

Volunteering Policy 2012

This policy, like all OTR policies, will be annually reviewed and any revisions brought to the attention of all staff and volunteers. This policy will be applied equally and fairly and without exception.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

OTR is strongly committed to involving volunteers in all areas of our work, helping us to ensure that we reflect the interests, needs and resources of the communities we work with. Volunteers are a core part of the OTR team, with distinctive but complementary roles alongside paid staff. OTR recognises and values the contribution volunteers make to the organisation. As OTR benefits from the skills, experience and enthusiasm of volunteers, we believe that volunteers should also be able to benefit from their involvement with us. We are committed to providing relevant opportunities and appropriate support, and regularly review our policies and practices to ensure we achieve this.

OTR seeks to involve volunteers to:

- Contribute to the provision of services by NCVS.
- Ensure our services meet the needs of all our current and prospective clients.
- Provide new skills and perspectives
- Increase our contact with the local communities we serve.
- Enable people to contribute to their community and to benefit from their involvement.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

As with all OTR governance ultimate responsibility for the organisation's policies and their implementation rests with the Trustees.

It is the responsibility of the Director to ensure all volunteers are aware of this policy and have access to it. The Director is also responsible for ensuring volunteers have an experience commensurate with aims and principles of this policy.

3. PRINCIPLES

This Volunteering Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- OTR does not use volunteers to replace nor displace paid staff.
- OTR will not use volunteers to do work where funding is available to employ paid staff.
- OTR will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to OTR's work and to benefit from their involvement.
- OTR recognises that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet

these needs, as well as providing the training for them to do their work effectively.

- OTR expects that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work.
- OTR is committed to identifying and securing additional resources to enable volunteers with additional support needs to volunteer at OTR.

4. ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

Each volunteer will have a written outline of the work they will be undertaking giving information about the purpose, tasks and any particular skills needed. Role Descriptions are designed to give a clear outline of the basic tasks, boundaries and reasonable expectations, but at the same time may be flexible to take into account a volunteer's particular skills, abilities, experience or time available.

Role Descriptions are not intended to create a contractual relationship – volunteers are not under any obligation to do the work, nor is OTR under any obligation to provide such work. OTR has no intention to create a contractual relationship with volunteers and recognises that volunteering is fundamentally a matter of choice.

5. EXPENSES

OTR believes that volunteers should not be out of pocket as a result of volunteering. All volunteers are entitled to have their agreed travel and other out of pocket expenses reimbursed on the production of proof of expenditure.

6. INDUCTION AND TRAINING

OTR will:

- Provide all volunteers with an induction, and a copy of the Volunteers' Welcome Pack.
- Provide all volunteers with an opportunity to discuss the induction information and any issues with their supervisor.
- Provide training as appropriate to enable volunteers to undertake the role.
- Encourage all volunteers to participate in further relevant training and development opportunities where appropriate.
- Seek to provide opportunities for all volunteers to achieve recognition of their learning through qualification or accreditation.

(Continued overleaf)

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7. SUPPORT AND MANAGEMENT

Volunteers will be assigned a supervisor who will be the volunteer's first point of contact. This person is responsible for providing ongoing supervision, support and guidance. For volunteer counsellors this will be the OTR Counselling and Participation Lead.

OTR will provide volunteers with adequate and appropriate facilities, equipment and resources to enable volunteers to fulfil their roles.

For some roles volunteers may be taken on subject to an agreed introductory period. The length of any introductory period will be set in advance and communicated in writing in the Role Description.

8. DISCIPLINARY AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

It is expected that supervisors will deal with complaints and issues about or from volunteers through the usual support and supervision systems, in the first instance. In a small organisation like OTR there is a responsibility on all staff and volunteers to try to find resolution through informal channels first, before invoking formal procedures. The exception to this is in relation to Child Protection. (See Child Safeguarding and Protection Policy)

In the interests of protecting the wellbeing of all our volunteers, staff and service users, OTR operates formal Disciplinary and Complaints procedures for dealing with more serious issues or instances of gross misconduct. These policies and procedures can be found in the Volunteers' Welcome Pack.

9. VOLUNTEER'S VIEWS

Volunteers are encouraged to express their views about matters concerning OTR and its work. OTR welcomes suggestions about ways in which the organisation could improve the quality of the volunteering experience.

All volunteers have an open invitation to join OTR Team Meetings, and volunteer counsellors are welcome and encouraged to attend the Counsellors Forum.

10. INSURANCE

Volunteers are covered by public liability, employer's liability and, where relevant, professional indemnity insurance policies whilst they are engaged in authorised work on OTR's behalf.

11. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Volunteers are included within OTR's Health and Safety Policy and are expected to work in line with appropriate health and safety guidance at all times.

12. EQUALITY

- OTR is committed to equal opportunities and the promotion of diversity in respect of both paid staff and volunteers.

- OTR volunteers will be expected to attend available diversity training where possible, and to demonstrate a strong commitment to implementing OTR's Equality Policy.

- OTR as an organisation and volunteer counsellors work within the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) Ethical Framework. www.bacp.co.uk/ethical_framework

- OTR seeks to protect all of its volunteers from harassment and discrimination and operates a Health and Safety, Disciplinary and Complaints Procedure to deal with such issues.

13. DATA PROTECTION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- Volunteers are expected to adhere to the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff, and will be asked to sign a copy of the OTR Confidentiality Agreement.

- OTR will maintain personnel files (which may be paper or electronic) for all volunteers which may include: personal contact and emergency contact details, application and selection information, references, CRB Disclosures, supervision and training activities and any complaints or grievances made or received.

- All personal data will be treated in accordance with Data Protection legislation, and volunteers are entitled to have access to personal records relating to their own involvement.

- Records relating to Safeguarding concerns will be kept for the statutory period of ten years, irrespective of whether the volunteer leaves OTR in that time.

14. OTR EMPLOYEE'S AS VOLUNTEERS

OTR accepts the services of its own staff as volunteers, provided that:

- such services are offered freely and without any form of coercion;

- it involves work which is outside the scope of normal staff duties;

- it is outside usual working hours.

Family of staff are allowed to volunteer with the organisation. When family members are involved as volunteers, they will not be placed under the direct supervision of members of their family who are employees.

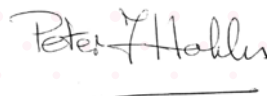
15. RECRUITMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AS VOLUNTEERS

As an organisation working with young people OTR is committed to the involvement and participation of young people in the work of the organisation. (See OTR Participation Policy).

Volunteers under 16 years of age must have the written consent of a parent or guardian in order to volunteer. A risk assessment should be carried out before involving under 16's as volunteers in a role normally undertaken by over 16's, to establish if any extra measures may be needed to safeguard the volunteer, the organisation or the public.

Last Updated 01.01.2012

Signed on behalf of OTR Executive:



Peter Hobbs

Chair of Trustees

Date of Review 01.01.2013

Signed off by Director operationally:



Simon Newitt

Director