

Volunteer Policy			
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1. Introduction

Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust (AWP) recognises the important role of volunteers in enhancing the service provided by the trust, complementing and supporting the work of staff to improve the day to day experience of service users.

The Trust values enormously the skills and different perspectives which volunteers from our diverse communities bring to their roles. AWP is committed to implementing the necessary systems and process to welcome volunteers safely into the organisation, to supporting staff in working with volunteers and to maximise the benefits of this valuable resource.

Volunteers play an important role in the Trust, complementing the work of Trust staff and improving the service user experience through practical activities. Roles are described [here](#) and include: assisting with art or craft activities for in-patients, running drumming sessions, assisting service users to complete surveys about their care, gardening, fundraising and administrative support. This is not a comprehensive list of volunteering opportunities within AWP. This policy sets out the Trust's arrangements for volunteers.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Confirm AWP's commitment to volunteers
- Recognise the contribution of volunteers
- Provide a framework for developing volunteering and managing and supporting volunteers
- Offer clear guidance and support to staff working with volunteers
- Ensure a consistent Trust wide approach.

3. Scope

This policy is for all AWP staff as there is an expectation that they will work with volunteers at some point. It applies to administrative, community and in-patient services and covers all sites and areas in which the Trust operates.

This policy refers specifically to volunteers, who usually volunteer for an agreed number of hours on a regular basis in one specific setting. It also covers Peer Mentor volunteers, who are supported by Involvement Coordinators and are current or recent service users. Peer Mentors support current service users in their recovery journey. This policy does not apply to service user and carer involvees.

This policy does not apply to Mental Health Act Associates.

This policy does not refer to people on observational placements. See [Guidelines on placements in AWP clinical settings for young people](#) .

This policy does not apply to people undertaking work experience in AWP. See the [Work Experience Policy](#).

The policy does not apply to 'enrichment activities' within the Trust, for example, a choir visiting an in-patient unit or a speaker giving a one off talk to service users. People taking part in enrichment activities are on Trust premises for a short period of time with a clearly defined purpose and are accompanied by AWP staff at all times. They will not have any unsupervised one to one contact with service users. See section 5.6 of the [Security Policy](#) . These activities would not take place more than four times a year for any given individual or group.

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Foundation Trust members who volunteer their time occasionally, for example, helping at Trust events, are not required to register formally as Trust volunteers. They will not have any unsupervised one to one contact with service users.

4. Definitions

A volunteer is someone who, without payment, regularly offers their time and skills to perform an activity for the benefit of the service users and carers within the Trust. They may be members of the public, students, staff, service users or carers.

Peer mentor volunteers are current or recent service users who are supported by Involvement Coordinators. They support current service users in their recovery journey.

An enrichment activity, such as a performance by a choir, is a visit to Trust premises with a clearly defined purpose for a short period of time. Visitors will be accompanied by AWP staff and will not have any unsupervised one to one contact with service users.

5. Policy description

The current minimum age for volunteers in AWP is 17. There is no upper age limit.

Volunteer roles are non-clinical. However, volunteers can provide additional support for clinical groups run by staff in some settings. Volunteers are not allowed to undertake any role that is the responsibility of a paid member of staff anywhere in the Trust.

Volunteer roles are clearly defined, describing the personal qualities, skills and knowledge required to enable individuals to be successfully matched to roles. Role descriptions list the tasks the volunteer will be required to undertake. The Trust carries out [risk assessments](#) for all volunteer roles. The purpose of this is to eliminate or control any potential hazards or risks to volunteers, including those that may arise from discrimination and/or prejudice based on an individual's identity. The Trust undertakes appropriate actions to ensure the safety of our volunteers and service users. Individual risk assessments are carried out for volunteers who are under 18 years of age and in other cases where an individual assessment is required to ensure the volunteers' safety. Volunteers are expected to act responsibly and to agree to comply with AWP's Health and Safety Policy and procedures.

The volunteer recruitment process is inclusive. We positively welcome applications for volunteering from all people regardless of age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief or ethnicity. We welcome applications for volunteering from all sectors of our communities and individuals with an interest in the work of the Trust, including service users, family members and carers, staff and Foundation Trust members. Where a volunteer needs the support of a carer to carry out a role, that carer will also need to register as an AWP volunteer.

Expressions of interest in volunteering are responded to promptly. Potential volunteers meet with the Voluntary Service Coordinator and complete an [application form](#) and the [appropriate checks](#). Volunteers are required to complete all checks, induction training and sign the volunteer agreement (in the [Induction Pack](#)) and [confidentiality agreement](#) before commencing their placement.

AWP has a duty of care to service users and staff. If any DBS disclosure raises concerns, it is reviewed and risk assessed by the Head of Safeguarding. In some cases, the person will not be offered a volunteer placement.

All AWP staff and volunteers have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults, and to protect the public from preventable harm. This duty takes precedence over the duty of confidentiality where there is a risk of significant harm or where a criminal offence has occurred, or is likely to occur.

There is an agreed process if concerns are raised about a volunteer or by a volunteer. See guidance on [concerns raised by volunteers](#) and [concerns raised about volunteers](#).

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AWP volunteers are covered by the Trust's public liability insurance while on Trust premises or while undertaking previously agreed tasks on AWP's behalf.

In order to continually improve our volunteer services, AWP collects data about volunteers. The kind of information we record is: age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity and disability. It is optional for volunteers to provide this information by completing the [Volunteer Diversity Monitoring Form](#). Data is securely held, used sensitively and reported anonymously.

AWP requires up to date contact details from volunteers, including who to contact in an emergency. AWP follows the guidance of the Data Protection Act 1998. The Trust keeps records of: recruitment information, start date, role, tasks undertaken and training.

Volunteers are offered reasonable [travel expenses](#) for their volunteering and to attend AWP training.

Some volunteers within AWP may be managed by partner organisations such as universities, the Alzheimer's Society or the Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) or other third sector providers. In these cases, a partnership agreement form is completed. Voluntary Services liaise closely with partner organisations to confirm that that appropriate checks have been undertaken to satisfy AWP safeguarding requirements and that appropriate training, guidance, support and management is in place for these volunteers.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 Director of Nursing and Quality

The Director of Nursing and Quality is the lead Executive Director for volunteering.

6.2 Patient Experience Manager

The Patient Experience Manager is the lead manager for volunteering and is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented.

6.3 Managing Directors

The Managing Directors are responsible for the operational delivery of volunteering in their own locality ensuring compliance with this policy and associated guidance.

6.4 Voluntary Service Coordinator

The Voluntary Service Coordinator is responsible for advising on and supporting the development of volunteering roles, for volunteer recruitment, selection, placement and induction, and for ensuring that all appropriate checks and training are carried out. They are supported by the Voluntary Service Administrator.

The Voluntary Service Advisory Group supports the Voluntary Service Coordinator in promoting AWP volunteering and implementing this policy.

6.5 Volunteer Supervisors

Volunteer Supervisors are staff who hold different roles in the Trust. They are individuals who have been identified locally to manage volunteers in their ward or team. They are responsible for the health and safety risk assessment and action plan and for managing the volunteer locally, including giving regular support and monthly supervision. See [attached](#).

6.6 Head of Safeguarding

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The Head of Safeguarding reviews any DBS disclosures for potential volunteers and advises the Voluntary Service Coordinator about risks in relation to the individual undertaking the specific volunteer role, and the level of disclosure required for each role.

6.7 Learning and Development

Learning & Development liaise with the Voluntary Service Coordinator to ensure that appropriate training for volunteers and for staff working with volunteers is developed and delivered.

6.8 Staff

All staff are expected to welcome volunteers to their ward or team and to respect the volunteers' individual contribution to the day to day experience of service users and carers.

7. Training

All volunteers receive induction training and an [Induction Pack](#) which provides information and guidance about: the Trust, equality and diversity, training and supervision, appropriate behaviour when volunteering, expenses and how we value our volunteers. This does not constitute a contract of employment. It clarifies the expectations AWP has of volunteers (including a Code of Conduct) and the expectations that volunteers can reasonably have of the Trust.

All volunteers receive local induction training from their volunteer supervisor, focussed on health and safety and local procedures.

Volunteers are offered internal training from Learning and Development appropriate and relevant to their volunteer role.

Staff are offered training by Voluntary Services on working with volunteers. Guidance for staff is available on [Ourspace](#).

8. Monitoring

There will be an annual Voluntary Service report to the Quality and Standards Committee.

The Voluntary Service Advisory Group, which meets quarterly, will monitor actions linked to this policy and associated guidance. Members of the group include volunteers and staff.

Regular volunteer surveys to ensure that this Trust is responsive to the feedback from our volunteers.

9. Associated policies

[Work Experience Policy](#)

[Security Policy](#)

10. Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1

[Mental Health Act Guidance](#)

10.2 Appendix 2

[Guidelines on placements in AWP clinical settings for young people](#)

Version History				
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