



# Volunteer Policy

## 1. Introduction:

Survivors' Network values the contribution that all volunteers make to the organisation. Our volunteer policy is designed to reflect our respect and appreciation for the work that our volunteers do, and to ensure fairness and consistency.

For the purpose of this document the term “volunteer” refers to anyone who commits their time and energy to Survivors' Network, who does so freely and without any anticipation of financial reward. The term “frontline service volunteer” refers to any volunteer working directly with clients, including face to face, or via other medium (e.g. phone, email, text, instant chat). We believe that it is vital that volunteers are not used to replace the employment of paid members of staff.

## 2. Recruitment:

We will use appropriate means to advertise for volunteers that take into account the principles of our Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policies. The nature of the work that we expect from volunteers means that volunteers are required to be emotionally strong and secure. We will ensure the safety of both our service users and volunteers by implementing a transparent and inclusive selection process that will only select the candidates that are suitable for working with Survivors' Network. We aim to have a diverse range of self-identified women in the volunteer team and one that reflects the city's communities.

Each applicant will have to complete an application form relevant to the specific volunteer post they are applying for, along with an optional diversity form (which will be stored separately), but help can be given with this if necessary. Volunteer applications will be scored against each of the questions and the criteria, and the shortlisted candidates will also be scored at interview. If a volunteer is successful at interview, we will store their application for the time they are volunteering plus an additional two years after they leave. If a volunteer is unsuccessful at interview or does not wish to take up the opportunity, we will store the application for 6 months. In most cases, the applicant will be interviewed by the line manager and another member of staff/volunteer if appropriate. If this is successful, two references will be taken up and the prospective volunteer will be offered a place on the next available volunteer training. If there are not enough spaces on the next training, they may be offered a space on the following training. Trustee recruitment is a different process, which is detailed in our trustee application pack.

An enhanced disclosure and barring service check will be made for every volunteer prior to them working with clients. This check will then be repeated every three years.

### Eligibility criteria:

- Most volunteer roles are open to self-identified women only (exempt under the Equality Act 2010, Schedule 9, Part 1), and that these volunteer roles are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

- Anyone aged twenty-one or above; there is no upper age limit.
- Anyone who has not been accessing our services for at least two years.
- Most volunteer roles will require that individuals are able to communicate with a basic level of the English Language.
- Drop-in & helpline volunteers are asked to commit to 2 - 3 shifts per month and attend the four-day induction training programme, along with regular reviews, appraisals, clinical supervision and meetings

Please note that additional eligibility criteria may apply to different roles in line with the person specifications for each volunteer role.

### **3. Induction and Training:**

There will be an induction prepared and delivered by the line manager and/or a member of staff/volunteer as appropriate. This will include:

- The role of the volunteer
- Structure and ethos of the organisation
- Copies of all the relevant policies (including this Volunteer policy)
- Sexual Violence Awareness
- Essential procedures i.e. service procedures, rota, supervision etc.
- Other information as appropriate

There will be a trial period to give the organisation and the volunteer time to discover if they are suited to each other. The length of this trial period will be appropriate to the role. A review will be made midway through the trial period and also at the end.

Appropriate training and support for Survivors' Network is essential to ensure both the safety of volunteers and service users and to maintain the high regard for Survivors' Network services within the community. In almost every area of Survivors' Network, training is mandatory for volunteers.

The line manager is responsible for locating and providing on-going training opportunities to Survivors' Network volunteers. Survivors' Network will cover reasonable training costs in order to ensure the continuing professional development of all of our volunteers.

### **4. Expenses:**

All volunteers are encouraged to claim expenses as this allows Survivors' Network to accurately measure the cost of our services.

In line with Survivors' Network Equal and Diversity policy we want to remove barriers to volunteer involvement. Expenses, such as transport costs and a contribution towards child care costs, will be paid to all volunteers once they have passed the training course, up to a maximum of £10 per shift.

In order to claim expenses, an expenses form must be completed and passed to our administrator. Receipts must be provided. We are unable to pay for expenses without attached receipts.

### **5. Support and Supervision:**

All Survivors' Network volunteers are highly valued by the organisation. Each line manager is the named person within the organisation that is responsible for the welfare of volunteers



but Survivors' Network operates an “open door” policy whereby any member of staff or the management team can be approached by any volunteer.

The individual line-managers will carry out regular (at least annually) volunteer appraisals with volunteers in order to identify any personal issues that may have arisen as a result of their work with Survivors' Network to facilitate further training needs, and to record the individual volunteer's progress with Survivors' Network. These appraisals should also include and record any feedback received from the volunteer about the experience of volunteering with Survivors' Network.

Survivors' Network expects volunteers to attend their service meetings. These are an opportunity to keep volunteers up to date with developments within the organisation, to share ideas about future plans and for volunteers to feed back any concerns, comments or ideas to the staff and management committee.

In addition to the support offered by the staff and management of the organisation, Survivors' Network provides all frontline service volunteers with access to clinical supervision. This provides a safe, containing space to explore feelings and emotions arising from the complex and challenging work that Survivors' Network volunteers undertake. It is essential for the safety of volunteers and service users.

Drop-in and helpline volunteers are required to attend the service meetings and clinical supervision monthly for the first 6 months after completing the induction training, and thereafter on a bi-monthly basis. If a volunteer is not able to attend the required number of meetings and supervision, they may not be able to volunteer until they have attended the next one. Repeated failure to attend may lead to termination of their volunteering role. If additional supervision is required due to a volunteer's lack of attendance at organised supervision sessions then they may be required to pay for this.

In exceptional circumstances it is possible to receive additional individual supervision. If volunteers feel they need some extra support, they need to inform their manager immediately.

After one of service, an appraisal will take place with the line manager to ensure that both the volunteer and the organisation are happy with the role being performed. Appraisals will then be undertaken on an annual basis.

## **6. Insurance:**

All volunteers are covered by Survivors' Network public liability and professional indemnity insurance policies whilst they are on the premises or engaged in work as a Survivors' Network volunteer. It is the responsibility of the volunteers to inform their motor insurance company if they are using their car in the act of volunteering.

## **7. Health and Safety:**

All members of staff, both voluntary and employed, are bound by the Survivors' Network Health and Safety Policy. This includes details on boundaries and volunteer safety. These topics are covered in more depth in the initial volunteer training. All volunteers are required to have a general awareness of the health and safety concerns of the organisation and are encouraged to take personal responsibility for their own physical and emotional safety.

Incidents to do with health and safety of volunteers must be reported to their line manager or on call member of staff, either directly or through the clinical supervisor. Once followed up, and any actions discharged, these are taken to Management Committee Meetings.



## **8. Absence:**

If volunteers are unable to attend their allocated shifts, they are responsible for giving maximum notice to staff and any volunteers they may be working with. Volunteers working in teams should also find cover, and if unable to find cover, they should notify their line manager (or other member of staff if unavailable) at the earliest opportunity.

Please note that due to the part time nature of most staff members it is not acceptable to advise of absence by e-mail or messages left on telephones. It is necessary to ensure that you speak to someone to register your non-attendance.

Longer absences should be discussed with the line manager.

If a volunteer wishes to take a break from their role at Survivors' Network, they should inform their line manager and have a discussion about how long they wish to be away for. If a drop-in and helpline volunteer takes a break for over 6 months, they will be required to go through the recruitment process again and retake the induction training.

## **9. Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures:**

Any concerns about unacceptable behaviour, breaches of confidentiality or health and safety policies can be initially reported to any member of staff, the clinical supervisor or the management committee. All concerns will be dealt with in accordance with our grievance and disciplinary procedure, and we will seek to resolve the issue as amicably as possible.

If the clinical supervisor has a concern about a volunteer or their work they will bring it to them directly. If the matter does not get resolved after exploring the issue together, the supervisor will take it to the line manager. This will be done with the volunteer's knowledge.

## **10. Confidentiality:**

Due to the nature of Survivors' Network work all volunteers are bound by the same confidentiality regulations as staff members, and therefore all staff, including volunteers, are obliged to observe the Survivors' Network Confidentiality Policy. Failure to do so will be considered gross misconduct and may result in instant dismissal.

The need for confidentiality and the specific circumstances where a volunteer is required to break confidentiality will be covered in the volunteer training.

## **11. Disengagement of volunteers:**

If a volunteer is not able to fulfil their duties adequately, the volunteer's position or working environment may be changed. In some cases, the volunteer may be asked not to volunteer further, for example where the volunteer has failed to make the minimum shift requirements, or to attend regular supervision and reviews. Volunteers not responding to communication (emails and phone calls) within a period of one month, without prior agreement with the line manager, will be assumed to have disengaged from their commitment to the organisation, and their volunteering role will be terminated.

## **12. Resignation:**

Survivors' Network understand that, due to changing circumstances, volunteers may need to resign from their volunteer involvement from time to time. Survivors' Network asks all volunteers to give as much notice as possible to the line manager before resigning, and, where possible, to leave the organisation a month after the new volunteers' intake, to give time to new volunteers to shadow. Resigning volunteers will be asked to attend an exit

interview. Volunteers who are resigning are encouraged to give feedback regarding their experience to Survivors' Network in order to improve the service provided and the management of volunteers.

