Volunteer Policy



Coventry & Warwickshire Mind aims to:

* Work for improvements in mental health care and services;
* Provide and pioneer facilities to complement and offer alternative support and services to statutory agencies;
* Increase public understanding and support

In line with these aims, Coventry & Warwickshire Mind seeks to involve volunteers:

* To ensure that our services meet the needs of clients
* To provide new skills and perspectives
* To increase our contact with the community we serve
* To respect, support and demonstrate the value of people with mental ill health by involving them as volunteers in the development and provision of services and support
* Who are able to give a commitment of at least six months in their voluntary role.

Principles

This Volunteering Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

* Coventry & Warwickshire Mind will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to Coventry & Warwickshire Mind’s work
* Coventry & Warwickshire Mind does not aim to introduce volunteers to replace paid staff
* Coventry & Warwickshire Mind expects that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work
* Coventry & Warwickshire Mind recognises that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers to meet these needs, as well as providing the training and support for them to do their work effectively.
* Coventry & Warwickshire Mind seeks to involve volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities and commits the necessary resources to this aim.

Recruitment & Selection

All potential volunteers will be expected to complete an application form. Following a successful interview, references will be requested and an enhanced DBS check completed (for details see PRC30 – Volunteering Process). The referees provided must have known the individual for a minimum of two years and must not be related to the applicant. If the references received are not satisfactory or the referee has not known the applicant for a minimum of two years, and the individual cannot provide alternative references, the potential volunteer will receive a letter of refusal. DBS check results will be considered on an individual basis.

Potential volunteers will be given information on all volunteering opportunities and will be able to contact individual services/projects for more information. If a visit to an individual service/project is needed, the volunteer co-ordinator will arrange an appointment.

Reviews

All new volunteers will take part in regular reviews. If the initial choice of service/project is not appropriate, the opportunity will be given to volunteer elsewhere. If the review highlights any areas of misconduct or bad practice, Coventry & Warwickshire Mind reserves the right to end the volunteering, details of which will be given in writing.

Volunteer Agreements and Voluntary Work Outlines

Volunteers will be issued with a Volunteer Agreement detailing what is expected of the volunteer and what they can expect from Coventry &Warwickshire Mind. Neither of these documents is a contract of employment; Each volunteer will also receive a Volunteers’ Handbook.

Expenses

All volunteers will have their travel and reasonable out of pocket expenses reimbursed. Volunteers working a minimum of five hours per day will be able to claim some expenses for lunch and travel: for details see the Volunteers’ Handbook or POL51 – Volunteer Expenses Policy.

Induction and training

All volunteers will participate in an induction into Coventry & Warwickshire Mind plus the area in which they will be working. Training will be provided as appropriate, and where possible volunteers will be offered additional training (on the same basis as paid staff).

Support & Recognition

All volunteers will have a named person as their main point of contact. They will be provided with regular support sessions to feed back on progress, discuss future development and address any problems. Volunteers will also be invited to organisational events, social activities and recognition for special or long service.

The Involvement of volunteers

Volunteers are encouraged to express their views about matters concerning Coventry & Warwickshire Mind and its work. Through involvement in the Quality Group and other appropriate groups/forums, the valuable experience which volunteers have contributes to service planning and review.

Insurance

All volunteers are covered by Coventry & Warwickshire Mind’s insurance policy whilst they are on the premises or engaged in any work on Coventry & Warwickshire Mind’s behalf. This excludes the use of a car in a voluntary capacity.

Health and Safety

Volunteers are covered by Coventry & Warwickshire Mind’s Health and Safety Policy (POL36), a full copy of which is available from Head Office.

Equal Opportunities

Coventry & Warwickshire Mind operates an equal opportunities policy in respect of both paid staff and volunteers. Volunteers will be expected to have an understanding of and commitment to our Equal Opportunities Policy (POL45). Further information can be found in the Volunteers’ Handbook.

Confidentiality

Volunteers will be subject to the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff and will be required to sign a copy of the Data Protection &

Confidentiality Policy (POL14) during their induction.

Misconduct and/or Bad Practice

Volunteers are expected to contribute to the success, effectiveness and efficiency of Coventry & Warwickshire Mind. If volunteers fail to behave appropriately, they will initially be offered support, but as a last resort, Coventry & Warwickshire Mind will reserve the right to withdraw the volunteering opportunity.

DBS (Disclosure Barring Service)

All volunteers will be required to complete an enhanced DBS Application. More information is available in POL26 – Disclosure & Barring Policy.

Disclosure of Criminal Convictions

The Senior Management Team of Coventry & Warwickshire Mind will consider all applicants who have disclosed or have been identified as having any kind of criminal conviction. The Senior Management Team will take into account the type of conviction, the date of the conviction, the activities the applicant has undertaken since the conviction and the proposed voluntary activities applied for within Coventry & Warwickshire Mind. Coventry & Warwickshire Mind reserves the right to and may request that the applicant provides additional references in these circumstances.

The Right to Appeal

Volunteers whose application is refused or whose volunteering has been terminated have the right to appeal against this decision. Please see Volunteer Appeals Process (PRC36).