



Key Contact: Senior Management Team & Volunteer Services Manager

Date Agreed: January 2025

Review Date: January 2027

Volunteer Policy

At Survivors' Network, we are brave, we are compassionate, we are empowering and we are collaborative. These values guide how we interact with each other and serve our community.

This means:

We centre survivors in everything we do

We pay attention to and transform power

We practice care and love

We tackle intersecting forms of oppression

We build a culture of openness and are open to change

We do the work

We believe that by living these values, we can create a stronger and more effective organisation that makes a meaningful difference in the world.

We strive to ensure that these values are reflected in the creation and implementation of all Survivors' Network policies.

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.

Volunteers play a vital role in helping Survivors' Network achieve its mission.

This policy outlines our approach to involving volunteers in a way that is safe, inclusive, and legally appropriate.

This policy does not create a contract of employment and volunteers are not considered employees or workers.

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. This policy is on the website.

Purpose of Volunteering

Undertaken freely and by choice

Unpaid (except for reimbursement of genuine out-of-pocket expenses)

For the benefit of the community and the charity's objectives

2. Recruitment:

Volunteers are recruited based on their skills, interests, and suitability for the role.

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 role 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 volunteering with Survivors' Network. We aim to have a diverse range of people 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 Volunteer Services Coordinator and another member of staff/volunteer if appropriate. If this is successful, two references will be taken up, plus evidence of Right to Work 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 all genders but some roles may be limited to self-identified women and/ or gender diverse people
- 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.
- Groupwork & Helpline volunteers are asked to commit to 2 - 3 shifts per month and attend the five-day induction training programme, along with regular reviews, appraisals, monthly 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
- Role expectations
- Health and safety
- Safeguarding (if applicable)
- Confidentiality and data protection

There will be a probation period of 6 months to give the organisation and the volunteer time to discover if they are suited to each other. Regular check ins via email and phone will take place during this time. Groupwork & Helpline volunteers will be required to attend a 6-month review meeting in person with the Volunteer Services Coordinator. They will usually be required to have done 12 shifts and attended 6 supervisions to pass probation.

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 Volunteer Service Manager is responsible for locating and providing on-going training opportunities to Survivors' Network volunteers. Volunteers will be required to update their Safeguarding training every two years.

Volunteers will be provided with a Volunteer Role Description outlining tasks, time commitment, and supervision arrangements.

Volunteers are free to end their involvement at any time, and Survivors Network' may also end the arrangement if necessary.

.

Problem Solving and Conduct

Minor concerns will be addressed informally where possible.

Serious or repeated issues may lead to the volunteer being investigated and may be asked to step down.

Volunteers will be given an opportunity to respond to concerns raised.

4. Expenses:

Volunteers may claim reimbursement for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses, such as travel or meals, with receipts. 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. Expenses must be submitted in the correct financial year

5. Support and Supervision:

All Survivors' Network volunteers are highly valued by the organisation. Each Service Manager is the named person within the organisation that is responsible for the welfare of volunteers within their service, +but Survivors' Network operates an “open door” policy whereby any member of staff or the management team can be approached by any volunteer. Regular check-ins may be arranged to provide feedback and address any concerns

The individual Service Manager 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 role 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.

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 role that Survivors' Network volunteers undertake. It is essential for the safety of volunteers and service users.

Groupwork & helpline volunteers are required to attend 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 the Volunteer Services Manager immediately.

After one year 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. Volunteers must follow health and safety procedures and report any incidents or concerns.

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 volunteering with. Volunteers should aim to find cover, and if unable to find cover, they should notify the Volunteer Service 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 Volunteer Services Manager.

If a volunteer wishes to take a break from their role at Survivors' Network, they should inform the Volunteer Services Manager and have a discussion about how long they wish to be away for. If a Groupwork & 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. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Survivors Network is committed to creating an inclusive environment and does not tolerate discrimination or harassment.

Volunteers are expected to treat everyone with dignity and respect.

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 Volunteer Grievance and Volunteer 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 role 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 Service Manager.

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.

Volunteers must maintain confidentiality and comply with UK GDPR when handling personal or sensitive information.

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

11. Safeguarding

Volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults may be required to undergo a DBS check. Any safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Volunteers must ensure compliance with the Safeguarding measures and protocols in place.

12. Disengagement of volunteers:

If a volunteer is not able to fulfil their duties adequately, the volunteer's position or volunteering 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 two months, without prior agreement with the coordinator, will be assumed to have disengaged from their commitment to the organisation, and their volunteering role will be terminated.

12. Resignation & References:

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 Service 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 invited to complete an exit interview form. 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.

Reference will usually only be given if a volunteer has supported a minimum of 15 shifts, either helpline or groupwork.

13. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in legislation or organisational practice.