

TOG Mind

Volunteer and Placements Policy

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Revision History

Date of this revision: November 2023

To be reviewed by: July 2025

Version number	Revised by	Summary of Changes	Changes marked
1	Ingrid Galbraith	Volunteer Policy	No
2	Nicola Grindrod	Volunteer Policy update	No
3	Shiobain Maher	Volunteer, Placements and Work Experience Policy	No
4	Karen Ditchfield	Basic formatting. Updated expenses and training sections. Removed work experience.	No
5	Karen Ditchfield	Expense claims updated to include car parking expenses.	No

Approvals

This document requires the following approvals.

Name	Title	Date of Issue	Version
Cheryl Eastwood	Chair	May 2019	3
Cheryl Eastwood	Chair	September 2022	4
Alice Coren	Vice Chair	December 2023	5

1. Introduction and Background

TOG Mind's policies are underpinned by our values of:

- Relationships: we listen and ask questions to understand others and to build trust. People matter to us both inside and outside our organisation.
- Aspiration: we support one another, clients, and communities to achieve better mental health.
- Learning: we seek insight and grow from experience; finding new or better ways to contribute to the field of mental health.
- Potential: we encourage personal responsibility for development by discovering and realising the abilities and energies of people.

Tameside Oldham and Glossop (TOG) Mind recognise that volunteers' time and skills are an important resource without which the organisation could not offer as comprehensive a service to the public. The organisation hopes volunteers find the time spent volunteering a valuable and stimulating experience. This policy is intended to provide an understanding of the volunteer role in the organisation.

TOG Mind consider volunteering to be a mutually beneficial arrangement that is both enjoyable and rewarding for both parties. Volunteers for TOG Mind are unpaid and do not receive any material reward for their work.

Anyone aged 16 and over – or 18 and over for volunteers who are undertaking lone working with individuals as part of their role – can apply to be a volunteer with TOG Mind.

There is no contract of employment between the volunteer and organisation so neither party are liable with regards to employment law. Volunteers are not obliged to carry out any tasks offered, nor are volunteers obliged to attend on any day or at any particular time. However, in the interests of the organisation, volunteers are required to make a commitment to agreed volunteering hours to support in the consistency of service delivery. Equally, TOG Mind are not obliged to provide work at any time but will endeavour to inform volunteers of availability of work at the earliest opportunity.

2. Scope

This policy is relevant to all Volunteers, which for the purposes of this policy includes student Placements but does not include volunteer executive committee members who have their own set of executive committee member policies.

Definitions:

Volunteers – A person who donates their time and effort for a cause or organisation without being paid.

Placement – A person who undertakes an unpaid role within a real working environment which fulfils part of the requirements of a qualification and provides mutual benefit to both the organisation and the student. For the purposes of this policy people on placements will be referred to as a volunteer and the policy applies equally to them except where stated otherwise.

3. Related Policy and Procedure

Please read this policy in conjunction with the following related policies:

- Paid staff and volunteer code of conduct
- Health and Safety Policy Handbook
- Disclosure and Barring Policy (where applicable)
- Confidentiality Policy
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Relevant services policies

4. Purpose and aims of this Policy

The aim of this policy is to provide:

- organisational commitment and value to volunteers
- fair and consistent treatment of volunteers
- clarity of roles and responsibilities for both the volunteer and organisation
- a framework within which all volunteers operate

5. Policy Statement

Recruitment

There are several different volunteering roles within the organisation. The organisation's volunteering roles are advertised via various channels including the website, social media, email and newsletters. Before completing an application, potential volunteers are welcome to contact the organisation and informally discuss their individual needs as well as find out about the organisation's requirements.

All volunteering roles require an application form to be completed. A role description for each role accompanies the application form. Applications will be checked, and applicants will be assessed on their suitability for the volunteer role they have applied; where an individual applies for several roles within the organisation they will be assessed on their suitability for each role.

Applicants will be contacted if they have been successful in gaining an interview; interviews may take place either one-to-one or in a group. Interview questions will be based on the role which is being applied for and a minimum of two staff members from the organisation will conduct the interview. In some instances, where necessary for the role, there will be additional requirements during the recruitment process; this may include a practical assessment within the interview.

If successful, applicants will be required to provide the details of two referees. Once appropriate references have been received the applicant can progress with their application. The organisation accepts references from friends and family as well as work or other volunteering roles.

A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check may be required, where appropriate, prior to a volunteer doing any relevant work with the organisation. Any expenses related to this are covered by the organisation.

With regards to dual relationships within the organisation, TOG Mind believe it is important to recognise the feelings that may be generated within a therapeutic relationship and the possible need for a period to pass for these to settle down again. Therefore, the organisation does not allow individuals accessing certain services within the organisation to volunteer whilst accessing this service.

If an individual has come to the end of receiving a service from us and wishes to become a volunteer, then each request shall be assessed on individual merit. The views of the worker will be considered, as well as what role has been applied for.

Induction

Following a successful interview, an induction process must be followed with all new volunteers. You will be required to complete online core training modules, Safeguarding Level 1 for Adults and Children, Data Security Level 1 and a one-day face to face training which will cover:

- The role of the volunteer
- Confidentiality issues
- Volunteer policy, code of conduct, health and safety information, relevant service policies and payment of clinical supervision policy (for qualified counsellors only)
- Essential day to day procedures
- Details of support procedures
- Details of ongoing training
- The volunteer agreement
- Any other information relevant to the volunteer role

During induction and onboarding the organisation will gather any additional relevant information from volunteers that is needed to provide support, such as, emergency contacts to respond in the event of an emergency during your volunteering. This information will be held on our company HR systems.

6. Equality and diversity

The organisation is firmly committed to equality and diversity. The organisation has much to learn and profit from diverse cultures, diversity of experience and a wide range of perspectives, with diversity making the organisation more effective in meeting the needs of all stakeholders. Developing and maintaining an organisation in which differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are fostered and valued, and those with diverse backgrounds and experiences can participate and contribute, is central.

7. Expenses

The organisation wants to ensure barriers to volunteering are minimised. The organisation encourages volunteers to claim the appropriate expenses for any volunteer work carried out within the organisation. Each volunteer will have access to our HR system (Breathe HR) where policies are stored and where volunteers can claim expenses.

To claim expenses VAT receipts are required (where applicable) and tickets are required for all travel reimbursements. Mileage claims are logged through Breathe HR. All claims must be made within 6 weeks of being incurred. All expenses will be made by BACS payment direct into your bank account.

Volunteers may claim for travel to and from home to their usual venue for volunteering up to a maximum of 12 miles each way. Exceptions to this can be considered by the Department Director. We will reimburse car parking expenses up to the value of £4.00 per day, with a receipt claimed through the expense procedure. The time the car parking receipt relates to should not be for longer than the number of hours volunteered. Volunteers working 4 hours or more per day will be reimbursed up to the value of £4.00 per day to cover the purchase of food, with a receipt claimed through the expense procedure.

Placement students cannot claim for usual travel to and from their usual venue for volunteering. Should a placement student be engaged in work outside of the placement which would be considered volunteering then the volunteer allowances apply. Placement/Work Experience Students are not eligible for reimbursement of food purchases.

8. Support

TOG Mind is committed to supporting the development of volunteers' skills and expertise and providing a safe and trusting environment to learn.

All volunteers within the organisation will have access to an appropriate member of staff for day to day support. Volunteers are encouraged to become familiar with the staff member(s) responsible for the area they volunteer in, so they know where to access support when needed.

If the appropriate staff member for a service is unavailable for support, a volunteer can seek support from any other member of staff within the organisation.

9. Supervision

Volunteers are discouraged from 'taking issues home' both in the interest of maintaining good wellbeing for our volunteers and in the interest of adhering to our confidentiality policy.

Whilst volunteering within the organisation it is important that volunteers have access to an appropriate staff member to enable both volunteers and staff to raise any issues and have these addressed appropriately.

Where volunteer roles include clinical client work supervision meetings will be used to explore client and volunteer relationships, good practice with clients and any difficult situations/disclosures. It is expected that volunteers carrying out clinical client work will attend supervision regularly. Please see the Supervision Framework for further guidance.

All qualified counselling/therapy volunteers, or year three counsellor doctorate students, are required to attend at least 90 minutes of external supervision per month, for which the amounts below can be claimed from the organisation:

- 2-3 clients per week = £18.75 towards monthly supervision
- 4-5 clients per week = £35.00 towards monthly supervision
- 6-7 clients per week = £56.25 towards monthly supervision
- 8 clients or more per week = £75 towards monthly supervision

It is the responsibility of volunteers to seek appropriate supervision/support relevant for their role.

10. Training

Ongoing training is available to volunteers within the organisation, in addition to training required for their role. Details of available training is sent out electronically to volunteers. If it is identified that volunteers have a specific training need relating to their volunteer role, it should be discussed with the appropriate staff member and the volunteer should be supported in accessing this training. Should a volunteer request access to training which is outside of their current volunteer role remit this will be discussed with the appropriate staff member and decisions made about access to further training will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The organisation is keen for volunteers to develop their skills and abilities and is happy for volunteers to take on additional volunteering roles within the centre. If a volunteer wishes to take on additional responsibilities via another volunteer role within the organisation this should be discussed with the appropriate staff member for their current volunteer role first.

There may be additional recruitment processes to follow for volunteers wishing to access more than one role within their organisation and individuals must discuss this with the appropriate service manager.

11. Communication

TOG Mind will endeavour to inform and communicate with volunteers about changes within the organisation in an open and honest way. We will ensure that communication methods used are inclusive and accessible, so all volunteers have access to the information. Information is generally disseminated via email and notice boards but where we are able, we will endeavour to communicate issues which might impact upon volunteers face-to-face.

As the organisation agrees to communicate openly and honestly with volunteers it is also the expectation that volunteers will communicate openly and honestly with staff members, other colleagues and members of the public accessing our services.

For specific volunteer roles it may be necessary for volunteers to access additional training, so they are able to communicate appropriately through their role.

Volunteers are asked to consider the impact upon the organisation of any communication, whether via email, telephone, social media or face-to-face contact.

12. Confidentiality

The organisation requires all workers, including volunteers, paid staff and Executive Committee to observe an explicit confidentiality policy. It is the responsibility of all volunteers and workers within the organisation to understand and adhere to the importance of maintaining confidentiality, in line with our policy, and to know when it is appropriate to break confidentiality. Any individual who does not understand the confidentiality policy should seek additional support from the appropriate staff member and may need to access further training. Further details can be found in the Confidentiality Policy.

13. Boundaries

To ensure the organisation, its staff, volunteers, any other workers and members of the public are within an environment which is safe, ethical and promotes wellbeing and independence, not fostering dependency, it is essential that professional boundaries are adhered to.

It is the responsibility of staff, volunteers and any other workers to ensure they understand how to maintain professional boundaries and to recognise when there may be an issue with these boundaries.

Below are several ways in which the organisation would expect a volunteer to maintain their boundaries, this list is not exhaustive and further guidance can be found in the Paid Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct:

- If a volunteer knows a person that comes and accesses a service they are providing, they must inform a member of staff to check it is appropriate to continue.
- Volunteers must not give out personal details to individuals accessing services whilst they are accessing services, nor should they engage in any form of relationship without making this known to a member of staff.
- Volunteers must not engage in or encourage physical contact which may be considered inappropriate with individuals accessing services.
- Volunteers should not accept gifts of any kind from individuals accessing services; should accepting a gift be unavoidable this should be discussed with a member of staff.
- Volunteers should understand management of internal relationships and boundaries with other volunteers or staff members.
- Some volunteer roles are required to be independent from any other roles within the organisation such as a Trustee Board member.
- Some volunteers may have their own private practice outside of the organisation. These services must not be promoted or endorsed directly to any clients undertaking services within TOG Mind.

Should volunteers have any concerns about boundaries of individuals accessing services, staff members or other volunteers they should make this known to the appropriate staff member. Where there is a recognised issue with a volunteer and their boundaries, additional training may be needed, or their suitability for the volunteer role may need to be reviewed.

14. Health and Safety

The organisation is committed to ensuring a safe working environment for all volunteers and workers. It is the responsibility of all volunteers and workers within the organisation to adhere to and understand the importance of maintaining health and safety. Further details can be found within the Health and Safety Policy.

15. Insurance

The organisation has public liability insurance which covers the duties undertaken by volunteers if volunteers comply with this policy and all the requirements of the insurance policy. The insurance policy is available on request.

16. Break from volunteering

The organisation recognises that volunteers often have conflicting demands that result in them not being able to provide availability for a period. Volunteers, with agreement of their volunteer manager, can take up to three months break from volunteering with organisation.

A maximum of a three-month break is permitted to ensure that volunteers are still up to date with current practice. The volunteer will not be required to be re-interviewed or retrained to recommence volunteering within this period, should they feel able to carry out work to the same standard as before their break. Volunteers may be required to undertake a review meeting with the relevant manager before recommencing volunteering. Where a volunteer role has changed substantially during a break it may be appropriate to follow a recruitment process to check volunteer suitability.

Where a break of more than three months is requested, there may be a possibility of recommencing volunteering subject to volunteer place availability and using the recruitment process.

Where volunteers take a break from volunteering access to expenses and training within the organisation will also be suspended.

17. Resolving problems

The relationship between the organisation and its volunteers is entirely voluntary and does not imply any contract. Where issues are identified, either with the volunteer's performance and/or conduct by a volunteer, it is important that these are resolved informally and in a timely fashion. Issues are usually addressed through an informal meeting between all relevant parties; minutes of the meeting may be taken, for future reference. However, for the purpose of managing volunteers, a formal procedure will not be followed.

Should a volunteer be dissatisfied with the outcome of this meeting they are entitled to escalate issues following the Complaints & Compliments Policy.

18. Exit Arrangements

A volunteer may choose to withdraw from volunteering at any point and is not required to give any notice period or explanation for their decision. However, the volunteer is requested to inform the organisation promptly of any such decision, to limit the potential impact upon organisational service delivery. Where volunteers have been working with clients over a period of time it may be appropriate for them to try and finish with their clients before leaving the organisation.

The organisation values the contribution made by all volunteers and consequently endeavours to treat all volunteers fairly, consistently and reasonably. The organisation will try and listen to any concern's volunteers may have. However, the relationship is not an employment relationship and volunteers do not have the same legal rights as employees. To this effect, at any point a volunteer may be asked to leave at the discretion of the organisation without any notice. This decision is final.

We encourage volunteers who cease volunteering for the organisation to provide the organisation with feedback which would help us review and continuously improve the volunteering experience at TOG Mind. Feedback should be given to the appropriate manager or HR team.

19. References

TOG Mind can provide a reference for volunteers regarding the length of service, confirmation of the volunteer role and brief details regarding the role undertaken within 12 months of the volunteering end date. Alternatively, the organisation can provide volunteers with a reference upon leaving the organisation in a PDF format. The volunteer can also request a personal reference from the volunteer manager and any reference given will be factual, truthful and will specify the volunteer manager's opinion only.

Policy Revisions

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, and any amendments made as necessary or earlier if changes to national legislation or operational procedures at TOG Mind occur. We welcome feedback on policies to help us continuously improve. If you would like to provide any suggested improvements on the content of this policy, please email your feedback to HR@togmind.org

All policies are subject to Executive Committee approval.