1. Policy Statement

1.1 RESTORE values and recognises the active participation and involvement of Volunteers in our organisation.

1.2 We aim to provide a positive, inclusive and mutually beneficial volunteering experience for people from across our community with a clear commitment to the principles of valuing and celebrating the equality, diversity and different skills that our volunteers bring to us.

1.3 We are committed to supporting our Volunteers to ensure they enjoy a positive beneficial experience from their volunteering activity whilst also respecting our Service User’s needs and our service delivery priorities.

1.4 We expect all staff to play an active part in delivery of this objective.

1.5 We will have systems in place to ensure that Volunteers feel supported to participate to the fullest extent they wish in the work of RESTORE whilst acknowledging that Volunteers are not here to replace employed staff.

1.6 We do not wish our volunteers to be out of pocket whilst carrying out activities for us and will reimburse reasonable expenses.

1.7 Any actions we take to amend or cease individual Volunteer activity will be taken only with the intention of safeguarding Volunteers, Service Users and Staff and/or in the interests of providing effective, safe and trusted services.

1.8 This Policy provides information to staff and volunteers alike about the role we envisage for volunteers in our organisation and our commitment to support their active participation and involvement in our work.

1.9 This Policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant RESTORE Policies relating to Volunteer activity.

2. What is Volunteering?

2.1 We define volunteering as any activity that involves spending unpaid time doing something that aims to benefit the environment, an individual or a group (other than, or in addition to, close relatives).
2.2 Central to this definition is the fact that volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual which does not routinely involve the obligations associated with a employee relationship.

2.3 Volunteering may include formal activity undertaken through public, private and voluntary organisations as well as informal community participation and social action.

2.4 We believe that everyone has the right to volunteer and that volunteering can have significant benefits for individuals as well as the organisations or people they support.

3. Recruiting Volunteers

3.1 The work of RESTORE involves supporting vulnerable people. We have a duty of care to our Service Users and therefore must ensure that all volunteers who are involved in their support are placed appropriately and have the required skill, abilities and knowledge to be able to provide that support safely and effectively.

3.2 Our volunteer recruitment process ensures that the suitability of all applicants to carry out this important work is assessed up until the point they have completed their four week trial period when on-going support systems are put in place.

3.3 Recruitment practices are designed to ensure that they follow best Equality and Diversity principles and do not inadvertently discriminate against particular groups or individuals.

3.4 The process is set out in detail in our Volunteer Recruitment Policy but includes:

- Role Descriptions
- An Online application form (We can provide a paper form for those who require it).
- Interview
- References
- Disclosure and Barring Service Check (where appropriate to the role).

RESTORE is an equal opportunities employer, so previous criminal convictions are not necessarily a bar to volunteering at RESTORE. Each situation is assessed individually.

3.5 Relatives may not volunteer in the same service as their relation who is a member even if they intend to volunteer on a different day than the day the member uses the service. This is to prevent confidential information about the member being shared with the members’ relative by staff, volunteers or other members. See Member’s Relatives Volunteering at Restore policy

4. Introducing Volunteers to the organisation

4.1 To ensure that Volunteers feel quickly involved in our organisation and confident to carry out their role we provide a structured Induction (see Volunteer Support Policy) involving a period of mandatory training followed by a closely supported trial period and review.

4.2 All volunteers must refer to the following policies before they start; Professional Boundaries, Confidentiality and Safeguarding.

5. Supporting Volunteers
5.1 We are committed to the on-going support for our volunteers to ensure that they feel confident in, and enjoy their experience with us. Our support systems are set out in detail on the Volunteer Support Policy but include:

- Induction check list which goes through health and safety, introductions, policies and wellbeing. See Induction check list form and check list for staff.
- One to One mentoring
- Groups support
- Team meetings
- On-going personal development, skills and training opportunities
- A dedicated senior manager responsible for Volunteering and Training and associated administrative support/liaison for volunteers.

5.2 Where a volunteer has had a break of six months or more from volunteering with us, we may ask that volunteer to complete all or part of the application process again where necessary.

5. Managing concerns and complaints

a. In the event that either staff or volunteers have concerns about the activity a volunteer is undertaking this must be addressed at the earliest opportunity.

b. The Volunteer Concerns and Complaints Policy sets out RESTORE’s processes for addressing such concerns for the benefit of the Volunteer, our Service Users and our staff.

7. The Volunteer Voice

7.1 Volunteers are encouraged to provide feedback about matters concerning RESTORE and its work.

7.2 To support this objective RESTORE facilitates the Volunteer run Volunteer Forum enabling Volunteers to meet regularly to feedback, bring forward suggestions and discuss the Volunteering programme with other volunteers and with relevant staff.

7.3 Other routes for feedback include the mentor support system, regular volunteer surveys and evaluation of training and interviews on leaving the service.

8. Expenses and volunteering

8.1 As a matter of principle we do not wish our volunteers to be out of pocket whilst carrying out activities for us, but are also mindful of the appropriate use of our charitable funds.

8.2 We will reimburse reasonable expenses incurred as described in our Volunteer Expenses Policy.

8.3 To comply with legal obligations we cannot provide any additional form of payment or financial reward to our volunteers (including, vouchers, gifts, flat rate expenses payments or payments that are not directly related to expect volunteer activity).
9. Insurance

9.1 All volunteers are covered by RESTORE’s insurance policy whilst they are working on our behalf but will need to ensure that any vehicles they use in connection with their voluntary duties are appropriately covered by their vehicle insurance.

10. Health and Safety

10.1 Volunteers are covered by RESTORE’s health and safety policy and are expected to follow all reasonable work and safety instructions and to report any concerns about Health and Safety promptly to their mentor or other appropriate person.

11. Equal Opportunities

11.1 RESTORE’s equal opportunities policy applies equally to staff and volunteers. Volunteers be treated equally with respect and dignity and will be expected to have a commitment to treating others similarly.

12. Confidentiality

12.1 Confidentiality and the protection of Service Users and other information is protected by the Data Protection Act. Volunteers are bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as staff.

13. Conflict of Interest

13.1 Volunteers should make RESTORE aware of any actual or potential conflicts of interest between their private or work life and their voluntary role at RESTORE at the time of recruitment or as soon as they arise if after voluntary work has started.

13.2 Volunteers must declare if they know a member at Restore during the interview process or whilst they are volunteering. See Member’s Relatives Volunteering at Restore policy.

14.0 Volunteering commitment and the law

14.1 Volunteers are under no contractual obligation towards RESTORE and we wish to assert that we have no intention of entering into or implying any form or employment contract with our volunteers.

14.2 Volunteers are free to carry out the volunteering hours they chose.

14.3 To support continuity of care and the establishment of reliable services to our Service Users we may recommend or suggest that volunteers carry out a certain number of hours in relation to their role but we cannot and do not require or expect it. For the Recovery group volunteer role we ask for at least one whole day a week for a minimum of three months. The Opportunities project role takes place on Tuesday afternoons.

14.4 Similarly, whilst RESTORE will endeavour to provide agreed activities and hours for volunteers, we recognise that there is no obligation on us to do so.

14.5 To avoid volunteers being confused as staff it is important to remember that volunteers do not receive paid holidays, statutory sick pay or maternity/paternity leave.
14.6 Volunteers can therefore have breaks from volunteering with us whenever they require and for as long as they require. We do ask that volunteers inform their supervisors as soon as they are able to regarding absences.

14.7 Where someone has had a break of six months or more from volunteering with us, we may ask that volunteer to complete all or part of the application process again where necessary.

15 Responsibilities and review

15.1 Head of Volunteering and Training is responsible for ensuring the regular review and maintenance of this Policy.

15.2 All staff acting as Volunteer mentors must ensure they are aware of the aims, objectives and provisions of this policy and for providing consistent support to their Volunteers.