Volunteer Support Policy

Policy ID Number: ORG037
Policy Passed by Trustees: Jan 2020
Review Date: Jan 2023

1. **Policy Statements**

1.1 RESTORE recognises that the most important resource we have to deliver effective services are our staff and Volunteers.

1.2 We aim 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.

1.3 We are committed to supporting our Volunteers to ensure they enjoy a positive beneficial experience from their work with us and expect all staff to play an active part in delivery of this objective.

1.4 Role Descriptions will be available for each of the Volunteer roles in RESTORE and staff should use these as a guide to support Volunteers activity.

1.5 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.

1.6 This Policy provides information to our Volunteers about the systems we have in place to support them, and provides guidance to our staff about their responsibilities in this regard.

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

2. **Induction**

2.1 RESTORE is committed to providing a comprehensive Induction to all our Volunteers. The aim of this is to ensure that Volunteers:

- Understand the full scope of work that RESTORE undertakes.
- Feel confident in undertaking their chosen Voluntary role.
- Understand the expectations of them in terms of conduct, standards and managing boundaries.
- Know how and where to raise any concerns or seek help if needed.
- Can work in a way that is safe, for them, our service users and the organisation.

2.2 RESTORE staff will work to an Induction Checklist to ensure that the delivery of Induction is consistent to all Volunteers, wherever they choose to support us.

2.3 To ensure that we are only exposing Volunteers to placements that are appropriate for them we will review Volunteers knowledge and understanding at the end of their induction period after 6 weeks.

2.4 If after review, a placement is not considered appropriate for a Volunteer RESTORE will consider whether alternative placements would be better suited to the Volunteers skills and abilities and will discuss possible solutions with the Volunteer.
3. **On-going Support**

3.1 RESTORE is committed to providing support to our Volunteers throughout their time with us, taking account of their needs, abilities and interests alongside the needs of the service.

4. **Staff responsibilities**

4.1 All Volunteers will be assigned to a staff member who will act as their mentor and support in respect of their work with RESTORE.

4.2 Staff are expected to familiarise themselves with the Volunteers role descriptions and induction framework and to ensure that they have allocated time to provide support, guidance and feedback to Volunteers.

4.3 Staff should be available to provide informal support to Volunteers as needed throughout their activity time.

4.4 Responsibility for the work of Volunteers will follow the normal line management chain, with the exception that ultimate (staff) responsibility will sit with the Volunteering and Training Coordinator.

5. **Volunteer Support systems**

5.1 **Team meetings**
Wherever appropriate Volunteers will be invited to attend and participate in Team meetings. These provide valuable opportunities to keep up to date with the work of the team and RESTORE more widely and to participate in regular training sessions.

5.2 **Group Support**
Where practicable Group Support meetings will take place monthly and will provide facilitated opportunities for Volunteers to share and discuss their experiences with other Volunteers, to give and receive Peer support. Volunteers and staff will also attend de-briefings at the end of the day when volunteering in Recovery groups.

5.3 **One to One support**
RESTORE expects all Volunteers to have an opportunity to meet one to one know as supervisions with their staff mentor to discuss their activities. All supervision notes should be signed by both parties.

5.3.1 The frequency of these meetings will be arranged by mutual agreement between the mentor and the volunteer but should take place AT LEAST once every SIX weeks for coaching volunteers and once every eight – twelve weeks for recovery, fundraising and admin volunteers.

5.3.2 It will be appropriate for meetings to be more frequent than this in the early stages of a placement.

5.3.3 RESTORE will provide a template to guide the topics covered in the meeting and to enable brief notes to be kept. See volunteer forms.

5.3.4 **Staff mentors** should ensure that they have sufficient time allocated to make this a valuable and useful time for both parties, and that they are prepared to provide and seek feedback to/from the volunteer.
5.3.5 **Volunteers** are encouraged to bring any feedback, concerns, suggestions or queries they have to this meeting, to share any relevant information about opportunities that may be available to RESTORE and to use these times as opportunities to discuss any further training or development with the organisation that may be of interest to them.

5.3.6 **Volunteer Forum**  
The Volunteer Forum meets quarterly and is open to any Volunteer who wishes to attend. The Forum provides an opportunity for Volunteers to bring forward suggestions and to influence decision making with regard to the use and development of Volunteers within RESTORE.

6. **Concerns and Complaints**  
We recognise that in any organisation concerns may arise from time to time and we are committed to addressing these fairly and at the earliest opportunity. Please see the **Volunteer Concerns and Complaints Policy** for further detail.

7. **End of Volunteering**  
7.1 When a Volunteer decides to end their Volunteering with RESTORE they will be given the opportunity for an “End of placement” interview with their mentor or the Volunteering and Training Coordinator or complete a Survey Monkey questionnaire on-line. See Volunteer forms.

7.2 This will give the Volunteer an opportunity to provide feedback on their Volunteering experience and will allow RESTORE to benefit from the accumulated knowledge and views of the Volunteer. This will help us to understand how we can best support future Volunteers and will be fed back (in an anonymised format) to the Volunteering Council.

8. **Responsibilities and Review**  
8.1 Head of Volunteering, Training and HR and Volunteering and Training Coordinator is responsible for ensuring the regular review and maintenance of this Policy  

8.2 All staff acting as Volunteer mentors must ensure they are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and for providing consistent support to their Volunteers.