VOLUNTEERING POLICY

APRIL 8, 2024

OBESITY UK

VOLUNTEER POLICY

Introduction
Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community: the environment of individuals outside one's immediate family. It is undertaken freely and by choice without concern for financial gain.

believes in the value of voluntary activity as an important expression of citizenship and an essential component of a free and democratic society. It supports and promotes volunteering in public and third sector organisations. Obesity UK takes responsibility for ensuring that volunteers within its own organisation are appropriately involved, valued for their contribution and respected as colleagues.

In adopting this volunteer policy Obesity UK wishes to:

- Formally acknowledge and support the role of volunteers in its work
- Set out the principles governing the involvement of volunteers and provide a set of guidelines to ensure good practice in working with volunteers
- Encourage and enable, rather than restrict, the involvement of volunteers.

This volunteer policy and accompanying guidelines are intended for use by Obesity UK paid staff and volunteers.

Volunteer Policy Statement

Obesity UK Equal Opportunities
- As an employer and engager of volunteers Obesity UK is committed to a policy of equal opportunities. This principle will apply to service delivery, recruitment, promotion, training, facilities, procedures and all terms and conditions.
- Volunteers will be expected to adhere to Obesity UK Equal Opportunities Policy, a copy of which can be found within the Obesity UK Volunteer Handbook.

Recruitment & Selection
- Recruitment of volunteers will be from all sections of the community, and will be in line with our Equal Opportunities Policy. Appropriate targeting may be used.

Information & Training

- Volunteers will receive full information about their chosen area of work and will be given a clear idea of their responsibilities to Obesity UK.

- Volunteers will be given induction and training in the specific tasks to be undertaken.

- Volunteers will be consulted in decisions which affect them.

Support & Supervision

- Volunteers will be assigned a named contact person for supervision and support.

Problem-Solving

- Obesity UK recognises that problems do arise and we aim to identify and resolve these problems at the earliest stage. Volunteers who have a problem of any kind should discuss it in the first instance with their named contact person.

Confidentiality

- Volunteers will be bound by the same confidentiality conditions as Obesity UK paid staff.

Expenses & Insurance

- Obesity UK will ensure that there is a clear and accessible system to enable volunteers to claim out of pocket expenses.

- Volunteers will be adequately covered by insurance while carrying out agreed duties.

Health and Safety

- All volunteers are covered by the same health and safety policies and provisions as staff.

Relations with Paid Staff

- Obesity UK is committed to ensuring that volunteers work complements the work of paid staff, and that it will not be used as a substitute for paid work.

- Steps will be taken to ensure that staff at all levels are clear about the roles of volunteers and to foster good working relationships between staff and volunteers.

- Obesity UK recognises the need for training for all those working alongside and managing volunteers.

Costs

- Obesity UK will endeavour to identify and cover the costs of involving volunteers and recognises the value of designated responsibilities within specific posts for the management of volunteers.

References

- On the basis of their voluntary work, volunteers will have the right to request a reference.

Monitoring & Evaluation

- Obesity UK will systemically monitor and evaluate its involvement of volunteers with reference to this Volunteer Policy.

Review

- This policy comes into force on (Date) and Obesity UK commits itself to review the policy as and when changes in legislation or other factors make this necessary. The policy will be subject to a comprehensive review two years after its introduction. (Review date: 08/04/24)

Note

- "Staff" refers to paid staff and those undertaking placements with (Organisation Name)
- This document refers to other policies which are available in Obesity UK Volunteer Handbook.

Guidelines for Involving Volunteers

These guidelines are intended for use along with the policy statement. They give further detail on recommended good practice in the involvement of volunteers within Obesity UK

Preparation

Prior to recruiting volunteers, full consultation and discussion should take place with users of the service, paid staff and unions to satisfy that there is a genuine need for volunteers and to develop a clear description of their role. A contact person within the section proposing to involve volunteers should be identified and the staff time and expenses to train, support and reimburse volunteers determined.

Recruitment

- Obesity UK has an Equal Opportunities Policy and will prevent discrimination particularly on the grounds of gender, marital status, disability, race, colour, religious belief, political belief, sexuality, nationality, ethnic origin, age, trade union activity, responsibility for dependents or employment status. (See statement and policy for details)

- In order to reach a wide section of the community, recruitment should be by a variety of means.

- Positive action in recruitment may be used for specific voluntary tasks. For example, specific work with minority ethnic groups.

Initial Contact

- People interested in becoming volunteers with Obesity UK should be invited for an informal talk with the appropriate contact person. They should:
  - Be given written information to take away
  - Have their role explained and how it fits in with Obesity UK's overall aims and ethos
  - Have the next stages of becoming a volunteer with Obesity UK outlined

- If the volunteer wishes to proceed with the application at this stage, the contact person should fill out the application form for the volunteer (getting referees' details) and ask the volunteer to sign.

- If the volunteer is undecided, agree the next step e.g. for the contact person to phone the potential volunteer in a week's time.

Selection

- All volunteers should complete an application form. Two written references will be required. If the volunteer is to carry out specialised work (e.g. IT support) at least one reference should relate directly to this.
- If volunteers may be working with vulnerable people, or in positions of trust, they should be asked to provide information on their application form about any criminal convictions that they may have.

- All information should be dealt with in the strictest confidence and should not necessarily prejudice the person being accepted for voluntary work.

Records

- Minimum details should be kept on volunteers. This will include the application form, references, placement details, relevant information regarding the person's health, correspondence and any other relevant information such as emergency contact details.

- Record keeping must be secure but accessible to other members of staff if you are absent.

- The Data Protection Act enables people to access information held about them.

Induction

- Induction sessions should be provided for all new volunteers and should cover:
  - Role of volunteers
  - Responsibilities of volunteers
  - Arrangements for training, support and supervision
  - Contact person
  - Need for confidentiality
  - Ethos/values, etc
  - System for payment of expenses

- Problem-solving procedures
- Background to Obesity UK
- Building orientation
- Health and Safety
- Meeting staff

- During induction, volunteers should receive the Obesity UK Volunteer Handbook.

Expectations of Volunteers

- Obesity UK should expect volunteers to:
  - Participate in induction sessions
  - Comply with existing policies and procedures
  - Undertake voluntary work at agreed times
  - Inform relevant staff if unable to attend
  - Give some notice if unable to continue volunteering
  - Raise any issues of concern relating to their voluntary work with the contact person
  - Agree with the aims and ethos of the organisation

Placement

- Once a suitable voluntary placement has been identified, details about the frequency and length of commitment and nature of the voluntary activity should be determined and an established trial period agreed.

- Obesity UK reserves the right to ask volunteers to leave and will give reasons in writing if requested.

Support, Supervision and Problem-Solving

- Regular support/supervision should be available to each volunteer. The type and level of support will depend on the needs of the volunteer and the nature of their role. Full information on this will be provided during induction.

- Each volunteer should have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for the day to day management and guidance of the volunteer and who will be able to offer advice, support and feedback on a regular basis.

- Support prompt questions can be used if desired. A pro forma has been prepared.

- If a complaint about a volunteer arises, refer to the complaints flowchart.

Expenses

- The procedures for claiming expenses should be clear and accessible.

- All agreed out of pocket expenses should be reimbursed on production of receipts.

- The pro forma should be used and the supervisor should liaise with admin staff.

Insurance

- It should be ensured that volunteers have appropriate insurance cover in terms of employers and public liability.