

Bristol Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Forum

The Create Centre, Smeaton Road, Bristol, BS1 6XN

Registered Charity No : 1098085

VOLUNTEER POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Volunteers are valuable to Bristol LGB Forum, by giving their time and dedication without pay. It is important to ensure that we protect volunteers and members/service users, by making sure that volunteers are recruited and selected properly and that they are fit to work. Where volunteers also have contact with our members, we may have legal obligations, including checks to be carried out. In all this it is important that volunteers are treated with respect and dignity.

Therefore, to make sure that this does happen, the Bristol LGB Forum has decided that this policy (the Policy) will be followed.

PURPOSE

The aim of the Policy is to produce a clear framework for the use of volunteers working at Bristol LGB Forum (the Forum). A volunteer is someone who is working in an unpaid capacity for the Forum as part of a programme of activity.

The Forum wants to involve and use volunteers wherever this is appropriate. The Policy is intended to help promote a constructive partnership between volunteers and staff. People volunteer for a variety of reasons and can contribute in a range of ways according to the individual needs and talents that they bring. However, in all cases, volunteers will need to understand the structure and abide by the values and objectives of the Forum, and of the particular project or tasks with which they are linked. In all cases the interests of the Forum and its members must at all times be paramount.

IMPLEMENTATION

Nominated paid staff will be responsible for ensuring that the Policy is implemented.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Forum's commitment to diversity and equality applies equally to volunteers. The Forum values the contribution made by everyone and especially that made by unpaid volunteers - regardless of sex, disability, race, age, class, marital status, religion, ethnic or national origin.

Volunteers must, in turn, uphold these values themselves.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Volunteers will be recruited and selected according to their suitability in helping meet needs defined by the Forum's constitution, strategic plan, funding agreements and related needs of members. Volunteers should normally be over 18; if under, the application should be discussed with the Management Committee, through its Employment sub-group. All prospective volunteers will be asked to complete an application form naming two referees and to make a medical declaration. They will be interviewed by the senior worker of the relevant section/area of the Forum's work, and then approved volunteers will receive an induction programme which closely parallels that for paid members of staff. All volunteers are subject to disclosure of criminal convictions.

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

All volunteers should sign a form of agreement that lays out general and specific expectations. A draft copy can be found at Annex A. This does not amount to a contract of employment, but clearly sets out what either party can expect from the other.

General Expectations

Volunteers will:

- a) Have the right to be made welcome and to feel involved and valued.
- b) Extend the same right to all those they come into contact with during their volunteering.

- c) Be expected at all times to promote and preserve the aims, objectives and purpose of the Forum, informing themselves about, and work in accordance with, all appropriate Forum policies, guidelines and procedures. These will be covered as part of the induction procedure.
- d) Receive regular supervision. Every volunteer should have a supervisor who they can go to with queries or problems. This is also important for feedback so volunteers know how they are performing. Should volunteers' performance fall below the required level steps should be taken to remedy this. Standards need to be established and maintained regardless of the status of the individual. Situations of misconduct need to be similarly managed. Being a volunteer does not excuse poor behaviour.
- e) Undertake only those tasks and responsibilities as arranged and agreed.
- f) Respect confidentiality at all times.
- g) Take responsibility for providing feedback and information to relevant staff.
- h) Report all accidents, serious incidents or damage to equipment immediately to their nominated member of staff (or, in their absence, the Employment Sub-Group) at all times.

Specific Expectations

The term of agreement will specify, without being inflexible:

- a) The hours and days and/or frequency during which the volunteering will take place.
- b) The name of the volunteer's nominated supervisor. A record of supervision would be maintained.
- c) Details of the volunteer's responsibilities.
- d) Details of the induction procedures that have been carried out.

EXPENSES

Subject to prior agreement, any reasonable costs incurred during volunteering will be reimbursed.

INSURANCE

General

- a) Approved volunteers are deemed to be employees for the purposes of insurance, and are therefore covered by the Forum's Employers' Liability policy for death or injury arising from their employment by the Forum. It will not cover loss of earnings.

- b) Public Liability cover is in force to protect the Forum's legal liability for third party injury or property damage arising in connection with the business of the Forum.

Agreed and Adopted on

Signed by

Name

Position