

Merton Mencap

VOLUNTEER POLICY

1. Introduction

Merton Mencap provides services for children, young people and adults with a learning disability, and their parents and carers, in the London Borough of Merton. We aim, in particular, to improve the choice, opportunity and independence of people with a learning disability, to promote their inclusion in the community, and to raise awareness and increase understanding of learning disability.

We believe that volunteers offer a valuable contribution to our work, and we involve volunteers to:-

- help govern and guide our organization
- work on our projects, supporting our service users
- bring new skills, experiences and perspectives to our work
- increase our contact with the local community

2. Principles

This policy is guided by the following principles:-

- We will ensure that volunteers are integrated into our organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to our work.
- We do not aim to introduce volunteers to replace paid staff.
- We expect all staff to work positively with volunteers.
- We recognise that volunteers need satisfying work and will wish to develop personally.

3. Recruitment of Volunteers

Prospective volunteers will have the opportunity to meet a senior member of our staff to discuss what they would like to do, their particular skills, suitability and how their potential as a volunteer might be recognised.

Prospective volunteers will be asked to complete a volunteer application form and to provide the names of two people (not relations) who can provide a character reference.

4. Equal Opportunities and Diversity

We have an Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy which applies to all aspects of our work including volunteering and volunteers. Volunteers will be expected to have an understanding of and commitment to this Policy.

5. CRB Disclosure

Because of the nature of our work, volunteers are required to apply for a CRB enhanced disclosure. This will be dealt with through our office.

6. Role Description

Volunteers will be given a role description outlining what their work involves.

7. Commitment

We recognise that volunteers will often need flexible arrangements on the time they can give and the level of their commitment. We try to match what a volunteer can take on with the needs of our service users and of our organisation.

8. Induction and Training

Volunteers will receive an induction into our work in general and into their specific area of work. Training will be provided as necessary to enable volunteers to do their work effectively.

9. Policies and Procedures

Volunteers will be given copies of our policies and procedures which are relevant to their work. Volunteers are expected to have an understanding of these policies and procedures and to comply with them.

10. Confidentiality

Volunteers must keep confidential all personal information about our service users and their needs in accordance with Merton Mencap's *Staff Confidentiality Policy*.

11. Gifts, etc

For the protection of both volunteers and service users, volunteers must not accept any gift from any service user nor must they enter into any financial arrangement of any kind with a service user. In this context, volunteers should also refer to Merton Mencap's *Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers*.

12. Support

Volunteers will have a named person as their main point of contact, who will provide support, and with whom volunteers will be able to discuss their volunteering role and air any problems.

13. The Volunteers' Voice

Volunteers are encouraged to express their views about matters concerning us and our work. Volunteers can do this through their named person.

14. Expenses

Volunteers will have their travel and other agreed expenses reimbursed. Volunteers are asked to provide receipts or other evidence of their expenses.

15. Insurance

All volunteers are covered by Merton Mencap's employer's liability insurance policy whilst they are engaged in any work on Merton Mencap's behalf.

16. Health and Safety

Volunteers are covered by Merton Mencap's Health and Safety Policy and Procedures.

17. Grievances/Problem Solving

If a volunteer has a grievance, the volunteer should speak to their named person about their concern.

We will try to resolve any problems or difficulties relating to a volunteer's work with us as quickly as possible.

If it becomes apparent that the relationship between Merton Mencap and a volunteer is not working out, for whatever reason, it may be necessary to end the arrangement without notice.

Please note that the relationship between Merton Mencap and a volunteer is not intended to create any contract.

This Policy has been adopted by Merton Mencap through its Executive Committee which remains responsible for its review as necessary at regular intervals. September 2009