



| | |
|---|------------------|
| River House Trust | |
| Volunteering Policy | |
| Filename: | Volunteering.doc |
| Adopted by the Board of Trustees to take effect from (date): | 21/8/19 |
| Next due for review on (date): | August 2021 |

1. Purpose of Policy

This policy sets out the broad principles governing the involvement of volunteers within River House. It aims to highlight the centrality of volunteers to our mission and ensure that all volunteers are treated with consideration and respect. The policy details our intention to be fair, to observe the law and to develop good practice.

2. Role of Volunteers

2.1 Definition: A volunteer is a person who undertakes to contribute their time and efforts *as a gift* to further the Mission and of River House.

2.2 The personal motivation of a volunteer (e.g. developing skills, gaining experience etc.) does not imply any contractual obligation on the part of River House.

2.3 For the purposes of this document volunteering includes work experience placements.

2.4 We recognise the unique contribution volunteers make as part of River House. By involving volunteers we are able to offer wider ranging and more flexible services to people living with HIV; where volunteers are themselves living with HIV, even better.

2.5 Volunteers currently undertake an assortment of roles. These include Complementary and Psycho Therapists, Trustee, Receptionist, Catering & Hospitality, Foodbank operations, Walk & Social Group leaders.

2.6 Each volunteer should, where possible, operate within a distinct area of our work or have identifiable tasks, to provide a worthwhile and satisfying experience.

2.7 Volunteers will not be asked to undertake tasks which result in a permanent decrease in paid work at River House or any other agency. Volunteers will not be used in periods of industrial action to do the work of paid staff.

2.8 Each volunteer will be offered individual support and supervision by the member of staff identified as immediately responsible for the work they do. Other members of staff will provide additional support as required. Volunteers will be expected to keep in regular contact with their “contact worker” about their current tasks and activities.

2.9 We will be open to new ways of involving volunteers.



3. River House intentions towards volunteers.

3.1 It is our intention, without entering into a contractual agreement and within resources available, to offer training and ongoing support needed by volunteers to carry out their assigned tasks.

3.2 Volunteers can expect full health and safety measures at River House. Volunteers will not be placed in situations which put their health and safety, or that of others at risk. Volunteers are expected to observe our Health and Safety Policy.

3.3 Volunteers will be reimbursed for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses according to our policy.

4. Equal Opportunities.

4.1 We actively oppose all forms of oppression and discrimination. Volunteers are expected to operate within our Equal Opportunities Policy.

4.2 The minimum age for volunteering with us is 18. There is no upper age limit.

5. Expectations.

5.1 Volunteers can expect:

- To be treated with fairness and respect;
- To be recognised as making a unique contribution;
- To have responsibility for a distinct area of work or identifiable tasks;
- To have the opportunity to be regularly involved in internal and external training covering various aspects of working in the context of HIV;
- To be reimbursed for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses;
- To have safe and healthy volunteering conditions.

5.2 We expect volunteers:

- To treat information given while volunteering here as confidential;
- To operate within our policies and procedures;
- To be reliable, trustworthy and co-operative;
- To participate in relevant training opportunities;
- To attend support meetings with the relevant member of staff;
- To follow the correct procedure involving complaints, grievances and disciplinary matters.

6. Planning & Recruitment.

6.1 Some volunteers will approach us to offer their specialist skills. More regularly recruitment of volunteers should be in response to identified need and to follow a plan

6.2 The Volunteer Recruitment Plan should include:

- Evidence of the need for volunteers and an estimate of the number required;
- Volunteer task list and specification;



Particular skills and experience required for the tasks;
What training will be needed;
Indication of volunteer expenses;
Details of support and supervision to be made available;
Benefits of the particular volunteering role, e.g. gaining new skills, making new friends etc;
Proposed advertising methods.

6.3 This plan should be considered and discussed within the staff team.

6.4 Once the plan has been agreed by relevant members of staff advertising can take place. Advertising methods should take into account the need to recruit according to our peer support ethos and Equal Opportunities Policy.

6.6 Recruitment information should always highlight a named contact.

7. Selection.

7.1 Once an enquiry is made further information will be sent promptly.

7.2 This should include:

Cover Letter;
Our Mission Statement and Strategic Goals;
Details of the specific role(s) advertised;
Details of the line manager and further contacts;
An application form;
Any further information as necessary.

7.3 Initial responses to volunteer recruitment should be collated by the named contact.

8. Interviews.

8.1 All applicants will be interviewed by the named contact. Interviews will be private and informal, and should be flexible regarding time and date. The applicant should be informed of the approximate length of the interview. The main purpose of the interview is to determine the skills, knowledge and interests of the applicant. It is also an opportunity for them to ask questions. It is important at this stage to assess the commitment of the volunteer, their motivation for volunteering and their understanding of the volunteer's relationship with River House as based on the gift of their time, not a contractual agreement.

8.2 Volunteers should be considered for their potential to contribute to our work. Training is intended to address specific knowledge and skills. The key question is whether the volunteer is in a position to benefit adequately from the training on offer and reach the skills level indicated in the role specification.

8.3 At the end of the interview, the interviewer should agree the next stage, e.g. taking up references and when the volunteer will next be contacted.



9. Acceptance.

After suitable references and, if necessary, DBS clearance have been received, a volunteer can be accepted. The volunteer should be contacted by email or in writing with details of induction and training.

10. Declining an offer of volunteer support.

The reasons for declining an offer of volunteer support should always be given so the volunteer has the chance to reply. An email or letter should always be sent thanking a volunteer for taking an interest in us.

11. Induction.

11.1 Volunteers should receive an Induction Pack containing:

- Role description;
- Volunteer Handbook, which must be signed and constitutes Volunteer Agreement;
- Code of Conduct, to be signed;
- Confidentiality Policy to be signed;
- Equal Opportunities Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Volunteer Expenses Policy;
- Protection of Vulnerable Adults Policy
- Complaint solving procedure;
- Induction checklist; Copies of current River House print materials;
- HSE Basic First Aid leaflet; HSE working with VDUs leaflet, if relevant to role.

11.2 All volunteers should follow the same core induction:

The designated contact worker is responsible for the induction of a volunteer and should be especially available in the first few weeks. The volunteer should be introduced to other members of staff, be shown around the building and made aware of:

- Toilets;
- Fire exits, Extinguishers and safety procedures;
- Location of the First Aid box and the name of First Aiders;
- Coffee / tea making facilities.

11.3 Where relevant volunteers should be introduced to the monitoring and evaluation procedures for the area of our work they will be involved in.

12. Training.

12.1 All volunteers will have a conversation with their names contact about training need relevant to their role.

12.3 Volunteer files will have details of all training undertaken by individuals.



13. Recognition.

13.1 Saying “thanks” is the most important form of recognition. Recognising the contribution and potential of volunteers is vital to giving them roles that they will find challenging and rewarding. The personal development of volunteers is integral in our volunteer involvement goal.

13.2 Volunteer recognition events should be built into the Year Plan. Appropriate “end of service gestures” should be made as an encouragement to all volunteers.

13.3 Individual volunteer files should show evidence of phone calls, cards, letters etc thanking and encouraging volunteers on an individual basis. All staff should take initiative in this area, especially designated contact workers.

14. Insurance.

Volunteers are covered by Public Liability insurance and Personal Indemnity insurance taken out by River House.

15. Expenses.

Our policy on volunteer expenses seeks to ensure that no volunteer is out of pocket as a result of their volunteering with us.

16. Health & Safety.

16.1 We are concerned to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all volunteers. Our Health and Safety Policy covers volunteers.

16.2 Our director is responsible for co-ordinating the Health and Safety Policy in relation to staff, visitors and volunteers.

16.4 Suitable and sufficient assessments of risks that affect any staff and volunteers are carried out. Where necessary records of these risk assessments are maintained, reviewed and periodically monitored.

17. Confidentiality.

17.1 Volunteers should be made aware that information they may come across throughout their time at River House must be treated with as confidential. This includes any information regarding us, our business and the day to day running of the organisation.

17.2 Records of volunteers are kept in appropriate files and volunteers are able to access their own personal files by arrangement with office staff.

18. Absence and Holidays / Time Off.

Volunteers should notify their contact worker should they be taking a period of annual leave. Absence due to sickness or any other reason should be notified to appropriate staff, as soon as possible, in order for alternative arrangements to be made.



19. Complaints, Grievances, & Disciplinary Procedures.

19.1 We intend to treat all volunteers fairly.

19.2 Complaints by a volunteer against River House or a member of staff will be dealt with according to our Grievance and Problem Solving Policies and Procedures.

19.3 Any complaint against a volunteer, either by a service user or by a member of staff will be dealt with according to our Complaints Procedures.

19.4 We reserve the right to end the service of any volunteer without notice.

20. Comments & Suggestions.

20.1 Volunteers should be encouraged to make comments and suggestions regularly. These should always be responded to. Reasons should be given if suggestions are not implemented.

21. Resignation.

21.1 Volunteers will be encouraged to notify us of their reasons for stopping voluntary work.

21.2 The contact worker should meet with the volunteer to thank them for their service and hear in person any comments they have to make.