

**Merton Mencap**

**Volunteering**  
**Policy & Procedure**

**Last reviewed**  
August 2024

**Next review**  
August 2026

## **Merton Mencap**

### **Volunteering Policy & Procedure**

#### **1. Introduction**

Volunteering is when someone freely chooses to give their time, unpaid, which is intended to benefit a cause they care about.

We believe volunteers can offer a valuable contribution to supporting the charity achieve its mission by

- helping govern and guide our organisation
- supporting people with learning disabilities and/or autism, and parents and carers to take part in our activities
- representing the charity and our members
- increasing our community activities

Merton Mencap is hugely grateful to people who volunteer their time to support the charity's work.

#### **2. Principles**

This policy is guided by the following principles:

- We will ensure 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
- Volunteer roles will differ from paid roles
- We require our paid employees to work positively with volunteers
- We recognise that volunteers need satisfying work and may wish to develop personally, eg skills, experience and knowledge

#### **3. Recruiting volunteers**

A volunteer at Merton Mencap is someone who has undergone our recruitment process including being provided with a role description, interview, induction and training.

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

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

## **5. DBS Disclosure**

Because of the nature of our work, volunteers in key positions (eg supporting service users) may be required to undergo an enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) disclosure or be able to provide us with a registration number so we can confirm their certification status via the Government's DBS Update Service online.

## **6. Induction, Supervision & Appraisal**

Following a successful application and recruitment process, Merton Mencap will confirm the volunteer's appointment at the charity, including their line manager/point of contact (hereafter referred to as line manager). The volunteer's line manager is responsible for providing an induction, and volunteers will receive support which provides opportunities for a discussion about the volunteer's progress, any problems or training needs.

## **7. Trial period**

After appointment, volunteers will have a trial period of up to 4 weeks or 4 sessions, depending on the frequency of volunteering, to ensure that they are in the right volunteering role for them.

## **8. Code of Conduct**

Volunteers will be required to sign the charity's Code of Conduct.

## **9. Policies & Procedures**

Volunteers will be provided with information in relation to the charity's Policies & Procedures which they are required to confirm they will follow.

## **10. Commitment**

We recognise that volunteers may need flexible arrangements and the charity will try to match a volunteer's availability and level of commitment with the needs of our service users and organisation.

We require volunteers to give as much notice as possible when they are unable to carry out volunteering work that they have previously committed to.

## **12. Expenses**

Volunteers will have the opportunity to have reasonable travel and other agreed expenses reimbursed, which must be approved in advance. Volunteers are required to provide receipts or other evidence of their expenses.

## **14. Insurance**

Volunteers are covered by Merton Mencap's employer's liability insurance policy whilst they are engaged in volunteering with the charity.

## **15. Health and Safety**

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

## **16. The Volunteers' Voice**

Volunteers are encouraged to express their views about matters concerning the charity which they can do through their line manager.

## **17. Complaints / Problem Solving**

If a volunteer has a complaint, the volunteer should speak to their line manager about their concern. If the complaint is about their line manager, the complaint may be referred to another manager.

We will try to resolve any volunteer complaint as quickly as possible, normally within 2 weeks. If a problem cannot be resolved within 2 weeks the volunteer will be contacted within this time and the problem will continue to be investigated and resolved as soon as possible. Volunteer complaints can be made in writing if they are not satisfied that their oral complaint has been resolved.

## **18. Termination**

Merton Mencap or the volunteer are able to end the volunteer arrangement at any time without notice and without either party having recourse to action for breach of any contract. For practical reasons, as much notice as possible is preferred.

If it becomes apparent that the relationship between Merton Mencap and a volunteer is not working out, for whatever reason, it may be necessary for the charity to end the arrangement.

Volunteers do not have a legal right to appeal against a decision by Merton Mencap to end the volunteering placement, however if a volunteer wishes to appeal a decision, Merton Mencap will review each appeal on a case by case basis.

Volunteers can also be immediately suspended pending investigation for serious incidents such as breach of the code of conduct, allegation, theft, assault, harassment/bullying.

Merton Mencap will confirm in writing when the volunteering arrangement has completed.

Merton Mencap may offer volunteers the opportunity to have an exit interview.

Merton Mencap may agree to provide references for volunteers for reasons such as for jobs, universities and other volunteering opportunities once the volunteer has carried out a minimum of 6 months regular volunteering.

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