



## Working With Volunteers and Student Placement Policy

### How we want to involve and enable volunteers at Pendle Action for the Community projects

#### What volunteering means to us

Volunteering is important to what we are and what we do. We want to do the best we can to support and value volunteers that work with us.

We believe that volunteering is a really important and rewarding activity to undertake, and we want to ensure that any volunteering opportunities within our projects are supported to ensure the volunteer:

- a. develop skills and interests
- b. becomes part of their community
- c. meet new people and learn about other people's lives
- d. change their lives for the better
- e. develop confidence and a sense of personal fulfilment

#### Diversity

We recruit volunteers with an equal opportunities approach so that people from all sections of the community have the chance to get involved. We always explain the necessary skills and experience needed for a volunteering role.

#### Recruiting Volunteers and Student Placements

We recruit volunteers through our local CVS office, HelpDirect, Local colleges and Universities or directly from people wishing to volunteer their time. Volunteer recruitment is gained through the following procedure:

- a. Volunteer expresses their interest via email or telephone (either in person, CVS HelpDirect or University/College). ***(Due to the nature of our work we request that interested volunteers do not visit the project without invitation)***
- b. Interested volunteers are requested to send in a CV, containing a minimum of 2 references (one being from employment/education or external agency) and a paragraph outlining their motivation and interest in the project.
- c. CV is received by the project and reference request are sent for response.
- d. On receipt of their satisfactory references, the potential volunteer is invited in for an interview/chat to discuss potential voluntary placement.
- e. Following satisfactory interview / chat potential volunteer is match to volunteering vacancy / opportunity.
- f. Potential volunteer is offered placement subject to a satisfactory enhanced CRB check.
- g. On acceptance of the placement the volunteer would be invited to the project for induction training, agree voluntary hours and to commence the placement.

#### How we make volunteering accessible - Making the work place right for you

To ensure anyone can volunteer we are committed to make all reasonable adjustments to both the office and the way we work. We can also explore any other ways we can make volunteering more accessible.

### **Making sure you're not out of pocket**

We provide out of pocket travel expenses to all volunteers and encourage everyone to claim them, you are here to volunteer your time not your money. We can give you cash on a daily or weekly basis or pay directly into a bank account on a monthly basis to cover the cost.

### **Getting here and travelling**

To save the environment we encourage everyone who can to walk, cycle or use the bus to get to us, we're very near the centre of town. We will pay the cost of your bus fare. If you need to use a car or motorbike, we pay a mileage rate.

You need to tell your motor insurance company if you're using your car to get to and from your place of volunteering and if you're using your car as part of your volunteering. This should not affect the cost of your insurance, if it does please speak to us.

Pendle Action for the Community is a registered charity and must act at all times in the best interests of the charity and must keep volunteers expenses to an amount that is reasonable and proportionate in order to protect charitable funds.

### **Helping carers and parents**

We can normally be quite flexible about when you come in to volunteer, as long as staff are around to support you. This means we can work round any caring responsibilities, doctor's appointments or other commitments that you have. We do not want to stop full time parents, house people or carers from volunteering with us so if you have any of these responsibilities you need to talk to us about how they affect you and what your needs are.

### **If you claim benefits**

You can still volunteer with us if you claim benefits. There are different arrangements depending which benefits you're on but the important thing is that you tell your advisor. You must also tell them you have received expenses, but that these only cover the money you spend.

### **How we involve Volunteers and Student Placements**

We want to involve volunteers in what we do so they can contribute:

- a. ideas and innovations
- b. skills and expertise
- c. passion and enthusiasm
- d. a different and unique perspective

We always try to:

- a. involve volunteers in tasks they find interesting and stimulating
- b. offer opportunities that are flexible, making sure they match your interests and skills as well as helping us deliver the work our service users want from us

We want to help Students by:

- a. ensuring that your placement is varied and supports your studies
- b. Working with your college to ensure your placement achieves your course objectives

### **Getting started**

You will be given a full introduction to your volunteering/placement. As part of this we will agree a task description and volunteer/placement agreement with you. This way we both know what you are going to be doing and what we expect from each other. You will also go through an induction with us so that you are familiar with how we do things and what is expected.

This will give you an appreciation and value of the work that you will be doing and how it directly and indirectly affects the project. You will have access to a staff handbook so you can keep all the information we give you and refer to it when you need to.

For Student Placements will meet with your college tutor to agree your role and objectives.

### **Helping you stay involved**

We want to offer support that suits you. You will have a supervisor who you can talk to about your volunteering/placement. You will be offered regular supervision.

During the induction period, you will speak with your supervisor weekly for the first six weeks to chat about your progress and if you are experiencing any difficulties. After six weeks, your supervisor will sign to say you have fully completed the induction process. If your supervisor thinks it would be beneficial to extend the induction period further, this will be agreed with yourself and a review date set. Once you have completed the induction, the supervisor will have a 1 to 1 with you on a monthly basis. After six months and every six months thereafter further reviews will be undertaken.

If things are not working out we will mutually agree to end the arrangement.

To make sure we have a good relationship we will:

- a. provide a good quality experience that is accessible
- b. be clear about what our expectations are and what support we can offer
- c. make sure we listen and spend time with you so you can learn the role and feel supported
- d. tell you if we have any problems with what you are doing, not doing, or how you're behaving
- e. give you a chance to tell us what you think
- f. tell you when there are changes to what we need you to be involved in
- g. provide an introduction to the role and help you carry on learning whilst you are with us

To make sure we have a good relationship you will need to tell us if:

- a. you're not going to make it in for your volunteering
- b. you want to change the times and days or number of hours your doing
- c. you find the tasks you're doing don't suit you and you want to change
- d. you feel things are not working out for you - you need to tell us why too
- e. you think we're treating you unfairly or not being clear about our expectations
- f. you experience any discrimination or harassment from any staff, volunteers or service users.

### **Keeping you and the people we work with safe**

We want to make sure you and those we work with are protected from harm and that we do what we can to minimise the chances of people getting hurt. We do this by:

- a. Having a health and safety policy and providing all staff and volunteers with this.
- b. Doing risk assessments for the organisation regularly (see risk assessment timetable) as well as doing them for individual service users, staff and when people have particular needs, like when they're pregnant.
- c. Having a child protection policy, safeguarding policy and protection of vulnerable adult policy.
- d. Having guidance on personal boundaries for volunteers and staff.
- e. Keeping good open relationships between volunteers and their support workers so any problems can be discussed and resolved.

### **Helping you learn and get the most out of your volunteering**

In the first few weeks there may be lots to learn, but learning is ongoing and we want to support you throughout your time here.

When we can, we will provide opportunities for you to go on training courses and events that you are interested in, and that are relevant to your volunteering role.

We will also be able to offer job-shadowing, tips on getting jobs in the sector and useful contacts if this is something you are interested in.

### **Thank you!**

We really value and appreciate our volunteers and thank you for giving your time. We like to thank you for what you do for us, in a way that means something to you. For example, we can offer references and certificates if you would like them.

### **Ending our relationship**

Whenever someone leaves, for whatever reason, we like to meet with them and get some feedback about their time here. You'll be offered a chance to do this in an Exit Interview. Either your supervisor or another member of staff will do this with you. The Exit Interview gives both us and you an opportunity to assess your volunteering experience here. It also gives an opportunity to focus on specific pieces of work completed and achievements made.

### **Not so happy endings**

If we have asked you to leave or if you feel you do not like it here and decide to leave we still want to be fair. If appropriate we will provide a reference if required.

### **Happy endings**

We will happily provide a reference for you so that you have a record of the things you did for us, and the skills and experience you got out of it and we wish you all the best in your future.