


Volunteer Policy		
Date Approved: 24/10/24	Authorised by: Sylvia Vincent	
Review Date: 24/10/25	Signed: S Vincent	
Page no: 1	Position: Trustee	

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Introduction

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in The Avon Centre (hereinafter referred to as 'The Avon Centre'). It is of relevance to all within The Avon Centre, including volunteers, staff, members, and those elected or appointed to positions of responsibility.


This policy is endorsed by The Board of Trustees of the The Avon Centre and will be reviewed annually, to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of the The Avon Centre and its volunteers.

Commitment

The Avon Centre acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways, that their contribution is unique and that volunteering can benefit users of services, staff, local communities and the volunteers themselves.

The Avon Centre values the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering.

The Avon Centre recognises its responsibility to arrange its volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

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Definition

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship as well as an important component of democracy. Volunteers are people who are, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community.

Statement of values and principles

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by The Avon Centre and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment. The role of volunteers complements but does not replace the role of paid staff.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

Volunteers will not be used during times of industrial action to do the work of paid staff.

The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise The Avon Centre cannot be compelled to provide either regular tasks, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what The Avon Centre expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of The Avon Centre.

Volunteer Co-ordination


All volunteers will have a nominated member of staff or volunteer to offer guidance and advice to help the volunteer carry out tasks effectively. Volunteers will be informed of who to contact to receive support and supervision.

The nominated post holder with overall responsibility for the development of voluntary activities within The Avon Centre is The Senior Manager. This person is responsible for the management and welfare of The Avon Centre's volunteers.

Recruitment and selection

The Avon Centre is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs or offending background that does not create a risk to vulnerable groups including children. The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out agreed tasks. TAC has set a lower age limit of fourteen years for volunteers. This will safeguard the safety and wellbeing of young people. There is no upper age limit. Information about the volunteer not relevant to the performance of the volunteering tasks concerned will be disregarded by The Avon Centre in terms of recruitment and selection.

Volunteering opportunities will be widely promoted in ways that makes them accessible to all members of the community.

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Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task will either be offered alternative voluntary involvement with The Avon Centre or referred to the nearest Volunteer Centre.

All volunteers will be asked to produce two references and will be invited to attend an informal interview. The Avon Centre works with vulnerable individuals and all volunteers are subject to our safer recruitment procedures carried out including asking a volunteer to undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check. More detailed information will be made available specific to legislative requirements and to the particular volunteer position.

Volunteers will have a clear and concise task description, which will be subsequently reviewed every year. The task description will be prepared in conjunction with the volunteer and the designated person referred to above.

New volunteers will be properly inducted into The Avon Centre.

Volunteers will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform with confidence.

Training & Development

All volunteers will be made aware of and have access to all The Avon Centre's relevant policies, including those relating to volunteering, health & safety, safeguarding vulnerable groups and equal opportunities.


The development of training and support for volunteers is a high priority for The Avon Centre in order to equip them with the necessary information and skills to carry out their tasks. It will be the responsibility of the designated person referred to above to see that this training is provided. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to attend relevant training.

Training in the supervision of volunteers will be provided for all those who have direct responsibility for volunteers.

Support, Supervision and Recognition

Volunteers will have a named person to whom they can take their volunteering concerns and seek guidance and support.

Volunteers will have access to regular support and supervision. This will enable both the volunteer and the supervisor to identify, monitor and evaluate the volunteer's involvement, recognise achievements and identify individual training needs, including that relevant to their particular volunteering role and to their wider personal development. The frequency, duration and format of these sessions will be negotiated between the volunteer and the designated officer referred to above.

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Expenses

The Avon Centre's volunteers are able to claim reasonable out of pocket expenses, subject to the production of receipts as evidence of the expenditure. What can be reclaimed from The Avon Centre and the calculation of expenses will be explained to the volunteer before they start any activity likely to give rise to expenses. Any expenses claimed by volunteers **must** have been pre-approved or requested by the Centre.

The Avon Centre has a consistent approach to the reimbursement of expenses which are the same for volunteers, staff, etc. and are as approved by the Inland Revenue.

It is the responsibility of the designated person referred to above to make volunteers aware of the procedure for the reimbursement of expenses.

Insurance

The Avon Centre's liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them.

The Avon Centre does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage


Confidentiality

The Avon Centre will advise the volunteer on its confidentiality policy and procedures, where relevant. This would include those relating to personal information held by The Avon Centre relating to the volunteer.

Settling Differences

The Avon Centre aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. The Avon Centre seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly and aim for a positive and amicable solution based on The Avon Centre's guidelines for settling differences.

The designated officer referred to above is responsible for handling problems regarding volunteer complaints or conduct and these should be referred to them. In the event of a problem, all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible. Support will be provided by The Avon Centre to the volunteer while it endeavours to resolve the problem in an informal manner. If an informal resolution proves impossible, The Avon Centre's wider grievance or complaints policies and procedures (which include volunteers) will be referred to. If a volunteer's behaviour is repeatedly or seriously unacceptable, they may be asked to change their role, or to leave The Avon Centre.

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Rights and Responsibilities

The Avon Centre recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- know what is (and what is not) expected of them
- have adequate support in their volunteering
- receive appreciation
- volunteer in a safe environment
- be insured
- know their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong
- receive relevant out-of-pocket expenses
- receive appropriate training
- be free from discrimination
- be offered the opportunity for personal development

The Avon Centre expects volunteers to:

- be reliable
- be honest
- respect confidentiality
- make the most of training and support opportunities
- carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of The Avon Centre
- carry out tasks within agreed guidelines
- respect the work of The Avon Centre and not bring it into disrepute
- comply with The Avon Centre's policies

Related Documentation

- [Volunteer Recruitment Process](#)
- [Volunteer Training Process](#)
- [Volunteer Application Form Responses](#)