Volunteer Involvement Policy

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Contribution List

Key individuals involved in developing this version of the document

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Change of History

Version	Date	Author	Reason for change
4	March 2012	Paul Gibbs	Policy expired
5	April 2016	Lesley Lopez	Informal review due to new voluntary services management and co-ordinator in place. Service currently being re-structured and modernized to reflect a more inclusive and reflective volunteer workforce. New policy in April will reflect these new changes.
6	November 2018	Ruth Paterson	Policy expired. Review due to new voluntary services management appointed. To update policy to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018. To create a more flexible approach to volunteering in an effort to engage younger generations in volunteering. To streamline and simplify the Volunteering Application Process in an effort to increase the number of potential volunteers who complete the whole application process.
7	March 2022	Aga Dychton	Policy expired. Review due to new voluntary services management appointed To update policy to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 To create a more flexible approach to volunteering to engage younger generations in volunteering.

				To streamline and simplify the Volunteering Application Process to increase the number of potential volunteers who complete the whole application process.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviations and Acronyms	Description
MDT	Multidisciplinary Team
PGRG	Policy & Guideline Review Group
QSG	Quality & Safety Group
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations
PAT	Pets as Therapy

Contents

1. Introduction

West Hertfordshire NHS Trust (WHHT) recognises the important role of volunteers in complementing the work of Trust employees in providing the highest possible level of care.

2. Aims and Objectives

This policy outlines the Trust's commitment to safe and effective volunteer involvement and aims to define roles and clarify responsibilities and expectations of both volunteers and employees.

The policy aims to:
- Clarify the role of volunteering within the Trust and recognise the value of volunteers
- Provide a framework in which volunteers can contribute safely and effectively
- Ensure that volunteer involvement remains relevant to the vision and values of the Trust and that volunteers participate in areas of identified need
- Define the roles, rights and responsibilities of the organisation and its volunteers
- Recognise, harness and value the unique skills and experiences of those with first-hand experience of Trust services through volunteer involvement
- Encourage and enable the involvement of volunteers from socially diverse backgrounds
- Ensure that the Trust offers support and recognition to volunteers for the valuable time, commitment and skills that they offer

3. Definitions

Volunteer	An unpaid individual, fully registered, trained and managed by the Trust Voluntary Services Department, participating in an activity with an agreed Role Description.
Voluntary Services Manager	Voluntary Services Department lead responsible for the development of volunteer projects and the safe recruitment, training, management, monitoring and recognition of volunteers. Coordinates recruitment and placements and offers regular and ongoing support and recognition to volunteers across the Trust.
Volunteer Supervisor	A named senior Trust employee taking lead responsibility for the involvement of volunteers within their area of responsibility who works in collaboration with the Voluntary Services Department.
Volunteer Mentor	A named member of staff or experienced named volunteer whom the volunteer volunteers alongside.
DBS	A national screening process used to identify activity of a criminal nature.
Volunteer Induction Training	Induction Training covering statutory and mandatory requirements, Volunteer Code of Conduct and themes relevant to all new volunteers.

Placement Training	Introduction to local requirements, procedures and policies delivered by the volunteer's named Supervisor or Mentor.
Role Description	An outline of the duties of a role, lines of accountability, location, skills, knowledge and experience required and key working relationships.

4. Scope
This policy applies to all employees and volunteers of WHHT.

5. Responsibilities
5.1 Volunteer Responsibilities

- Undertake training and support sessions
- Ensure they are familiar with the guidance outlined in this policy
- Adhere to the Volunteer Code of Conduct
- Inform the Voluntary Services Manager of any changes in their health status which may affect their ability to perform their usual duties
- Sign in and out of their volunteering area before and after each shift

5.2 Voluntary Services Manager Responsibilities

- Ensure Voluntary Services are developed, promoted, organised and managed across the organisation.
- Ensure volunteers are deployed appropriately
- Identify needs that can be met by volunteers
- Develop a diverse range of voluntary roles and that role descriptions reflect this
- Ensure risk assessments are carried out for new volunteer projects
- Lead the recruitment, training, and ongoing support for volunteers

5.3 Voluntary Services Department Responsibilities

- Act as a central reference point for information on all aspects of volunteering within the Trust
- Design, update, and distribute the Volunteer Induction Handbook/Volunteer Handbook
- Process and store volunteer information in line with GDPR
- Undertake interview, registration, and screening processes for volunteers
- Arrange volunteer training and organise relevant placements
- Maintain the upkeep of the Volunteer Database

5.4 Volunteer Supervisor Responsibilities

- Provide day-to-day supervision of volunteers
- Ensure volunteers are signed in and out of their volunteering area before and after each shift
- Provide local induction to volunteers
- Support the review meetings with the volunteers, following the completion of their trial period

- Ensure exit interviews are completed prior to the volunteer leaving the Trust (where possible)
- Escalate concerns regarding a volunteer's behaviour to the Voluntary Services Manager

5.5 Third Party Responsibilities

- Ensure their volunteers are recruited in line with the Trust's policy and procedures and are all registered through the Trust's Voluntary Services department
- Complying with relevant Trust policies
- Notifying the Voluntary Services Manager of any amendments/cessations to their volunteer numbers or change in their circumstances (e.g. change of personal details; DBS compliance, etc.)
- Notifying immediately the Voluntary Services Manager of any serious incidents (SIs), Health and Safety (H&S) or breach of confidentiality issues.

6. Key Principles

The act of volunteering can help build skills, confidence and a sense of achievement and can offer social contact in a supportive atmosphere. Volunteers should feel safe, purposeful and valued.

The status of volunteers differs to that of paid employees and requires a distinct management framework that combines a supportive atmosphere with effective governance arrangements.

The role undertaken by volunteers will be clearly detailed in a role description so that both paid staff and volunteers are sure about their respective roles and responsibilities.

Arrangements between the Trust and the volunteer are binding in honour only; volunteers are not employees and are not subject to employment law or a contractual agreement.

All voluntary roles are supernumerary and are not used to replace paid staff or used as job substitution during periods of staff shortage.

The Trust accepts the services of staff as volunteers, subject to successful completion of the registration process. The volunteer role must be outside the scope of their normal staff duties, must be provided outside usual working hours and there should not be a conflict of interest between the paid and voluntary role.

7. Recruitment and Selection

All prospective volunteers receive an interview with a member of the Voluntary Services Department. The volunteer may be accompanied by someone in a support role e.g., care coordinator, friend or relative, at their own discretion.

NHS volunteers may only participate in non-clinical roles. WHHT volunteers should be age 16 years or over and should be treated as employees in respect of insurance purposes.

The interviews should be informal and offer potential volunteers the opportunity to find out more about the role and the volunteering environment. Interviews will be undertaken using criteria that assess the individual's skills and abilities in line with Trust policy.

Applications to become a volunteer will not be considered from service users who are currently receiving in-patient care. However, upon their request, they may receive information regarding volunteering and details of how they may apply once they have been discharged.

In addition to the application and interview process, the following screening methods are carried out for all volunteers:

- Two values based references are sought by the Voluntary Services Department. References from family members or friends are not accepted.
- Declaration and Registration forms
- DBS Checks
- Functional Requirements Form

8. Induction and Training
It is essential that volunteers undertake appropriate training to clarify expectations, provide the most effective assistance for the volunteers, help the volunteer feel valued, assist with their personal development and ensure they undertake their role without posing a risk to the Trust.

All volunteers will receive Induction Training and information on starting with the Trust. For details on Mandatory Training requirements, please refer to the Mandatory Training Frequency Timetable.

Some volunteer roles will require the provision of further tailored training to enable the volunteer to safely and successfully undertake their role. This can include on the job training, such as shadowing.

The Volunteer's named Supervisor or Mentor will offer orientation and ensure guidance upon commencement of the volunteer, to ensure the volunteer is equipped with the necessary information to undertake the role and informed of any pertinent changes to their environment or to the role.

9. Reimbursement of Expenses
The Trust will ensure volunteers are offered reimbursement of reasonable actual out-of-pocket expenses in line with Trust Policies and Procedures. Please refer to the Trust Travel and Expenses Policy for further detail.

In the event that a volunteer is offered a personal gift or inducement, the volunteer should refuse the gift, hospitality or sponsorship, unless they are of low intrinsic value or small tokens of gratitude from patients, their families and their friends. However, the volunteer should inform their Volunteer Supervisor or Voluntary Services Manager to seek advice from HR and advised accordingly of action to take in response to the gift. Volunteers should

never take patient's house keys in order to collect personal property or money for shopping, etc. and should liaise with staff.

10. Settling in Period

All volunteers will have a settling in period, the length of which depends on the nature and hours of the voluntary role and is agreed between the volunteer and the named supervisor at the start of the voluntary role.

During the settling in period, volunteers are given additional support and a review meeting between the volunteer and their supervisor.

An Initial Volunteer Review will take place after the settling period to help monitor the progress of each volunteer to help create strong and clear staff/volunteer relationships for the benefit of all parties involved.

Annual Volunteer Reviews will be carried out to maintain the strong staff/volunteer relationships and to provide an opportunity to discuss any issues or suggestions. This is for the benefit of all parties involved.

11. Recognition of Volunteers

Volunteers should receive recognition for the value of their contribution to service users, carers and the Trust.

The Trust will endeavour to provide additional recognition by:
- Celebrating their contribution through social events
- Written recognition in staff and volunteer newsletters
- Special achievements may be acknowledged by nominations for internal/external award schemes
- Thank you certificates for particular achievements and upon leaving
- Valuing their ideas and contribution through participation in monitoring and evaluation
- Acknowledgement via the press and via social media platforms (this will only ever name individual volunteers who have provided prior consent)

12. Sickness and Absence Reporting

Volunteers are requested to inform their named Volunteer Supervisor or Mentor if they are unable to attend their role. The named Volunteer Supervisor/Mentor should inform the Voluntary Services Manager of any repeated non-attendance of volunteers. Sickness records are not held for volunteers.

13. Health and Safety

The Trust is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all employees, service users, carers, visitors and volunteers in line with Health and Safety legislation – Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Trust's Policy.

It is the responsibility of volunteers to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and others. Hazards or hazardous situations should be reported to Volunteer Supervisor. Accidents or incidents involving volunteers should be reported to the named Volunteer Supervisor/Mentor and Voluntary Services Department and reported using the Trust's Web Based Online Incident Reporting System (Datix).

Risk Assessments for voluntary activity will be recorded and reviewed as and when significant changes within the voluntary role are identified.

14. Information Governance

The Voluntary Services Department ensures that information sought from volunteers is not excessive, is held and processed effectively and is available whenever and wherever there is a justified need for that information.

Information relating to volunteers, staff and services should be treated as confidential and will not be disclosed to any third party without their permission, unless non-disclosure would lead to risks to the health and safety of the third party.

If a service user discloses their intent to harm themselves or others, the volunteer has a duty to pass this information on to their Volunteer Supervisor or the most senior member of staff available but must inform the service user of their intent to do so.

Information offered to volunteers by Volunteer Supervisors/Mentors and associated staff will be on a 'need to know' basis, with the permission of a service user, to enable the volunteer to undertake their role safely and minimise risk to service users.

15. Volunteers and Safeguarding

All staff and volunteers have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults and children at risk. This duty will take precedence over the duty of confidentiality where there is a risk of significant harm or where a criminal offence has occurred or is likely to occur. Any concerns volunteers have about service users, staff or visitors should be raised immediately with their Named Volunteer Supervisor/senior staff on duty, the Voluntary Services Department or the Trust's Safeguarding Team. Information regarding safeguarding and reporting mechanisms is included in Mandatory Training and in the Trust's Volunteer Handbook and is also available on the Trust intranet.

16. Raising Concerns

WHHT aims to create a constructive atmosphere in which volunteers can raise concerns and issues without fear of repercussion or reprisal. Usually concerns can be explored and resolved by discussion with the volunteer, named Volunteer Supervisor and/or Voluntary Services staff.

Volunteers may, however, wish to raise concerns regarding conduct and behaviour that may pose a threat to service users, carers, the public, staff or the environment. In this case, the Trust Speaking Up Policy should be followed.

The Voluntary Services Manager can offer advice to staff or volunteers where some of the processes may differ from those of paid employees. Voluntary Services staff will offer full support, as required, to volunteers wishing to raise concerns use Trust Complaints procedures.

There may be occasions where a member of staff, another volunteer, service user or carer raises concerns about a volunteer's conduct or their capacity to adhere to the agreed boundaries of their role. In the first instance attempts should be made to resolve issues sensitively through informal discussion

If concerns cannot be resolved informally the staff member should contact the Voluntary Services Manager who will investigate the complaint and will gather information from all parties concerned.

In some circumstances the volunteer may be asked to take a break from volunteering during the investigation

- Depending upon the nature of the concern, a range of options will be explored that may include further training or increased support and supervision for the volunteer
- Where applicable, an alternative volunteer role with greater supervision may be suggested (subject to availability)
- Where a raised concern does not achieve a satisfactory resolution or there is a serious complaint that may put the welfare and safety of service users at risk, the

volunteer may be asked to cease their role

17. Security
All new volunteers will be issued with a time limited Trust Identity Badge indicating their voluntary status upon commencement in their role. Badges should be worn in clear view of staff and patients and at all times while attending a voluntary role.

18. Leaving a Voluntary Role
Whenever possible the Trust will make every effort to reassign the volunteer but if no other mutually suitable role is available within the Trust the volunteer will discontinue service with dignity and support. Wherever possible Voluntary Services staff will endeavour to gather and offer information about external voluntary opportunities.

Volunteers who persistently fail to attend their role will be supported in the first instance but may, dependent upon circumstances, be asked to cease their involvement on a temporary or permanent basis in order to free the vacancy for another volunteer.

Volunteers leaving their volunteer role will be thanked personally wherever possible. All volunteers will be issued with a thank you certificate and a personalised thank you letter acknowledging their achievements.

Volunteers may request references for future employment, study or other voluntary roles provided they have consistently participated for a minimum of three months.

19. Monitoring & Compliance

1	Following local and national policies and guidelines, what key elements require monitoring?	List elements to be monitored	a. Adherence to safe recruitment practices b. Adherence to annual review of volunteers c. Adherence to equality and diversity practices d. Volunteer engagement and involvement
2	Who will lead/be accountable for monitoring?	Lead title and/or MDT	Voluntary Service Manager Lead Nurse for Patient Experience
3	Describe how the key elements will be monitored?	List tools to evidence compliance	a. Audits b. Recruitment data c. Feedback
4	How frequently will each element be monitored?	List frequency of monitoring for each element	a. Annually
5	Explain the protocols for escalation in the event of problems?	List the processes of escalation	a. Voluntary Services Manager escalates to the Lead Nurse for Patient Experience
6	Which Committee/ Panel/ Group will reports go to?	List the Committee/Panel/ Group/Peer Review that the reports will go to	a. PERC

7	Explain how the policy/guideline will be disseminated within the Trust?	List ways identifying how this document will be shared and how it will be recorded that appropriate staff have been made aware of the document and where to find it	a. Via the Trust Intranet

20. References

- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, 1974
- Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974
- Data Protection Act, 2018
- Equality Act, 2010
- Care Act, 2015
- Volunteering Compact Code of Good Practice, 2002
- Volunteers across the NHS: improving the patient experience and creating a patient-led service, Department of Health, 2006
- Themes and lessons learnt from investigations into matters relating to Jimmy Savile(2015) Kate Lampard and Ed Marsden
- Volunteers and the Law by Mark Restall, published by Volunteering England (2005)
- Investors in Volunteering Standard, NCVO
- Disclosure and Barring (DBS) Protocols and Code of Practice
- Benefits of Volunteering, Department of Health, 2010

21. Related Policies and Guidelines

Inclusion and Diversity Policy
Health & Safety Policy
Information Security Policy
Disclosure and Barring Policy
Recruitment and Selection Policy (Non-Medical Staff)
Speaking Up Policy: Raising Concerns/Whistleblowing
Travel and Expenses Policy

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22. Equality Impact Statement (EIA)

	Does this policy/guideline affect one group less or more favourably than another on the basis of:			
				Comments
1	Age (younger people & children& older people)		No	
2	Gender (men & women)		No	
3	Race (include gypsies and travellers)		No	
4	Disability (LD, hearing/visual impairment, physical disability, mental illness)		No	
5	Religion/Belief		No	
6	Sexual Orientation (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual)		No	
7	Gender Re-assignment		No	
8	Marriage & Civil Partnership		No	
9	Pregnancy & Maternity		No	
10	Is there any evidence that some groups maybe affected differently?		No	
11	Could this document have an impact on other groups not covered by a protected characteristic? (e.g.: low wage earners or carers)		No	
X	If '**NO IMPACT**' is identified for any of the above protected characteristics, then no further action is required.			
	If '**YES IMPACT**' is identified a full impact assessment should be carried out in compliance with HR028 Equality & Human Rights Policy and linked to this document			

Any other comments:

Assessment completed by:	*Aga Dychton*	Date completed:	November 2021

If you have any queries or concerns about completing the EIA form, contact the Trust's Inclusion & Diversity Team at WestHerts.Inclusion@nhs.net