

Introduction

Body Positive North West (BPNW) recognises that there are many situations in which volunteers' help make an appropriate and significant contribution to the work and service objectives of our organisation.

This document, the BPNW Volunteer Policy, defines the term and sets out the principles, practices and procedures which we will follow in the appointment, management and support of volunteers.

We have developed this policy to demonstrate our commitment to both our volunteer programme and our volunteers as individuals. This policy underpins our intention to treat all volunteers equally and fairly.

Definition

Volunteers may be described as individuals who put their experience, knowledge and skills at the disposal of an organisation, free of charge, with the primary aim of helping the organisation to achieve its service objectives and or with the primary aim of bringing some benefit to the local community. In this sense, volunteers are to be distinguished from students, other work placements, and secondees, where the primary aim is usually for the student or secondee to obtain certain work experience or to carry out work or research in certain areas.

Recruitment of volunteers

We advertise for volunteers in our quarterly newsletter Positive Living, on our website www.bpnw.org.uk and 'Just Do It' a national volunteer web site and through Tameside volunteer centre and Manchester University student Unions.

Volunteers will be selected through the following process:

Step 1

BPNW will provide the following for our volunteers:

- a role description, outlining the specific tasks, responsibilities and reporting lines of the volunteer;
- terms and conditions including the duration, hours, expenses, insurance, etc, relating to the placement;
- a specification, outlining the relevant experience, skills, knowledge, abilities and equal opportunity awareness necessary to carry out the role effectively.

Step 2

The prospective volunteer will be invited to a meeting with the volunteer coordinator of BPNW. Using the role outline and the specification the parties will engage in a two-way discussion of the proposed role, of its requirements and of each other's expectations, with a view to assessing mutual suitability. Following the meeting, the volunteer coordinator will make a decision within one week regarding the individual's suitability for the particular role. Should an individual be considered inappropriate for a given role suitable alternative may be discussed with the potential volunteer.

Step 3

Prior to commencing their placement at BPNW successful volunteers must provide a reference from a suitable person (excluding relations) attesting to their character and suitability for the position.

Step 4

Prior to commencing their placement at BPNW, each successful volunteer shall be formally allocated to a particular employee who will manage and supervise the volunteer throughout the duration of her/his placement at the organisation. The manager's responsibilities will include ensuring that the volunteer receives the following:

- a planned induction to BPNW;
- regular supervision and support sessions;
- positive feedback on their contribution;
- adequate office accommodation, equipment and services to perform their tasks effectively.

Equal opportunities

BPNW recognises that the activity of volunteering can provide a volunteer with experiences and opportunities for self- and career development. In accordance with BPNW's equal opportunities policy, volunteer placements at BPNW will be therefore be open to individuals irrespective of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age or marital status.

Diversity

BPNW is firmly committed to diversity in all areas of its work. We believe that we have much to learn and profit from diverse cultures and perspectives, and that diversity will make our organisation more effective in meeting the needs of all our stakeholders.

We are committed to developing and maintaining an organisation in which differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are fostered and valued, and where those with diverse backgrounds and experiences are able to participate and contribute. We will regularly evaluate and monitor our progress towards diversity.

Confidentiality

All BPNW volunteers are bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff.

Health and safety

As an organisation BPNW has a duty of care to avoid exposing volunteers to risks to their health and safety.

Termination

Where appropriate, the role and placement of the volunteer may be terminated by the volunteer coordinator at one week's notice, or immediately, where behaviour equivalent to gross misconduct has occurred. In all cases the volunteer will be entitled to an explanation of the decision and action taken.

Discipline and grievance

Volunteers will not be subject to BPNW's disciplinary procedures. Correspondingly, volunteers will not have access to BPNW's grievance procedures. However, volunteers will be entitled to use BPNW's complaints procedure. Where appropriate, the complaint will be investigated fully by the CEO or her/his representative.

Expenses

To remain in line with national minimum wage legislation BPNW pay its volunteer workforce out-of-pocket expenses only. Volunteers will be entitled to travel expenses and will be provided with meals.

Insurance

Volunteers will be covered by BPNW's employer's public liability-, professional indemnity- and personal accident insurance.

Training, supervision and support

BPNW offer a volunteer training course which all volunteers must complete before starting their voluntary position. Each volunteer will have a named supervisor and regular supervision meetings to discuss problems or issues as they arise.

Monitoring and review

It will be the responsibility of the volunteer coordinator to regularly review the operation of BPNW's volunteer policy to ensure that it is in accordance with their equal opportunity policy. Ideally volunteers themselves should be involved in the reviewing of this policy.

To find out more, contact us:

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This document will be reviewed in 2010 and is available in other formats.