

Volunteer Policy

Introduction

Volunteers at One25 contribute their skills, personality and experiences to befriend, support and advise to women involved in Bristol's street based sex industry. One25 believes that volunteers can make a positive difference to the organisation, the community and themselves. As a local voluntary sector organisation, we are committed to enabling and encouraging this process. We understand that people volunteer for many reasons and we value their contribution, commitment and participation. Their involvement complements the work our organisation undertakes, but cannot replace the work of paid staff members.

We aim to ensure that volunteers are as involved as possible in the part of the organisation which is relevant to their role. Volunteers and/or volunteer representatives are invited to join relevant staff team meetings, and paid staff are expected to work positively and inclusively with volunteers in their teams.

We will allocate adequate resources to enable volunteer involvement in our organisation, but the level of this depends on available funding and other work commitments and priorities. We will aim to ensure that no volunteer is out of pocket as a result of their volunteering with One25.

Recruitment

One25 recruits volunteers from a diverse range of backgrounds that reflect the makeup of the local community, and of service users within One25. We are committed to ensuring that volunteering opportunities are open to everyone and that our recruitment process is fair and transparent at all stages. We particularly value the personal experience that some of our volunteers have around issues of addiction but will require that volunteers must have been free from addiction to illegal substances and/or alcohol for two years prior to volunteering for One25. In addition we require that volunteers must have a minimum of two years without accessing support from any relevant addictions services (excluding recovery groups such as NA, AA or counselling) prior to volunteering.

Every volunteering opportunity will be accompanied by a clear volunteer role description, and potential volunteers' suitability for the role will be decided in relation to this.

We will use appropriate means to advertise for volunteers locally or within One25, which take into account the principles of our Equalities & Diversity Policy. Potential volunteers will be asked to complete an application form, with help given if necessary. Potential volunteers will be invited to have an informal interview with the appropriate person according to the role, and if this is successful, two references will be taken up.

For some volunteer roles, successful completion of core training is a requirement of recruitment. One25 may make a decision not to recruit volunteers or to ask an existing volunteer to cease volunteering at One25 if they work (paid or unpaid) with One25 service users in a professional environment where this is likely to create a conflict of interest. One25 requests that potential and existing volunteers inform One25 if this situation arises in order that One25 is able to assess the situation and make an informed decision.

All volunteers providing support to vulnerable adults in their role will be required to provide an enhanced DBS check.

Induction and Training

All volunteers will receive a copy of the volunteer handbook relevant to their position. The handbook contains a summary of relevant information from the Volunteer Policy, and useful information specific to each role.

There will be a compulsory induction prepared and delivered by the appropriate person to the volunteer role. This will include:

- The role of the volunteer
- Communicating effectively with service users
- Safeguarding
- Boundaries
- Understanding addiction
- A list of relevant staff and volunteers
- Familiarisation with the premises and an outline of all projects and service provision
- Copies of all relevant policies, including this Volunteer Policy.
- Essential procedures i.e. timekeeping, record keeping, claiming expenses etc.
- Details of induction training and One25s modular training course
- Other information as appropriate

One25 is committed to providing volunteers with training which will enhance and widen their skills, and which will benefit both the individuals and One25. Training will be tailored according to the volunteer role.

Members of staff should be aware of the need to continually assess the training needs of a volunteer and should support volunteers to obtain relevant qualifications as well as update

their skills. It should be noted that the additional training of volunteers will depend on appropriate and available resources.

Where possible One25 will provide opportunities and support volunteers to achieve relevant awards and or recognition for their demonstrated voluntary commitment.

Expenses

We value our volunteers and want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. Out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed, including refreshments and travel expenses for the cheapest reasonable form of public transport for their journey to/from their volunteering, and any travel incurred while they are volunteering.

We accept that some volunteers may have specific mobility needs, or exceptional circumstances, and may therefore need to use a private vehicle or taxi. This must be agreed in advance with the Volunteer Manager. Car parking fees to the value of the time required to complete the voluntary activity will be reimbursed with receipts. Mileage must be claimed using the relevant form which can be obtained from the Volunteer Manager.

Volunteers working a minimum of five hours per day will be able to claim expenses for lunch or lunch will be provided. Rates payable for lunch allowance are available from the Volunteer Manager.

One25 strives to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement but is only able to reimburse childcare and caring expenses in exceptional circumstances. Any such circumstances will need to be agreed on a case-by-case basis with the Volunteer Manager. Where caring expenses are agreed, the volunteer will be responsible for choosing and paying the carer. It is up to the volunteer who they choose to use for caring, but it is the carers responsibility to ensure that they are declaring their earnings or paying tax and National Insurance. One25 will reimburse caring expenses on production of a receipt. One25 will not pay carers directly.

All reimbursement of volunteer expenses must be agreed in advance with the Volunteer Manager. In order to claim expenses, a Volunteer Expenses form must be completed and given to the Volunteer Manager. Except in the case of mileage claims, volunteers must keep receipts of all expenses and attach these to the expenses claim form. Volunteers will then be asked to sign the Expenses Form to say that they have received the money. Expenses will be reimbursed as quickly as possible to minimise inconvenience to volunteers.

Amounts over £20 will normally be reimbursed by cheque or electronic transfer into the volunteer's bank account.

Volunteers who are receiving benefits should seek advice as to their rights and obligations to engage in voluntary work and any impact that this may have on their benefits. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to inform the benefit office about their commitment to volunteering, although One25 would be happy to write to the benefits office if necessary to confirm that the volunteer is only receiving out of pocket expenses.

Volunteers should ensure that they are clear as to what they can and cannot claim for, as expenses will not be reimbursed if they do not fall within this policy or have not been agreed with the Volunteer manager.

Supervision and Support

All office based volunteers will receive regular supervision.

All front line volunteers will be receive pre and post shift briefings / debriefings and offered regular supervision meetings. In addition, all outreach volunteers will be assigned to a Volunteer Support Group which will meet periodically, led by an experienced team leader who will regularly speak / meet with them to review their support and training needs.

Team Leaders on out of hours outreach can also call the "On Call" staff member for support or advice for any questions or concerns they have relating to incidents or issues arising while they are on outreach.

Remote Working

All work carried out by office volunteers will be at One25's premises and never remotely.

Insurance

The organisation has a valid insurance policy which volunteers are welcome to see on request.

All volunteers are covered by One25's insurance policy whilst they are on One25 premises, or engaged in agreed work as a volunteer for one of the projects or off-site.

While it is not envisaged that volunteers would be asked to use their private motor vehicles for carrying out their volunteer tasks, if the need arises and by agreement with the Volunteer Manager, the volunteer should inform their motor insurance company that they are using their car in the act of volunteering. If the insurance company makes a charge for change of use, then the volunteer may be able to claim any reasonable charge back as expenses. In the event that a volunteer does use their car, they should be aware that any damages to parties directly involved, and to third parties or third party property will be settled between the volunteer's own insurance policy, and the insured party of any other vehicles involved.

One25 has full employee and public liability insurance. One25 is not able to provide insurance relating to private motor vehicles as this must be in the vehicles owner's name.

Health & Safety

A copy of the complete Health and Safety policy is held as a separate document, and is available on request.

Problem Solving Procedures

The relationship between the organisation and its volunteers is entirely voluntary and does not imply any contract. However, it is important that the organisation is able to maintain its agreed standards of service to its service users, and it is also important that volunteers should enjoy making their contribution to this service.

If a volunteer is dissatisfied with any aspect of their duties they should:

1. Initially explain the dissatisfaction to their Team Leader
2. If that does not resolve the concern then a meeting with the Volunteer Manager or Services Manager will be held.
3. If, after this, the volunteer's dissatisfaction remains unresolved, and we are unable to resolve this, then it would be inappropriate for the volunteer to continue in their voluntary role. They will be informed of this in writing within two weeks of their meeting with the Volunteer Manager.
4. If the volunteer feels unable to have the initial discussion with their Team Leader or they are a Team leader, they can contact the Volunteer or Services Manager directly.

At all times volunteers will be freely able to state their case, and can have a friend to accompany them.

If an individual's role as a volunteer does not meet with the organisations' standards, the situation will be managed in the following way:

Serious Issues

There are certain actions which may be deemed serious enough to justify asking a volunteer to cease volunteering for One25 immediately until the concern has been resolved to One25's satisfaction. These are actions that are deemed to threaten One25s ability to maintain our agreed standards of service to its service users, or may cause a threat to the safety of the volunteer concerned, other volunteers, employees or services users.

The following are examples of such actions (the list is not complete or exhaustive):

- Refusal to accept and act on reasonable instructions from a member of staff or a volunteer team leader
- Serious negligence that could or does result in unacceptable loss, damage or injury

- Fighting, assault or threatening / bullying behaviour and / or any violent act
- Theft, fraud or any dishonesty involving One25, its volunteers, employees, service users or authorised visitors or attempts to commit such offences
- Deliberate or reckless damage to the property of One25, its volunteers, its employees, service users or authorised visitors
- Being unfit to volunteer through use of alcohol, illegal drugs or other prohibited substances.

Depending on the nature of the issue, the volunteer will be invited to a meeting with the Volunteer or Services Manager who will explain the organisations concerns. If at this meeting the volunteer cannot refute or explain her actions to the Volunteer or Services Manager 's satisfaction, and no agreement can be reached as to how the volunteer can reach the standards required by One25 the volunteer will immediately be asked to stop volunteering for One25. We would confirm this decision in writing, with a full explanation of the reasons behind the decision.

For less serious issues

1. Depending on the nature of the issue the volunteer will be invited to a meeting with the Volunteer or Services Manager who will explain the organisations concerns.
2. If this does not resolve the concern within an agreed time period, then a further meeting with the Volunteer or Services Manager will be convened and a review period agreed.
3. If the person's volunteering still does not meet with our standards by the end of the agreed review period then we shall have to stop using their services. We would confirm this decision in writing, with a full explanation of the reasons behind the decision.

At all times volunteers will be freely able to state their case, and can have a friend to accompany them.

Complaints Procedures for Volunteers

If a volunteer has a complaint about another volunteer or any staff member, they should refer to One25's Complaints Policy.

Ending the Volunteer Agreement

Apart from ending a volunteer agreement due to incompetence, inappropriate behaviour or unsatisfactory performance, volunteers should provide adequate notice for finishing their volunteering at One25 if they have agreed duties on the current rota.

Volunteers who leave for any reason will be invited to an exit interview or asked to complete an exit questionnaire. This procedure is designed to help improve the support given to volunteers and to record their achievements and provide statistical information.

References

One25 will provide a reference after the volunteer has been actively involved with the organisation for three months.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff and will be provided with a copy of the confidentiality policy.

Personal details of staff, volunteers and service users are treated in the strictest confidence. Information of a confidential nature should not be disclosed to anyone outside One25, without prior permission from the Service Manager, and explicit consent of the individual concerned, except in the circumstances set out in the policy.

For more information on anything mentioned in the Volunteer Policy, volunteers can refer to the Volunteer Manager.

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