

## Volunteering Policy

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## 1. PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

- 1.1. The purpose of this Volunteering Policy is to provide the Together Trust workforce (both employees and volunteers) with a clear and robust framework for the involvement and management of volunteers.
- 1.2. Volunteering supports the strategic growth of the Together Trust, contributing added social value. Volunteers are an important part of the Trust's workforce but do not replace paid employees; their roles are designed to *enhance* a service, not to deliver core activity. In fact, volunteers can add value in ways that paid employees cannot - by virtue of not being paid a salary, the perception of them from service users' perspectives can be extra special. They are people who give their time freely to do a volunteering role that has been defined either by us or in agreement with us, and for which we take responsibility for organising, insuring, and managing.
- 1.3. The Together Trust has identified four core values, which are:-
  - **Positive** - We take pride in celebrating the difference we make
  - **Professional** - We act in a fair and respectable way that recognises our collective expertise
  - **Passionate** - We encourage creative ideas and inspire one another
  - **Supportive** - We are considerate and caring towards one another.

This Volunteering Policy aims to ensure that the way in which the Trust involves volunteers reflects those values.

## 2. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- Records Retention Schedule
- Equality & Diversity policy
- Safeguarding (Children/Young People) Policy
- DBS Disclosures Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Governors & Trustees Policy
- Student placements policy

## 3. SCOPE

- 3.1. This policy applies to:
  - Together Trust volunteers, including regular service volunteers, fundraising volunteers, central office volunteers, corporate volunteers, and Trust employees who also volunteer for the Trust.
  - Together Trust employees who work directly with volunteers, whether in a supervisory capacity or otherwise.
  - Together Trust employees who are involved in volunteering activity, including central office employees undertaking administrative tasks related to volunteers and volunteering.
- 3.2. This policy does not apply to Trust Governors or Trustees - please refer to the separate Governors & Trustees Policy in such instances.
- 3.3. This policy does not apply to student placements, work experience, internships, or mandatory work activity / community work placements (i.e. any government schemes requiring compulsory work to be carried out in return for benefits), nor to supporters who may raise money for the Trust independently.

### 3.4. Definition of volunteering

The Together Trust adopts the NCVO (National Council of Voluntary Organisations) definition of volunteering as follows:

*“An activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives. Central to this definition is the fact that volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual.”*

## 4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

4.1. There is a legal difference between ‘volunteers’ and ‘voluntary workers’. The Together Trust is committed to involving volunteers, not voluntary workers, as per the Home Office distinction below.

- **Volunteers** do not have a contract, they must not be a substitute for an employee and they must not be doing unpaid work - i.e. receiving payment in kind (although they are sometimes reimbursed for reasonable travel and subsistence expenses).
- **Voluntary workers** will usually have obligations to perform the work, which may, if tested in law, be found to be ‘contractual’ (e.g. to attend at particular times and carry out specific tasks) with the employer being ‘contractually’ required to provide the work. The contract does not have to be written. The worker is sometimes remunerated in kind in this situation, for example through free training, building their CV for future employment or free products or services from the organisation.

## 5. KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

**Trust Leadership Team (TLT)** is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the Trust provides a safe environment for volunteers and that volunteers are covered by appropriate insurance.
- Ensuring that teams and services across the Trust have the necessary capacity and resources to be able to manage volunteers effectively.
- Communicating to the Trust’s workforce the organisation’s commitment to involving volunteers.
- Reviewing and agreeing the Trust’s annual volunteering objectives.
- Recognising the value of volunteers’ contributions and communicating their appreciation to volunteers.
- Ensuring that this policy is fully implemented.

**Operational Leadership Team (OLT)** is responsible for:

- Engaging with the Volunteer Service Team regarding the development of appropriate volunteering roles.
- Identifying appropriate employees to act as Volunteering Champions, ensuring that they have the relevant experience or aptitude.
- Ensuring protected time for local supervision of volunteers and for staff development with regards to volunteering.
- Securing adequate financial resources to ensure that all volunteers have the necessary resources and materials to carry out their role (with the exception of volunteers’ expenses, which will be reimbursed by the Volunteer Service Team).
- Encouraging employees and volunteers to embrace diversity among co-workers.

**Line Managers and Senior Managers of Volunteering Champions** are responsible for:

- Ensuring that Volunteering Champions feel confident to carry out their role.
- Monitoring volunteers’ involvement within their team, liaising closely with Volunteering Champions to assess the value of the volunteering activity and any difficulties as they arise.
- Making time during staff meetings to discuss volunteering issues.

- Where appropriate, approving attendance at relevant Volunteer Management Training activities and making appropriate arrangements to cover the individual's duties during that time.
- Appraising Volunteering Champions' work at least annually and meeting one-to-one at regular intervals in between to provide support, celebrate successes and identify challenges and learning needs with regards to their supervision of volunteers.

**Volunteering Champions** are responsible for:

- Introducing new volunteers to the relevant colleagues with whom they will come into contact, making them feel welcome and part of the team.
- Supporting and supervising volunteers and identifying any learning needs as relevant to the volunteering role(s).
- Regularly checking in with volunteers to assess how they are feeling about their experience.
- Liaising with the Volunteer Service Team to report on volunteering activity within their team, make arrangements for new volunteer starters, and inform them of volunteers who are leaving.
- Reporting problems with or concerns about volunteers to the Volunteer Service Manager (or directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the event of a safeguarding concern).
- Undertaking any Volunteer Management Training as required.
- Informing the Volunteer Service Team of any potential new volunteering applicants and any volunteer leavers.

**Volunteer Service Team** is responsible for:

- Safely recruiting, selecting, and matching suitable volunteers to appropriate roles across the Trust.
- Developing Volunteer Roles in liaison with the Operational Leadership Team and carrying out risk assessments of each one.
- Ensuring that volunteers receive the required induction training and refresher training as appropriate to their role.
- Making clear to volunteers their rights and responsibilities while volunteering with the Trust.
- Providing Volunteer Management guidance and advice to staff members responsible for supervising volunteers.
- Approving and reimbursing volunteers' expense claims.
- Accurately inputting and maintaining volunteers' data records on iTrent in line with GDPR.
- Monitoring the diversity and inclusion of volunteers across the Trust and implementing measures to increase diversity and representation from the local community.
- Assessing and reporting on the impact made by volunteers across the Trust.
- Ensuring all volunteers have written Role Descriptors, detailing the required skills, attitude, experience, and availability.
- Conducting annual review sessions with volunteers, and adjusting roles and arrangements where necessary, including investigating opportunities for volunteer progression.
- Making information about the ways in which volunteers can be involved as widely available as possible.
- Seeking and reporting on volunteers' views about the Trust's work and their volunteering experience, including those who are currently active and those leaving the organisation.
- Seeking ways for volunteers to participate in decision making.
- Providing references for volunteers seeking opportunities elsewhere.

**Volunteers** are responsible for:

- Carrying out their volunteering role in accordance with their Volunteer Agreement, Volunteer Role Descriptor, and Volunteer Code of Conduct.
- Giving their Volunteering Supervisor as much notice as possible when unable to volunteer as arranged.

- Following Trust policies and guidance in line with their training, including providing the required ID / documentation and updating that when necessary.
- Reporting any concerns or problems to either their Volunteering Champion or the Volunteer Service Team.

## **6. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION**

- 6.1. The Together Trust is committed to treating all individuals fairly and equally in all aspects of its work. The Together Trust endeavours to promote equal opportunities with all organisations and individuals with whom it works. The Together Trust promotes a working environment in which there is no unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation, and all decisions are based on merit. The Trust aims to do everything practicably possible to ensure volunteering opportunities are available to everyone, in line with the Trust's equality and diversity policy.
- 6.2. All volunteers and volunteering applicants are asked to give the Trust information relating to whether they possess any of the nine characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010, so that we can maintain an accurate record and identify where we need to improve our work to include certain groups. This information is held on iTrent with access limited to only those involved in the administration of that system. The personal data that volunteers submit is voluntary, and if submitted is only used in an aggregated and anonymised form.
- 6.3. Applicants who have difficulty completing forms, for example those whose first language is not English, are offered reasonable assistance with their application (for example by taking their details verbally). Consideration is given however to the skills necessary to carry out the role - for example where form-filling will be a regular activity.

## **7. CATEGORIES OF VOLUNTEER - SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS & REQUIREMENTS**

- 7.1. The following groups of people are welcome to volunteer for the Trust but require special consideration and additional arrangements as outlined in point 5 of the Procedures section of this policy.
- Young volunteers, subject to the following minimum age requirements:
    - residential services: 22
    - community services: 18
    - all other settings, including central office: 16.
  - Pregnant volunteers.
  - Service users.
  - Together Trust employees.
  - Previous volunteers (who return after having left the Together Trust).
  - Volunteers with health concerns.

## **8. VOLUNTEERING ROLES**

- 8.1. Volunteers at Together Trust undertake roles as defined in Volunteer Role Descriptors designed by, or in agreement with, the Volunteer Service Manager.
- 8.2. Each role is risk assessed by the Volunteer Service Manager.
- 8.3. Specific arrangements are made in accordance with point 6 of the Procedures section of this policy for the following roles:
- Remote volunteers
  - Drivers
- 8.4. Volunteers who change roles are subject to new background checks to ensure their suitability for their new role, in line with point 5 of the Procedures section of this policy.

## **9. CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING**

- 9.1. Corporate Volunteering refers to voluntary action undertaken for the Trust by the employees of an external company, where the activity is arranged in collaboration with that company. The volunteering could be as a group or individually. It may take the form of regular or one-off events.
- 9.2. As with any other category of volunteering, Corporate Volunteering is a means of adding value to the Together Trust. The activity is planned strategically, in order to make best use of the time offered by corporate companies and to avoid wasting the Trust's staff capacity and resources in facilitating the activity.
- 9.3. Prior to agreeing any Corporate Volunteering arrangements, proposed activities are assessed to ensure that they are worthwhile for the Trust, either by fulfilling a valuable practical purpose, raising money / resources, or facilitating additional service user engagement.
- 9.4. All Corporate Volunteering activity is underpinned by a Corporate Volunteering Agreement between the Together Trust and the corporate company that is offering its employees' time to volunteer. This may be a standalone agreement or form part of a wider partnership arrangement. This outlines the expectations on each side regarding the aims and objectives, insurance, health and safety, safeguarding, supervision / facilitation arrangements, costs covered by each party (e.g. consumables / tools required), any financial donation to be made to the Trust, and timeframe / duration of the activity.
- 9.5. All events are risk assessed in line with the Trust's Risk Assessment Policy and emergency contact details are collected for all participating volunteers.
- 9.6. Anyone volunteering on a regular basis through Corporate Volunteering arrangements must go through the recruitment procedures outlined for Corporate Volunteers in point one of the Procedures section of this policy.

### **9.7. Team Events**

- 9.7.1. All team volunteering events take place in situations where no service users are present, and there is no possibility of volunteers meeting service users.
- 9.7.2. A named Team Leader from the corporate partner is agreed in advance who will be present on the day of the event and can vouch for any other member of the team volunteering at the event. A named Deputy Team Leader is also allocated, to cover the leader's role in the event that they are unable to attend.
- 9.7.3. Instructions are sent to the corporate partner in advance of the event, which include:
- Team Leader to inform the Trust of any volunteers planning to attend who will require additional risk assessments to be undertaken;
  - all volunteers to bring a form of ID with them on the day of the event (where possible, this should be a corporate company ID badge);
  - details of appropriate clothing to wear and anything volunteers need to bring with them.
- 9.7.4. On arrival at the event, each member of the team signs in with the Trust event coordinator, detailing emergency contacts and confirming their position with their employer.
- 9.7.5. Before activity begins, the Trust's event coordinator briefs the team on Health & Safety and housekeeping rules.

## **10. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- 10.1. The Trust provides volunteers with adequate training and feedback in support of health and safety and fire policy, as well as any specific health and safety requirements relevant to their role. Volunteers responsibilities regarding health and safety are outlined in the volunteering handbook, which they should familiarise themselves with prior to starting their role. Volunteers are provided with personal protective equipment should their role require it.

10.2. Risk assessments are undertaken for every volunteering role, and for volunteers with relevant health conditions, disabilities, learning needs, and pregnant women, to ensure that their volunteering role and environment are safe and appropriate for them. These risk assessments may be done prior to a volunteer starting their first role with us, or at any point later on if circumstances change.

## **11. CONFIDENTIALITY & DATA PROTECTION**

11.1. Volunteers may come into contact with personal and/or commercially sensitive information related to service users, staff, supporters and operational activity. All volunteers have a duty to maintain confidentiality and are expected to follow our data protection policy. Volunteers are asked to sign a confidentiality agreement as part of their induction.

11.2. Volunteers' details are retained in line with the Trust's Record Management Policy and Records Retention Schedule.

## **12. ELIGIBLE OUT OF POCKET EXPENSES**

12.1. Volunteers may claim back from the Trust reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred during their volunteering. Expenses eligible for reimbursement are:

- travel costs at the equivalent rate of paid employees, whether travelling by car, bicycle, or public transport (including travel required as part of a volunteering role, such as for volunteer drivers, and for travelling between home and the location of the volunteering activity at the Trust)
- meal allowance up to a maximum of £5 (or provision of a meal itself) if volunteering for 4 hours or more in certain cases, care costs for dependents whilst volunteering (i.e. the cost of childcare or the care of adult dependents); however this is agreed on a case-by-case basis to allow the Trust to assess its financial capability to do so.

12.2. For details on how expenses are claimed, see point 4 of the Procedures section of this policy.

## **13. REWARD AND RECOGNITION**

13.1. Volunteers form a valuable part of the Trust's workforce and the Trust recognises the valuable contribution they bring. Volunteers are valued and regularly thanked by the local team they are involved with.

13.2. Volunteers are never paid more in expenses than the amount which they are out-of-pocket as a result of their volunteering. Any gifts given as a means of reward / recognition are small items which could not be construed as having economic value (e.g. a box of chocolates) and not given regularly as a matter of course.

13.3. Other reward and recognition activities are organised by the Volunteer Service team, for example to mark Volunteers Week each year.

13.4. Volunteers are welcome to apply for internal vacancies.

## Volunteering Procedures

### 1. RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES

#### 1.1. Advertising

Care is taken to ensure that volunteering roles are not only advertised through ‘word of mouth’, to avoid the risk of individual volunteers who pose a safeguarding threat bringing similarly-minded applicants to the Trust. Volunteering roles are advertised on the Together Trust website, and using a variety of other means which may include:

- social media
- volunteer brokerage services such as Volunteer Centres and universities
- recruitment events
- leaflets and posters with a variety of community groups, eg different ethnic and religious groups
- press campaigns
- emails to families, donors, and other stakeholders.

Volunteering adverts:

- make clear the Trust’s commitment to safeguarding
- specify requirements for background checks
- make clear the Trust’s commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion
- outline the nature of the volunteering activity and the skills/experience required.

#### 1.2. Application process

Volunteers are invited to apply for roles online via the Trust’s website or if they do not have access to the internet, they are sent a paper application form. This includes self-certification around previous offences.

#### 1.3. Background checks

##### 1.3.1. Interviews

All volunteering applicants attend an interview to ensure the role is right for both parties, using the Trust Volunteer Interview Form. These interviews are informal in style, to help applicants feel welcome and relaxed. However, in line with Safer Recruitment procedures there are always two interviewers on the panel, one of whom is trained in Safer Recruitment. One of the interviewers is the Volunteer Service Manager (other than in exceptional circumstances) and where possible the other is the applicant’s intended supervisor.

Applicants are then matched to opportunities based on their skills, motivations, and ability to carry out the role.

*Exceptions:*

- One-off fundraising event volunteers are interviewed by a single member of the fundraising team using an abbreviated Volunteer Interview Form.
- Corporate Volunteering Teams follow the steps outlined in the Corporate Volunteers section earlier in this policy.

##### DBS checks

Roles which involve regulated activity are subject to enhanced DBS checks with barred lists check, carried out by the Trust at no cost to the volunteer, in line with the Trust’s DBS Disclosures Policy. Other volunteering roles which involve unsupervised access to service users are subject to enhanced checks without barred lists checks. Where volunteering roles are not eligible for enhanced checks, standard checks are carried out when appropriate.



Volunteers are requested to join the DBS Update Service, free of charge. Otherwise, DBS checks are repeated every 4 years.

Where the Disclosure reveals a conviction or other information which may preclude the applicant from working with children, young people or vulnerable adults, or if there is any doubt about the applicant's suitability for the volunteering role, the relevant registration bodies are consulted. Intentional failure to provide accurate information may lead to the volunteer being asked to leave if already volunteering. See point below re 'Cause for Concern' regarding further action to be taken in these circumstances.

### 1.3.2. References

Volunteers are required to provide details of two independent references. References are sought by the Volunteer Service team using the Trust's Volunteer Reference Form, which includes questions regarding applicants' motivations to work with children and families and any safeguarding concerns.

*Exceptions:* applicants who will be helping less than regularly (less than once a week, or on fewer than 4 days in a 30-day period) and who will not have unsupervised access to service users, may provide one reference. For instance, this applies to one-off fundraising event volunteers. Should they then wish to get involved in other ways, or to volunteer more regularly, they must provide a second reference.

Acceptable referees:

- Must have known the applicant for at least one year and have been in contact with them in the last two years.
- If possible, should include one from a setting relevant to our service users if the volunteer is applying to work in a Trust service.
- Must include either two recent employers or one employer and one volunteering supervisor if possible (on letter headed paper/company stamped or sent from the company email address).
- The most recent commissioner of work when an applicant is self-employed.

If the above cannot be obtained, the reason why must be documented. Possible valid reasons are:

- Company policy to provide limited information.
- Company has closed down.
- Person has limited employment.
- Time restraints prevent contact with employer (for one-off event volunteers only).

Character references can be used if the above are unobtainable. Family members are not acceptable referees. Acceptable relationships can be any of the following:

- previous employer who no longer works at the organisation the applicant was employed by
- colleague from current or previous employment or volunteering role (including within the Trust)
- tutor/teacher
- clergy e.g. minister/priest etc
- other professional, e.g. solicitor/ accountant/police/magistrates/social worker.

Completion of references:

- All questions on the form must be answered in full.
- Any discrepancies must be addressed with the applicant.
- Employment references from non-company email addresses (e.g. Hotmail or Gmail) are not acceptable unless there has been independent verification of the identity of the referee through telephone discussion or face-to-face meeting.

- All references for volunteers working directly with service users are checked by phone.

### 1.3.3. Health checks

All volunteers are asked to complete and sign a health declaration form, which is assessed by the Trust's Occupational Health consultant. If health concerns are noted, the Volunteer Service Manager takes appropriate action (e.g. by adjusting the role or offering an alternative role).

### 1.3.4. Proof of identity

All volunteering applicants are asked to provide at least one proof of identity (e.g. passport, photo driving licence, birth certificate, and proof of current address, e.g. utility bill, bank or credit card statement less than 3 months old) and a recent portrait-style photograph. If volunteers are unable to provide the required documents (for example, refugees or asylum seekers) appropriate action is taken to decide on a case by case basis depending on the volunteering role being undertaken.

### 1.3.5. Cause for concern

If any of the above checks reveal information that is cause for concern (e.g. the DBS Disclosure certificate reveals a criminal record or Additional / Other Relevant Information which was not previously disclosed by the applicant, or a reference indicates past safeguarding incidents) the applicant is invited to meet with the Volunteer Service Manager to establish the facts. The Volunteer Service Manager then completes a risk assessment. Where the concern relates to safeguarding, the Designated Safeguarding Lead approves whether to proceed with recruitment or decline the applicant's offer of volunteering. Risk assessments related to DBS disclosure results consider:

- the severity of the offence
- whether there was multiple or repeat offending
- the period of time since the last conviction
- the candidate's age at the time of the offence
- any mitigating circumstances
- the relevance of the offence to the position being offered
- the candidate's attitude to the offence.

### 1.3.6. Unsuccessful applicants

If an applicant is not suitable to volunteer with the Trust, the reasons are explained to them by the Volunteer Service Manager. When possible, this is in person or by telephone, to allow the volunteer to ask any questions they may have and to avoid any negative feelings. It is followed up in writing.

## 1.4. **Volunteer Agreement**

Volunteers are required to sign the Together Trust Volunteer Agreement. This outlines the relationship between the Trust and the volunteer, setting out the Trust's commitment to the volunteer and what is expected of volunteers in return. Copies of all Volunteer Agreements are kept by the Volunteer Service Manager.

## 2. **INDUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT**

### 2.1. **Induction**

#### 2.1.1. Before starting volunteering

The Volunteer Service Manager is responsible for ensuring that all volunteers receive induction training relevant to their role before they start their volunteering. This may

comprise of face-to-face training, e-learning, video conference training, or a combination of all three. As a minimum, all volunteers receive training on:

- Introduction to the Together Trust
- Equality & Diversity
- Data Protection
- Health & Safety (*exception*: Virtual Volunteers who will only ever volunteer in their own home are not be required to complete this training)
- Raising Concerns
- Safeguarding
- Volunteering arrangements (overview of the volunteer's role and what is expected of them; what to do if they cannot volunteer as arranged; who their named supervisor is and how to contact them (ideally the induction is carried out by that person); how to claim out-of-pocket expenses and what they can claim for; days and hours they have agreed to volunteer for).

Volunteers also receive a Volunteer Handbook and access to TogetherNet, and are asked to familiarise themselves with the following policies:

- Social Media
- Data Protection
- Safeguarding.

Volunteers who are unable to access training electronically will receive training either face-to-face or via written information packs sent to their home.

#### 2.1.2. On a volunteer's first day

The local Volunteering Champion is responsible for welcoming the volunteer and delivering the following introduction to their volunteering role and environment:

- introduction to their team, staff members, and fellow volunteers
- service users / clients if appropriate - their needs and service they receive
- health and safety arrangements
- how to use any equipment they will be expected to operate (in accordance with the Health & Safety Policy). (Volunteers must not be expected to operate specialist equipment in place of paid employees.)
- facilities such as toilets and kitchen.

2.2. Volunteers are also provided with training and development opportunities relevant to their role. Some roles may require volunteers to undertake specific training; however, the Trust supports all volunteers to develop their skills through ongoing learning opportunities (that are relevant to their volunteering).

2.3. Volunteers who support the Trust on an ad-hoc, or one-off basis (such as at fundraising and corporate volunteering projects) receive information about their volunteering activity before the day of the event (either in writing or in person with confirmation in writing) outlining details of location/time to arrive, agreed duration of the volunteer's activity, special requirements (e.g. particular clothing), how to claim expenses, and who to report to on arrival. They also receive a verbal briefing from their designated supervisor at the start of their volunteering 'shift', outlining their tasks, safety measures and emergency arrangements, break times, and access to facilities such as toilets and refreshments.

### 3. SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

3.1. Volunteers are supported and supervised by an identified member of staff within the service in which they volunteer, proportionate to the number of hours given by each individual and the intensity of the role. Supervision meetings are used to communicate messages to the volunteer on their performance and to provide support. Safeguarding is a standing item in supervision discussions for any volunteers who have contact with children

or vulnerable adults, including questions on how they are dealing with boundaries and sensitive issues. A local record is kept of volunteer supervision sessions within the service the volunteer is involved in, making particular note of any problems with conduct and action taken/planned and in line with the Trust's Data Protection Policy.

- 3.2. The Volunteer Service Manager conducts a Volunteer Review with both the volunteer and their supervisor one month after each volunteer's start date to ensure that if there are any problems they are resolved, and again on an annual basis thereafter. The annual review gives the volunteer opportunity to identify any ambitions with regards to progression or change of role, as well as learning needs and any concerns they may have with their local setting.
- 3.3. Volunteers are encouraged to make contact with either their local Volunteering Champion or the Volunteer Service Manager in between supervision / review meetings if they have any worries or queries.
- 3.4. Employees responsible for supervising volunteers receive ongoing support and guidance from the Volunteer Service Manager in carrying out their responsibilities in relation to volunteering activity.

#### 4. EXPENSE CLAIM PROCEDURES

- 4.1. All expense claims, other than mileage, must be accompanied by receipts. See point 12 in the Policy above for detail on expenses eligible for reimbursement.
- 4.2. They are claimed and processed through iTrent, unless a volunteer does not have access to the necessary device or internet to do so.
- 4.3. Volunteers claiming mileage expenses must provide evidence of their driving documents (driving licence, MOT, and vehicle insurance).
- 4.4. Expense claims must be authorised by the relevant manager (see below).

Volunteering Category	Expenses authorised by
Fundraising volunteers (including Corporate Volunteers)	Head of Fundraising
All other volunteers (including service volunteers and central office volunteers) other than Governors and Trustees	Volunteer Service Manager

#### 5. CATEGORIES OF VOLUNTEER - SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

##### 5.1. Young volunteers (16-17 year olds)

- 5.1.1. The minimum age for volunteering at Together Trust is 16.
- 5.1.2. Due to the nature of our services, young people aged 16-17 may not volunteer in community or residential services (please see point 7 on page 4 of this policy for specific age restrictions for those services).
- 5.1.3. Additional risk assessments are carried out for any roles undertaken by volunteers aged under 18 years in line with the Trust's Risk Assessment Policy. Due consideration is given to whether it is appropriate to involve young volunteers in particular roles, for example if it would result in increased workload for staff / fellow volunteers.

5.1.4. Young people under the age of 18 are supervised by suitable Trust staff at all times. This means that:

- the volunteer is **at no time** left alone with a service user or visitor;
- the supervising member of staff is clearly identified, has had full background checks completed, and has up-to-date safeguarding training;
- if the supervisor is unable to carry out the task for whatever reason, there is an alternative suitably screened named person able to continue the supervision;
- the supervisor can see and hear the activities of the volunteer at all times.

## **5.2. Pregnant volunteers**

5.2.1. Volunteers should let their Volunteering Champion know as soon as they know they are pregnant to that they can have the support they need.

5.2.2. The Volunteering Champion will complete a risk assessment in collaboration with the Volunteer Service Manager. This risk assessment may need to be reviewed throughout the pregnancy.

5.2.3. The risk assessment may mean that the volunteer needs to do alternative, less or non-risky work. If no alternative volunteering activity is available it may be necessary for the volunteer to stop volunteering until at least two weeks after giving birth.

5.2.4. The volunteer's Volunteering Champion and the Volunteer Service Manager will complete a further risk assessment if a volunteer returns during the first 6 months after giving birth.

## **5.3. Service Users**

Together Trust service users are welcome to volunteer with the organisation, providing there is no conflict of interest and the individuals meet the Role Profile minimum requirements.

To create and maintain clear boundaries for volunteers, roles are sought for them within groups / activities in which they do not access services. If this is not possible, arrangements are made to volunteer within the same service but only if this is not likely to create confusion / tension / extra workload for employees or fellow volunteers. In this instance very clear boundaries are laid out with the volunteer and made known to all employees, volunteers, and service users.

For service users aged under 18, procedures for young volunteers are also followed.

## **5.4. Together Trust employees**

5.4.1. Current Trust employees wishing to undertake volunteering with the organisation, may do so in a separate location to that in which they undertake their paid role. The volunteering role must be substantially different to the employee's paid role.

5.4.2. Volunteers are never managed by employees for whom the volunteer has direct line management responsibility in their paid capacity (for instance Service Managers do not volunteer within the same service they manage).

5.4.3. Together Trust employees who volunteer with the Trust undertake only those activities agreed on their Volunteer Role Descriptor whilst volunteering.

5.4.4. The employee responsible for supervising the volunteer ensures that the Volunteer Role and its limitations are made explicitly clear to everyone concerned, including the volunteer, the staff (both employees and other volunteers) they will be working with, and the service users they will have contact with. Written confirmation is given to the volunteer outlining their remit and its boundaries.

5.4.5. If issues arise about the conduct of a Trust employee while volunteering for the Trust, this may lead to disciplinary proceedings being taken, affecting that person's employment.

### **5.5. Previous volunteers**

Volunteers who leave the Trust and then return to volunteer again do not need to complete new background screening checks (references, DBS check) if they return within three months of their leaving date. They must complete a Return to Volunteering interview with the Volunteer Service Manager, to discuss their reasons for returning, any problems that may have occurred previously which would need to be resolved, and the most appropriate volunteering role / team for them to be placed with.

Volunteers who return more than three months after their leaving must complete the recruitment process in full.

### **5.6. Volunteers with health concerns**

If health concerns are assessed as a significant risk (either for the volunteer themselves or others around them - see section 11 - Health & Safety), a volunteer must either be asked to change to a more appropriate role (for instance one that does not involve driving), or asked to stop volunteering altogether.

## **6. VOLUNTEERING ROLES - ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

### **6.1. Remote volunteers**

Virtual volunteers are people who volunteer for the Trust remotely, i.e. from home. This may include activities such as helping service users over the telephone / email or by conducting online research.

Given the nature of the activity, any remote volunteering that involves regular contact with service users must be risk assessed as there will be no provision for direct supervision. The volunteer's supervisor must remain in regular contact with both the volunteer and the service user(s) they are supporting to monitor the nature of the relationship and establish any support the volunteer may need.

### **6.2. Volunteer drivers**

6.2.1. Volunteers who carry out driving as part of their volunteering role with the Together Trust must provide evidence of the following documentation prior to volunteering and then updated versions each time the documents expire:

- Driving licence
- MOT (if driving their own vehicle), or evidence that the vehicle is under three years old and therefore does not require an MOT
- Vehicle insurance (if driving their own vehicle) - this must include cover for volunteer driving (a full list of insurers who include this as part of Social, Domestic, & Pleasure can be found at the Association of British Insurers (ABI) website) and, if required by the insurer, confirmation that the volunteer has notified them of the volunteering activity (again, see the list of insurers on the ABI website).

6.2.2. Volunteer Drivers must also complete the Trust's Safe Driving for Volunteers training.

6.2.3. Volunteers must not transport service users in either their own vehicle or a Trust vehicle without the Volunteer Service Manager first ensuring that Trust insurance is in place to cover the activity.

### **6.3. Changing roles**

6.3.1. Volunteers moving to a different role within the Trust must be re-interviewed by the Volunteer Service Manager and proposed new Volunteering Supervisor. DBS checks and

reference checks must be re-done if existing ones are not at the level required for the new role.

- 6.3.2. The Volunteer Service Manager ensures that original DBS checks and references are suitable for the new role or else updated.

## 7. RECORDING AND RETAINING VOLUNTEERS' DETAILS

Volunteer records are managed using the Trust's people management system iTrent and retained in line with the Trust's Record Management Policy and Records Retention Schedule. Volunteers' iTrent records are managed by the Volunteer Service Team. Any records held locally by Volunteering Champions (such as contact details) must be stored securely and be consistent with those held on iTrent.

## 8. PROBLEMS WITH VOLUNTEERS' CONDUCT

### 8.1. Serious misconduct

If any allegation of abuse or safeguarding concern is raised about a Together Trust volunteer, the procedures within the Trust's Safeguarding Policy ("Allegations against staff" section) is followed.

If a volunteer is believed to have behaved in any other manner that has affected or could seriously affect the organisation, its service users, employees, or volunteers - for example involving theft, bullying, violence, or other illegal activity - they are asked to stop volunteering with the Trust immediately while the matter is investigated by the Volunteer Service Manager. The volunteer is entitled to put their case, and a decision is made within 14 days, or as soon as possible thereafter. If the complaint against the volunteer is upheld they are excluded from volunteering and asked to return all Trust ID and property.

### 8.2. All other concerns

#### 8.2.1. Informal stage

The volunteer's supervisor first attempts to resolve any problems regarding the volunteer's behaviour in an informal manner, involving an informal discussion to bring the problem to the volunteer's attention and ascertain the cause (for example it may be that the volunteer has developed health problems or disabilities affecting their role). Possible solutions are discussed, such as extra support, further training, or changing a volunteer's role. The concern and agreed actions are reported to the Volunteer Service Manager.

#### 8.2.2. Formal stage

- a) *Formal meeting*: If the actions agreed at the informal stage do not resolve the problem, the Volunteer Service Manager holds a formal meeting with the volunteer. Where applicable, reference is made to the Volunteer Agreement and the Volunteer Handbook. The volunteer is entitled to put their case, and to have a friend, fellow volunteer, or Trust employee, accompany them.
- b) *Action Plan*: A written record of the meeting is kept, including the areas discussed and the action plan with agreed timescales for improvement (which should be no more than three months, and sometimes less depending on the problem concerned). The action plan is carried out and reviewed in discussion with the volunteer. If progress is satisfactory, no further action is required other than recording that fact.
- c) *Formal written warning*: If the problem is still not resolved and if it is felt necessary, a formal warning may be issued, with the understanding that should the problem conduct occur again the volunteer may be asked to leave.
- d) *Exclusion*: Should there still be insufficient improvement, the volunteer is excluded from volunteering and asked to return all Trust ID and property.

## 9. COMPLAINTS FROM VOLUNTEERS

9.1. The Trust takes concerns and complaints seriously and endeavours to resolve them promptly and fairly.

### 9.2. Informal Stage

If a volunteer is unhappy with their experience they are encouraged to speak to their Volunteering Supervisor in the first instance to resolve the matter informally (or to their Volunteering Supervisor's manager if the complaint is about the supervisor). Possible solutions are discussed and agreed. The complaint and agreed actions are reported to the Volunteer Service Manager.

### 9.3. Formal Stage

- a) *Formal meeting*: If the matter remains unresolved after the informal stage, the volunteer should approach the Volunteer Service Manager who will meet with them and investigate the complaint. The volunteer can bring somebody with them to that meeting if they wish, such as a friend, member of staff, or fellow volunteer. Any complaints about the Volunteer Service Manager should be made to the Head of Organisational Development.
- b) *Action Plan*: A written record of the meeting is kept, including the areas discussed and the action plan with agreed timescales for improvement (which should be no more than three months, and sometimes less depending on the problem concerned). The action plan is carried out and reviewed in discussion with the volunteer. If progress is satisfactory, no further action is required other than recording that fact.
- c) *Decision / action plan*: A written record of the meeting and any subsequent investigatory actions / results is kept. The Volunteer Service Manager outlines their decision (whether or not to uphold the complaint) and any next steps to resolve the issue, in writing.
- d) *Appeal*: If the volunteer is not satisfied with the result of the investigation, they are entitled to appeal - this should be in writing to the Head of Organisational Development (or, if this is who chaired the original meeting, to the Director of Resources) within 14 days. The manager receiving the appeal letter decides whether or not there is sufficient evidence in the letter to hold an appeal meeting. Again, the volunteer is entitled to bring a friend/staff member/fellow volunteer to this meeting. The decision of the appeal hearing manager will be confirmed in writing and considered final.

## 10. VOLUNTEERS' SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

If a volunteer has a safeguarding concern, they must follow the safeguarding policy.

## 11. VOLUNTEER LEAVERS

11.1. Volunteer roles are subject to review to ensure the roles support the needs of the Trust. Some roles may be available for a defined period and others with the possibility of continuing them if mutually agreeable.

11.2. Changes in volunteers' circumstances may mean that it could be advisable to take a break from volunteering responsibilities. If this is the case, volunteers are more than welcome to return to volunteer at a later date. See section 6.6 for procedures on Returning Volunteers.



- 11.3. The Trust recognises that volunteers may wish to leave their role and that they can do so at any time. Volunteers are invited to complete a confidential exit survey regarding their experience as a volunteer which helps the Trust to improve and develop its volunteering offer.
- 11.4. Volunteers have the right to request a reference for their service while volunteering and are offered the opportunity to stay in touch to keep up to date update with our work and the chance to be involved with the Trust in the future.
- 11.5. All data and records regarding volunteers are retained in line with the Together Trust Record Retention Schedule.