system.

#### Training

The training you will receive will depend on the role you are performing and the tasks you will be performing. We will cover safety protocols and ways to protect yourself and others when appropriate. You may have to undergo training which is mandatory for volunteering with us. We will explain when and why were relevant. We expect you to attend all training offered and put the learning into practice to ensure the smooth running of the organisation and to continue the protection of our insurance and other legalities.

1. **Open Door**

You don’t have to wait until a ‘meetup’ to share any concerns you have or ways in which your situation has changed and might affect your volunteering. You can arrange a chat at any time with your named contact, never feel that you have no one to talk to.

#### The Volunteer’s Voice

Volunteers will have opportunities to express their views about matters concerning **\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** and its work.

#### Insurance

All volunteers are included in **\*INSERT ORGANISATION\***’s insurance policies whilst they are part of our activities and delivering the service. If you want more information on this, talk to your named contact.

1. **Equipment**

At times you may be asked to use the equipment owned by the group to deliver your tasks and it is important that you use this equipment only for group work and not for personal activities.

It may be necessary to ask you to use your equipment (especially if it’s a specialist). This is a choice and you don’t have to. Remember that using your equipment is at your own risk.

1. **Personal Belongings**

Whilst every care will be taken to create a safe environment, **\*INSERT ORGANISATION\*** is not responsible for any loss or damage to personal belongings whilst you volunteer with us.

1. **Representation**

Part of your volunteering when you are part of a service or when you are talking about it to friends on family is about giving a positive representation of the service-user, the group and the people connected to it. Also, consider your social media presence and we would very much appreciate you raising any concerns you have about our reputation to us, and we can make a call as to how we react. Please do not react on our behalf unless you have our position.

If you have an issue and you feel you cannot present the organisation effectively and appropriately, talk to your named contact.

#### Confidentiality

Confidentiality is about protecting people’s identity, issues, challenges and circumstances from becoming common knowledge and gossip. It’s about being sensitive to people’s privacy. You may see and hear information which is sensitive and is part of a challenging situation and it is important to know what to pass and who to pass on any information to within the organisation.

It is also important to maintain this attitude when you are not volunteering and not discuss cases or situations with anyone outside the organisation, regardless of who they are.

There are other elements you can add to explain some of the practical elements of volunteering and make them specific to your group. These may seem odd, but they are things that make a big difference in how welcome, supported and integrated they feel. Things you can include:

* Car Parking
* Tea / Coffee / Food
* Storage / Lockers for belongings
* Reward and Recognition
* Dress Code
* Breaks

You may also wish to include a code of conduct in this document which is a list of rules and guidance that governs behaviour. This can also be a separate document if you need it to be.

1. **Ending your volunteering**

We understand that there are many reasons that you may want to end your volunteering. If it’s because of something we’ve done or an experience you’ve had then we would be more than happy to talk about it and hopefully solve the issue. If you feel that the issue is unsolvable or you have another reason for leaving, we would appreciate you telling us you are leaving and we can complete the necessary ending procedures.

**DISCLAIMER**

**This template document is produced by Warrington Voluntary Action for you to adapt to suit the needs of your organisation. Please note that we do not accept any liability for how it is used.**