

**VOLUNTEER POLICY**



**Charity number 1133669**

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This document provides a framework of good practice for Brighter Living Partnership staff involved in the placement and use of volunteers. The organisation recognises the importance of volunteers and hopes to provide positive and worthwhile volunteer placements that will be of benefit to the volunteer, staff and projects delivered by the Brighter Living Partnership.

1.2 The Brighter Living Partnership will positively promote the work of volunteers both internally and externally.

1.3 The Brighter Living Partnership exists to try and reduce health inequalities across Sefton.

Brighter Living Partnership oppose discrimination of the grounds of age, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, health related reasons and all forms of discrimination direct or indirect which restricts or hinders the promotion of equal opportunities.

1.4 For the purpose of this document, a volunteer is a member of the public who spends time engaged within activities of the Brighter Living Partnership, with the intention to act on behalf of and to the benefit of the local community, without concern for financial gain.

1.5 Volunteers are not employees and most employment rights are not applicable. However, the policies relating to volunteers should be the same as those relating to paid staff for example in relation to Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety and Confidentiality. Volunteers will be required to comply with all appropriate policies.

1.6 The volunteer appointment is at the sole discretion of the Brighter Living Partnership and a volunteer agreement can be terminated at any time at the discretion of the paid worker following discussion with their line manager who may consult the board of trustees and/or HR manager of Sefton CVS.

**2. PURPOSE**

2.1 Thepurpose of this document is:

1. To ensure recognition of the important role of volunteers within the Brighter Living Partnership and the benefits that volunteering can bring to the general community.
2. To ensure staff recruiting/utilising volunteers in their work provide a positive and worthwhile opportunity that will be of benefit to their projects and volunteers.
3. To give a cohesive and consistent set of guidelines to ensure that volunteers are fully supported during their volunteer work.
4. To ensure that the Brighter Living Partnership recognised standards of good practice in recruiting, training, supporting and rewarding volunteers.
	* **Choice:** Volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual. Any encouragement to become involved in volunteering should not result in any form of coercion or compulsion. Freedom to volunteer implies freedom not to become involved.
	* **Diversity:** Volunteering should be open to all, no matter what their background, age, belief/faith, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation, etc. Inclusiveness can build bridges, helping a diversity of people to feel usefully involved. Social exclusion barriers can be overcome by skills, experience, confidence and contacts gained while helping others. Equal opportunities principles are basic to supporting diversity.
	* **Reciprocity**: Volunteers offer their contribution unwaged but should benefit in other ways in return for their contribution to wider social objectives.
	* **Recognition**: Explicit recognition of the value of what volunteers contribute to the organisation, to the community, to the social economy and to the wider social objectives, is fundamental to a fair relationship between volunteers, organisations and government policy and practice.

**3. SCOPE**

3.1 This policy applies to all Brighter Living Partnership employees and volunteers. Volunteers should receive a copy of the volunteer handbook.

**4. DUTIES**

4.1 The Board of Trustees will support the process in relation to recruitment, placement and management of volunteers in line with this policy.

4.2 The manager within the placement area will provide local induction and support to the volunteer.

**5. VOLUNTEER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

5.1 Brighter Living Partnership recognises and supports the rights and responsibilities of volunteers, including:

1. Placements that are based on their availability, skills and abilities, needs and areas of interest.
2. To be treated and valued as a team member.
3. Support in all aspects of an individual’s voluntary work, where required, from the appropriate manager who will support the volunteer in their assigned project.
4. Having clear information about the role of volunteers within Sefton CVS & Volunteer Centre Sefton and the Volunteer Handbook for the project the volunteer is working with.
5. To receive relevant training to enable them to carry out their duties effectively and efficiently.
6. To be covered by the Brighter Living Partnerships insurance providing that they are working in accordance within the relevant policies of the organisation.

5.2 Volunteer responsibilities include:

1. Showing commitment and capability to the area of work/project in which they are involved.
2. Complying with the organisations policies and attend training where appropriate. To make every effort, where necessary, to be available for training to enable them to carry out their tasks. All volunteers must complete the relevant induction programme.
3. Treating all staff and other volunteers with dignity and respect.
4. Being bound by duty of confidence to protect person identifiable information that they may come into contact with during the course of their volunteering role as a requirement within the Data Protection Act 1998. Volunteers are obliged to keep any person identifiable information of staff/others, strictly confidential.
5. When volunteers use their own vehicle they must provide evidence of relevant insurance and a driving licence to their manager/supervisor prior to using the vehicle in connection with their volunteer role. Brighter Living will reimburse any volunteer who is asked to use their vehicle on behalf of the organisation.

5.3 Brighter Living Partnership reserves the right to terminate the volunteer relationship at any time without a period of notice.

**6. ROLE AND RECRUITMENT**

**6.1 Defining the role**

6.1.1 Volunteers are an additional resource and are not intended to replace paid staff but to complement and/or enhance the work of the Brighter Living Partnership.

6.1.2 A role description should be drawn up by the project that requires the volunteer. This should clarify expectations, set out lines of managerial support and accountability and, among other things, make it clear whether the role is time limited or on-going. Role descriptions should be viewed as flexible. Role descriptions are found within the volunteer handbook.

**6.2 Equality and diversity**

The Brighter Living Partnership is committed to equality diversity in all areas of its work and to developing and maintaining an organisation in which different areas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are valued. The same equal opportunities policy, which apply to the recruitment of paid members of staff, apply for volunteers.

**6.3 Recruitment process**

6.3.1 It is the responsibility of projects to develop a volunteer role description based upon their project need. This should be reviewed regularly and discussed with their line manager on a regular basis.

6.3.2 Brighter Living Partnership may use a range of alternatives to conventional advertising when recruiting volunteers. Options for consideration include the Volunteer Centre Do-It website, targeted posters or leaflets and direct approaches to groups from whom a volunteer representative is sought once the need has been identified.

6.3.3 Potential volunteers will be asked to contact the recruiting project manager in the first instance. If they are suitable for the role, they must complete a volunteer application form and follow the recruitment procedure.

6.3.4 It will be normal procedure to take up two references for all volunteers (flexible to the project manager). In addition a DBS check may be required (at no cost to the applicant) where a volunteer has contact, works with children, vulnerable adults or young people.

**6.4 Appointment process**

6.4.1 A volunteer will not be able to undertake duties until satisfactory clearance has been received by the manager.

6.4.2 Confidential information about the volunteer will be stored in line with the Data Protection Act and shared between the HR. This is not a contract. Volunteers will also receive a copy of the Volunteer Handbook.

6.4.3 Volunteers will be issued with personal identification (ID) badges if deemed appropriate. These badges need to be returned if a volunteer resigns.

**6.5 Induction and training**

6.5.1 Our commitment to the volunteer is to provide training for the allocated work area, if appropriate. Volunteers are usually supervised at all times and will be supporting the paid worker.

6.5.2 The manager in the allocated project will also be responsible for the volunteer’s on-going training needs and the level or type of training will depend on the duties being undertaken and interests of the volunteer in relation to their role. Managers should discuss with the volunteer any training considered useful for the post.

**6.6 Expenses and reimbursements**

6.6.1 Volunteers will be paid travel expenses and, in agreed circumstances, reasonable out of pocket expenses.

6.6.2 Claims for reimbursement of expenses will be made on the Expenses Claim Form. Forms will then be passed to the manager to issue payment. Volunteer expenses include:

1. Travel expenses, including travel between home and their place of volunteering. Car mileage is paid at public transport rates.
2. The Brighter Living Partnership does **not** reimburse taxi fares for regular volunteering duties. However, in exceptional circumstances, they may be paid e.g. a wheelchair user is unable to use public transport. This would need approval from the manager before proceeding.
3. Reasonable car parking costs
4. Other expenses should be agreed in advance with the paid worker/line manager of the project

6.6.3 Expenses must normally be claimed monthly and, where applicable, receipts should be attached to the claim forms. Further information is found in the volunteer handbook.

**7. SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION**

7.1 The project worker for each project will offer support for volunteers. This is a vital element for a happy and productive placement. Managers must ensure volunteers are supervised to an appropriate level and are aware of whom to approach within the organisation for appropriate advice and guidance if needed.

7.2 The volunteer’s key source of advice, information and support should be the line manager. If the volunteer is unable to attend on their usual designated day they should in the first instance inform the manager.

7.3 Volunteers should be given the opportunity to network with each other in order to offer mutual support in their roles and share experiences.

7.4 Every effort will be made to provide both interesting and rewarding voluntary work. If there are any concerns about a volunteer’s performance or behaviour, these should be discussed at the earliest opportunity in an informal meeting. If the issue cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of both parties, the volunteering arrangement should be terminated in writing.

7.5 At the end of a time limited volunteering project, or when a volunteer leaves for any other reason, the Manager should ensure that there is an opportunity to review and discuss the volunteer’s experiences during the placement.

7.6 The Brighter Living Partnership will act as a reference for any of our volunteers should they wish to seek volunteering and/or employment elsewhere.

**8. HEALTH AND SAFETY PRINCIPLES**

8.1 The Brighter Living Partnership has the same responsibility for volunteers’ safety as that of paid employees. Volunteers must exercise the same duty of care to themselves and others as paid staff. Volunteers must comply with the organisations health and safety policies and procedures.

8.2 The area of placement has a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that volunteers are not exposed to risks to their health and safety.

8.3 The responsibilities, tasks and rights of volunteers must be made clear at the beginning of their placement in order that no misunderstandings arise at a later date

8.4 All volunteers must adhere to the health and safety guidelines issued in the volunteer’s handbook.

8.5 Volunteers must exercise care when carrying out tasks and not put themselves or others at risk.

8.6 It is the responsibility of the manager of the project recruiting volunteers to ensure volunteers are informed of the relevant policies, these are found within the volunteer handbook.