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Health and Safety Policy

General Statement of Policy

The policy of the trustees is to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, premises, vehicles, plant, equipment and safe systems of work, for all our volunteers and others involved by invitation or by statutory duties in our activities.

Our statement of general policy is:

- to provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our work activities
- to consult with our volunteers on matters affecting their health and safety
- to provide and maintain safe plant and equipment
- to ensure safe handling and use of substances
- to provide information, instruction and supervision for volunteers;
- to ensure all volunteers are competent to do their tasks, and to give them adequate training;
- to prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health;
- to maintain safe and healthy working conditions; and
- to review and revise this policy as necessary at regular intervals.

Overall and final responsibility for health and safety is that of the Trustees of the Friends' Group.

To ensure health and safety standards are maintained/improved, all volunteers have to:

- co-operate with supervisors and managers on health and safety matters;
- not interfere with anything provided to safeguard their health and safety;
- take reasonable care of their own health and safety; and
- report all health and safety concerns to an appropriate person (as detailed in this policy statement).

Equal Opportunities Policy

Introduction

The Friends' Group seeks to be a catalyst for positive social change. It works through project development and support to meet individual and community need across London. The Friends' Group is committed to Equal Opportunities and sees this as part of empowerment in the organisation and in local communities.

General Statement of Intent

The Friends' Group recognises that the strength of the organisation is built on the understanding of individual strengths and differences and seeks to respect these.

The Friends' Group recognises that certain groups and individuals in society are disadvantaged because of discrimination experienced; for example as a result of gender, sex, race, colour, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, ethnic or national origin, language, age, marital status, child care arrangements, carer status, disability, HIV status, physical or mental health, offender background, appearance, class or economic status, trade union membership or political affiliation.

There may be other areas where people experience discrimination and The Friends' Group will work towards an anti-discriminatory environment within the organisation, based on an open discussion of staff, volunteers and users' perceptions of discrimination.

The Friends' Group further recognises that discrimination can be direct or indirect and takes place at both institutional and personal levels. The Friends' Group recognises and believes that such discrimination is unacceptable and is committed to ensuring that its policies and practices provide equal treatment for all in terms of employment of staff, work with volunteers and in all aspects of its service delivery to projects' users.

The Friends' Group recognises that staff, volunteers and service users can experience discrimination for more than one reason, e.g. female with a disability, and in its work to achieve equality will take this into consideration at all times.

Policy

The Friends' Group is committed to both the elimination of unfair discrimination and the promotion of equal opportunities. The Friends' Group's codes of practice in employment and service delivery are designed to counteract and prevent discrimination.

The Friends' Group is also committed to monitoring the implementation and effects of this policy and reviewing and updating it at regular intervals. Existing procedures and criteria may be changed in response to changing circumstances and changing needs. The Friends' Group is committed to publicising this policy and to providing necessary training and guidance to staff and volunteers. The Friends' Group supports its belief in equal opportunities by linking this policy to existing complaints, disciplinary and grievance procedures.

The Friends' Group's Equal Opportunities policy is part of a package of inter-related policies produced by the organisation. It is supported by a detailed Code of Practice for recruitment and employment of staff and a commitment to training opportunities. This equal opportunities policy is

written to conform with the statutory requirements laid down by legislation as well as the guidance and advice offered by the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission.

Strategy

The Friends' Group seeks to challenge stereotyping and provide equality of opportunity through it's:

1. Staff Recruitment, Employment and Support through:

- Accessibility of advertisements
- Open access to all posts (except where it is necessary to specify a particular group where legislation permits, e.g. an all-female staff team in a safe house for young women)
- Open access to training
- Extra help/support to those with varying needs.

2. Volunteer Recruitment and Support:

- Advertising widely
- Wide range of volunteering tasks and levels of commitment required
- No discrimination on access to training
- Extra help/support to those with varying needs

3. The Friends' Group's overall Image/Communications through:

- Literature and photographs reflecting equality of opportunity (e.g. Annual Report, leaflets, etc.)
- Presenting positive images
- Reflection in language used in correspondence, telephone calls, reports, etc.

4. Service Provision:

- Within the target client group, no discrimination due to irrelevant factors
- Seeking to provide services to the community according to need
- Supporting clients with varying needs, whatever the service, whenever possible
- Open access to services - in principle, within the remit of the service
- User involvement
- Projects to have detailed individual equal opportunities statements tailored to their services

5. Provision of training:

- To all staff and volunteers to enable them to comply with and support the policies

Whistle-blowing Policy

The word “whistleblowing” in this Policy refers to the disclosure, internally or externally, of wrongdoing involving The Friends of Cedar House. This policy aims to help you to raise any serious concerns you may have about The Friends’ Group with confidence and without having to worry about being victimised, discriminated against or disadvantaged in any way as a result.

The policy is intended to deal with serious or sensitive concerns about wrongdoings, such as the following:

- a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed, or is likely to be committed
- failure to comply with any legal obligation
- a miscarriage of justice
- health and safety risk
- damage to the environment
- fraud or corruption
- the mistreatment of service users
- unauthorised use of Impetus’ assets
- breaches and abuses of Impetus’ policies or code of conduct
- undue favour over a contractual matter or to a job applicant
- concealment of any of the above.

Who this policy is for?

This policy is for people employed by or volunteering with The Friends’ Group. For the purposes of this policy only, this is someone who is:

- Employed on a permanent or fixed term contract of employment;
- On secondment to The Friends’ Group ;
- On a temporary contract or employed through an agency to work for The Friends’ Group ;
- An independent consultant for The Friends’ Group
- A volunteer with The Friends’ Group
- Contractors and suppliers of services to The Friends’ Group

Procedure

Any individual who has reasonable suspicions of malpractice should initially take their concerns to their line manager. If they do not feel that this is the appropriate person, they should approach the Chair of the Board of Trustees, or if their concern is related to the Chair, they should contact another Trustee of the board. It is recognised that for some individuals, raising a concern under this procedure may be a daunting and difficult experience. An individual may choose to be accompanied or represented by their trade union representative or colleague at any stage of this procedure. All reported incidents will be investigated. All reports will be dealt with in confidence, with only staff who need to know, being informed.

The Chair or Trustee of the board will establish and record the basis of the concerns that have been raised and establish what further actions are required. The individual raising the concern will be advised of the outcome of the investigation as soon as possible, normally within two weeks of the date of their disclosure. Where a longer period is needed for investigation, the member of staff will be informed in writing.

The Chair will be informed of all reported disclosures and the actions being taken. In the case of disclosures on alleged fraud and corruption, The Friends' Group's Treasurer and The Friends' Group's auditors will be informed by the Chair.

If an individual is not satisfied with the response received and any subsequent action taken, they should put their concerns in writing to another appropriate trustee) who will arrange any further investigation as he/she thinks appropriate. The trustee will send a written response to the individual concerned.

Confidentiality Policy

Introduction

All staff (paid and unpaid) undertake to uphold the good name of The Friends' Group, including its relations with the public, its members and suppliers. This will ensure that relationships with its stakeholders are taken seriously.

They will uphold in the strictest of confidence all information of a personal nature that is learned about others in The Friends' Group, including clients, their families and carers, and other members of staff. Such information will only be shared with others inside the organisation if required to do so as part of their duties, and in ways which will

d its sensitive nature. Such information will not be shared with anyone outside The Friends of Cedar House.

Information such as arrangements for the storage of money and valuables, etc. that would put the business or the assets of The Friends' Group at risk will not be disclosed to anyone outside the organisation.

All staff will adhere to the principles of the Data Protection Act 1984 and will be required to sign the note of confidentiality clause in their employment contract.

Staff remain under these obligations at all times including after they have left The Friends' Group.

Security legislation

Security of data is concerned with the preservation of:

- Confidentiality - Only persons who are authorised should have access to data or other data for supporting functions
- Integrity - It should be possible to trust the information generated by a system. It must be certain, for instance, that data relating to members is not only present, but is accurate and fit for purpose in every detail
- Availability - The system should be able to provide data when and where it is needed.

The security of information stored on computer is covered by legislation, making it a criminal offence to do anything in contravention to these Acts of Parliament. Such contravention will also lead to the individual being liable to disciplinary action.

Data Protection Act 1984

The Act relates to living persons. The 8 principles to be complied with are:

- The information to be contained in Personal Data shall be obtained, and Personal Data shall be processed fairly and lawfully.

- Personal Data shall be obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purposes, and shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or those purposes.
- Personal Data shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose or purposes for which they are processed.
- Personal Data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date.
- Personal Data processed for any purpose or purposes shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes.
- Personal Data shall be processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects under this Act.
- Appropriate technical and organisational measures shall be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data.
- Personnel data shall not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection for the rights and freedoms of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data.

Breaches of Information Security

Should there be a breach in Information Security, then the primary objective is to minimise the adverse consequences to the individual(s) concerned and The Friends' Group as the legal entity liable under law for information security. In the first instance all breaches must be reported to the Office Services Manager.

Risk Management Policy

Introduction

The Friends are committed to providing a responsive, high quality service to members and organisations, and providing a policy of openness and accountability. The benefits of risk management, apart from preventing loss of assets, is the formation of quality service, which will be provided with the optimum use of resources.

With the growing complexity of the organisation, and health and social care, it is vital that sufficient thought is given to the structure and process for effective management of risk. It is acknowledged as an activity of considerable strategic importance.

When a risk is present across the organisation, The Friends must evaluate the potential consequences. The organisation needs to know how often these are likely to occur, and the potential severity of effects on members, staff, the public and the organisation itself. It is therefore necessary to have in place a system for prioritising risks, in order that some objectivity can be applied to any decisions relating to the necessary control measures.

The Strategy for Risk Management

The strategy is based on a 7-point programme of action embracing the following issues:

- ***Organisational*** – It is a fundamental principle of the strategy that risk management is a line management responsibility. Managers at all levels must believe in this approach, own the process, and take action, both proactively and retrospectively, to identify, assess and tackle all risk issues affecting their departments. Management of risk will be co-ordinated through the Chief Executive. The senior management team will be responsible for co-ordinating risk issues.
- ***Ethical*** - All managers and staff need to acknowledge that all risks within the organisation will be reduced if everyone adopts an attitude of openness and honesty. All necessary efforts must be made to ensure the reporting of adverse incidents and mistakes and the overall approach within The Friends should be one of help and support to each other, rather than recrimination and blame. Managers at all levels have an important role to play in risk management by ensuring that they respond quickly to any reports of any adverse incidents or complaints from staff. It is vital that the person reporting is given feedback on any action taken, or not, on the reported incident, with some clear indication as to how that particular risk situation has been reduced or eliminated. Communication between parties must be adequate.

- **Volunteers** - In order to analyse the risks to members or to staff, it is important that The Friends ensures that systems are in place to regularly monitor risks arising from:
 - The utilisation and skill mix of staff
 - The on-going competencies of staff
 - Recruitment and retention

The Friends Group is committed to supporting staff in exercising their roles and responsibilities and re-affirms that, where an incident had occurred, no disciplinary action will be taken against staff who have followed policies and procedures (including reporting procedures) or exercised reasonable judgement which has led to an incident.

- **Environmental** - It is necessary for staff to have an awareness of security issues with regard to their own personal safety, and the organisation's property.
- **Incident Reporting** - Reporting of risk situations, adverse incidents, "near misses", accidents to staff, staff mistakes and complaints from members, etc. is a vital part of managing and controlling risk. The Senior Management Team will ensure that procedures and systems will be in place for the reporting and collection of adverse incidents and accidents. These procedures and systems must be clear and understood by all staff.

Data and information on the following should be collated:

- Staff accidents
- Quality improvement initiatives
- Member complaints
- Legal claims (members and staff)
- **Corporate Governance** – The Friends Group is determined to ensure that it conducts its affairs in accordance with the best possible values and standards of public life. It has in place policies and procedures for all financial aspects, a scheme of delegation outlining accountability and business conduct and will ensure that accepted best practice in relation to corporate governance is fully implemented in the organisation.

The organisation has a robust and comprehensive strategy for the recruitment, induction, training and succession planning for Trustees to broaden their expertise, strengthen their existing range of skills and provide continuity for the future.

- **Corporate Risk** - through the Chair, The Friends Group and the work of the Honorary Treasurer will ensure that financial systems and procedures are in place to safeguard against fraud and corruption and to ensure that The Friends Group assets and finances are deployed to best effect and in line with Charity Commission Guidelines by:
 - Selecting suitable accounting policies and applying them consistently
 - Making judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
 - Preparing financial statements for each financial year
 - Ensuring there is a mechanism for internal audit
 - Ensuring a comprehensive system of internal controls is in place

In order to ensure our services remain at a high and improving standard, we have a procedure through which you can let us know of for any reason you are not satisfied with your dealings with the organisation.

- If you are unhappy about any of The Friends' Group's services, please speak to the relevant staff member, manager or Director.
- If you are unhappy with an individual in The Friends' Group, sometimes it is best to tell him or her directly. If you feel this is difficult or inappropriate then speak to the staff member's manager or a trustee.

Often we will be able to give you a response straight away. When the matter is more complicated we will give you at least an initial response within five working days.

Making a written complaint

If you are not satisfied with our response or wish to raise the matter more formally, please write to the Chair. (If your complaint is about the Chair, please write to another trustee.)

All written complaints will be logged. You will receive a written acknowledgement within three working days.

The aim is to investigate your complaint properly and give you a reply within ten working days, setting out how the problem will be dealt with. If this is not possible, an interim response will be made informing you of the action taken to date or being considered.

If after we have responded you are not satisfied, please write to another trustee who will report the matter to the next Board meeting, which will decide on any further steps to resolve the situation.

Dress Code Policy

Staff are expected to come in neat attire and suitable dress for their post.

- i) Staff involved in the movement of heavy items should work with their limbs covered in addition to the wearing of protective equipment.
- ii) All staff should ensure that they wear appropriate footwear for the tasks that they are required to do.
- iii) Shorts, jeans and trainers are not considered suitable attire for work.
- iv) T-shirts with offensive logos or advertising for external organisations should be avoided.

For the purpose of this policy, 'staff' refers to both paid staff and volunteers.

Conflict of Interest Policy

All staff, volunteers, and management committee members of The Friends' Group will strive to avoid any conflict of interest between the interests of the Organization on the one hand, and personal, professional, and business interests on the other. This includes avoiding actual conflicts of interest as well as the perception of conflicts of interest.

The purposes of this policy are to protect the integrity of the Organisation's decision-making process, to enable our stakeholders to have confidence in our integrity, and to protect the integrity and reputation of volunteers, staff and committee members.

Examples of conflicts of interest include:

- 1 A committee member who is also a user who must decide whether fees from users should be increased.
- 2 A committee member who is related to a member of staff and there is decision to be taken on staff pay and/or conditions.
- 3 A committee member who is also on the committee of another organisation that is competing for the same funding.
- 4 A committee member who has shares in a business that may be awarded a contract to do work or provide services for the organisation.

Upon appointment each committee member will make a full, written disclosure of interests, such as relationships, and posts held, that could potentially result in a conflict of interest. This written disclosure will be kept on file and I will be updated as appropriate.

In the course of meetings or activities, committee members will disclose any interests in a transaction or decision where there may be a conflict between the organisations best interests and the committee members best interests or a conflict between the best interests of two organisations that the committee members is involved with.

*Option 1: After disclosure, I understand that I may be asked to leave the room for the discussion and may not be able to take part in the decision depending on the judgement of the other committee members present at the time.

*Option 2: After disclosure, I understand that I will be asked to leave the room for the discussion and will not be able to take part in the decision.

Any such disclosure and the subsequent actions taken will be noted in the minutes.

This policy is meant to supplement good judgment, and staff, volunteers and management committee members should respect its spirit as well as its wording.

Guidelines for Managing Finances

We are a small volunteer led and run Friend group. Our main focus is to improve the lives of the residents of the care home through building stronger bridges with the local community. We aim that people will spend more time in the home, and we might be able to add value to the daily lives of residents by buying things that they wouldn't otherwise have.

Role of Attend

The friends group has chosen to join Attend, a national umbrella organisation and are grateful for their offer of support until the organisation is large and resourced enough to deliver its own back office functions.

Available support from Attend includes:

- Help in supporting/providing volunteer Treasurers.
- Ability to take advantage Attends accounts/credit terms and be recharged for expenditure.
- Volunteer book- keeping.
- Volunteers to produce management accounts.
- Volunteers to produce year end accounts.
- Support in finding an independent examiner.

Finance Procedures

All record will be stored together, and securely. Wherever possible, the friends group will not use personal addresses for correspondence.

Income:

For ease of tracing, it is recommended that as little cash is kept as possible, and all income is banked.

Expenditure:

i) For ease of tracing, it is recommended that there is as few cash payment as possible, and all payments are made through the bank account.

ii) It is expected that much of the expenditure will be from restricted funds; any expenditure must be made the spirit of the donation.

iii) Once a donation has been received and agreed, it is acceptable for the chairman, society and treasurer to make the expenditure within the stipulations of the funder.

iv) All cheques require two signatures.

v) Expenses payments: It is a principle of best practise that all volunteers should be offered reimbursements for travel, and any other reasonable cost incurred.

- Public transport: reimbursement at cost.
- Mileage in private vehicle is reimbursed at 45p per mile.
- If taxis are required, the use of these needs to be agreed with the chairman, treasurer or secretary in advance. If parking cost, tolls, congestion charges etc. in the course of volunteering, these are all redeemable.
- Reasonable meal cost may be reclaimed where volunteering occurs across a mealtime.

The Process of Paying Expenses

- Expenses should be claimed using an expense claim form.
- This should be authorised by a second person before a cheque is drawn.
- Ideally, cheques should be raised by a non-recipient of the cheque.
- If a signatory is to be in receipt of the cheque, they are not to be the first person to sign the cheque, though they may be the second signatory.

Fraud Policy

This document sets out the policy and procedures of The Friends' Group against fraud and other forms of dishonesty, together with the steps that must be taken where any of these practices is suspected or discovered.

It applies to trustees, staff and volunteers. Anybody associated with the Friends' Group who commits fraud, theft or any other dishonesty, or who becomes aware of it and does not report it, will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

The Friends' Group will continually strive to ensure that all its financial and administrative processes are carried out and reported honestly, accurately, transparently and accountably and that all decisions are taken objectively and free of personal interest. We will not condone any behaviour that falls short of these principles.

All members of the organisation have a responsibility for putting these principles into practice and for reporting any breaches they discover.

Actions will be taken against the following fraudulent and dishonest activities:

- **Fraud:** A deliberate intent to acquire money or goods dishonestly through the falsification of records or documents. The deliberate changing of financial statements or other records by either; a member of the public, someone who works or is a volunteer for the Friends' Group. The criminal act is the attempt to deceive and attempted fraud is therefore treated as seriously as accomplished fraud
- **Theft:** Dishonestly acquiring, using or disposing of physical or intellectual property belonging to the Friends' Group or to individual members of the organisation.
- **Misuse of equipment:** Deliberately misusing materials or equipment belonging to the Friends' Group
- **Abuse of position:** Exploiting a position of trust within the organisation.

The board of trustees is expected to deal promptly, firmly and fairly with suspicions and allegations of fraud or corrupt practice.

Responsibilities

The trustees of the Friends' Group are responsible for establishing and maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of the Charities policies, aims and objectives.

Overall responsibility for managing the risk of fraud has been delegated to the Chair. His/her responsibilities include undertaking a regular review of fraud risks, establishing an effective anti-fraud response plan, and the design of an effective control environment to prevent fraud.

Every member of staff or volunteer is responsible for:

- Acting with propriety in the use of Charities resources and the handling and use of funds whether they are involved with cash, receipts, payments or dealing with suppliers;
- Conducting themselves in accordance with the seven principles set out above. They are: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership;
- Being alert to the possibility that unusual events or transactions could be indicators of fraud;
- Alerting their manager when they believe the opportunity for fraud exists e.g. because of poor procedures or lack of effective oversight;
- Reporting details immediately if they suspect that a fraud has been committed or see any suspicious acts or events; and
- Cooperating fully with whoever is conducting internal checks or reviews or fraud investigations.

Detection and Investigation

The Chair of the Board of Trustees must be notified immediately of all financial or accounting irregularities or suspected irregularities or of any circumstances which may suggest the possibility of irregularities including those affecting cash, stores, property, remuneration or allowances.

Reporting of suspected irregularities is essential as it:

- Facilitates a proper investigation by experienced staff, and ensures the consistent treatment of information regarding fraud and corruption.
- When so notified, the Chair will instigate an investigation by appointing a designated officer, auditor or other adviser.
- The designated officer, auditor or other advisor will:
 - deal promptly with the matter
 - record evidence received
 - ensure the security and confidentiality of evidence
 - Work closely with senior managers of the Charity and other agencies, such as the Police and Courts to ensure that all issues are properly investigated and reported upon.
 - Ensure maximum recoveries are made on behalf of the Charity, and assist the senior managers to implement (Organisation)'s disciplinary procedures where considered appropriate (referral to the Police will not prohibit or restrict action under the Disciplinary Procedure).
- Malicious accusations may be the subject of disciplinary action.

Governance Policy

Governance is about the leadership, direction and supervision of an organisation.

It means making sure that the organisation is well run (or 'governed') and carries out the work it was set up to do. This involves planning for the future, guarding the organisation's values and reputation, looking after the money and people and being accountable for the organisation's actions and decisions.

Good governance is about making sure an organisation is well run. This is the responsibility of its trustees.

Trustees of an Organisation

Trustees, have overall responsibility for their organisation and a duty of care towards it. To fulfil this they need to act reasonably in their decision making. This means they need to be well-informed about their role and all aspects of the organisation. It is also important that their decisions and actions reflect the organisation's values and underpin everything done in its name.

Trustees need to understand their role and responsibilities, both as a group and as individuals, in relation to:

- what the law says they must do (legal duties)
- looking after the organisation's assets
- the rules set out in their governing document
- what is happening outside their organisation
- how the organisation is set up and who else is a part of it and in terms of:
- setting and safeguarding the organisation's vision, values and reputation
- overseeing the work of the organisation
- managing and supporting staff and volunteers, if your organisation has them

Every Trustee should understand all aspects of the organisation that they are helping to lead and govern. The organisation should make sure that all new trustees are provided with everything they need to know as part of their induction and training.

Remember that an organisation includes:

- Structures and systems (committees, working groups, different offices)
- people (beneficiaries or service users, volunteers, members, employees)

Trustees of the Friends' Group will work to ensure that structures and systems work effectively and that issues between people/groups within the organisation are kept to a minimal.

Trustee Code of Conduct Policy

Selflessness

The trustees of the Friends' Group have a general duty to act in the best interests of the Friends' Group as a whole. They should not do so to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their friends or the organisation they represent, if applicable.

Integrity

The trustees of the Friends' Group:

- should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their role
- should, as well as avoiding actual impropriety, avoid any appearance of improper behaviour
- should avoid accepting gifts and hospitality that might reasonably be thought to influence their judgement

Objectivity

In carrying out their role, including making staff and trustee appointments, awarding contracts or transacting other business, the trustees of the Friends' Group should ensure that decisions are made solely on merit.

Accountability

The trustees of the Friends' Group:

- have a duty to comply with the law on all occasions in accordance with the trust placed in them and in such a way as to preserve public confidence in the Friends' Group.
- are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public, funders and service users and must submit themselves to scrutiny as appropriate to their role

Openness

The trustees of the Friends' Group:

- should ensure that confidential material, including that about individuals, is handled with due care
- should be as open as possible about their decisions and the action they take and give reasons for their decisions and restrict access to information only when the wider interest clearly demands

Honesty

The trustees of The Friends' Group:

- have a duty to declare any interests relating to their trustee role and to take steps to resolve any conflicts that may arise
- must resolve any conflict between his/her private interests and his/her trustee duties in favour of the trustee role
- must make relevant declarations of interest in their different roles both within and outside *The Friends' Group*

Leadership

The trustees of The Friends' Group:

- should promote and support the principles of leadership by example
- must respect the role of staff and volunteers

Volunteering Policy

Aims and principles

The Friends' Group seeks to engage the community in the work of the care home, so that the lives of residents is enriched and rooted in their local community.

Engaging volunteers is central to this purpose, and the Friends' Group looks to involve volunteers in supporting the work of the care home wherever this is possible.

The Friends Group works in close partnership with the care home, acts as an advocate for the care home in the community, and support the care home in delivering the kindest care, where everyone matters and each and every one can make a difference.”

Statement of intent

The Friends' Group is committed to ensuring that volunteers have a positive experience. The following areas will be central to this intent.

- Volunteers are provided with information about the organisation and their role within it
- Volunteers are provided with a safe working environment
- Paid staff will be supported with the involvement of volunteers in the work of the care home
- Volunteers will be provided with rewarding volunteering opportunities
- There will be provision of support and encouragement
- Expenses will be reimburses according to the expenses policy

Values of the Friends' Group

The Friends' Group are committed to the following:

- For volunteers to have a defined place in the structure of the organisation.
- For volunteers to be integrated and treated equally as part of the team.
- To recognise the individual skills each person brings to the organisation.
- For volunteers to feel supported and valued in their role.
- Encouraging volunteers to develop and build on existing skills and knowledge through sharing good practice within the Friends' Group.

Recruitment

The Friends' Group seeks to recruit volunteers from a diverse range of backgrounds that reflects the makeup of the local community (see diversity policy).

Before recruiting the Friends' Group will consider and take advice on how to attract people from a diverse range of backgrounds to the organisation. Each potential volunteer will be invited for a meeting and submit an application form.

Each person who volunteers for the Friends' Group will be asked for references, and if the role requires it, a DBS check will be undertaken. If a DBS check is positive, then the Care Home Manager will have the final decision on whether the volunteer is offered a volunteering placement.

Volunteers will have a volunteer agreement and role outline which shows the expectations and support offered by the scheme. This is not a contract.

Induction and training

All volunteers will be provided with a comprehensive induction before starting their volunteering. This will ensure that volunteers have a good understanding of the work and purpose of the Friends' Group and of the Care Home, and how to undertake their volunteering role in a safe and supportive environment.

Volunteers will be given a volunteer handbook and also have the opportunity to meet with individual members of staff and other volunteers to learn about the organisation.

Support

A volunteer's line manager will be a main point of contact for the volunteer at the Friends' Group.

Volunteers will be supervised by their Line Managers to ensure that everything is running smoothly and that both the volunteer and staff are happy with the on-goings of the placement.

Volunteers will be invited to team meetings to get together with the other advocates and listen to guest speakers.

Expenses

There is reimbursement of expenses incurred while undertaking the business of the organisation. It is specified that lunch should not exceed more than £5 per day. Should expenses exceed £25, a cheque will be issued to the volunteer on completion of a claim form.

Travel costs will also be reimbursed. All reimbursement claims must have valid receipts attached and the claimant must sign the reimbursement form.

We reimburse expenses, incurred by volunteers as part of their agreed role with the organisation, against receipts wherever practically possible

The following are examples of legitimate expenses:

- Travel to and from the place of volunteering
- Travel undertaken in the course of volunteering
- Meals taken during the course of volunteering (usually a single meal not exceeding £5/day)
- Postage and telephone costs if working from home
- Protective clothing or other essential equipment

For more information, please refer to the Volunteering Handbook.

Insurance

All volunteers are covered by Hiscox's insurance policy whilst they are on the premises or engaged in work as a volunteer advocate. It is the responsibility of the volunteers to inform their motor insurance company that they are using their car in the act of volunteering.

Diversity

Volunteers will be expected to have an understanding and commitment to equal opportunities and diversity (See equal opportunities policy).

Volunteer Problem Resolution

- **Absenteeism**
Volunteers are expected to perform their duties on a regular schedule and punctual basis. When aware they will be absent, volunteers are expected to inform their manager as far in advance as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made. If a volunteer is regularly unable to attend to fulfil the requirement of the agreed role, their manager will carry out a review and seek to resolve any problems.

- **Reviewing the Continuation of a Volunteering Placement**
A review of the nature of the volunteering involvement will take place if volunteers do not adhere to the guidelines and procedures of the organisation or who are continually unable to perform their volunteering duties whilst on placement. No volunteer placement will be ended until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons with their manager. Prior to withdrawing the services of a volunteer placement, the volunteering manager will seek the consult with the Chairman, who will also attend the exit interview if one is required.

- **Reasons for Ending a Volunteering Placement**
Possible grounds for the withdrawal of a volunteer placement may include, but are not limited to the following:
 - Gross misconduct or insubordination
 - Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs
 - Theft of property
 - Misuse of equipment or materials belonging to the organisation
 - Abuse or mistreatment of colleagues
 - Failure to abide by the organisations policies and procedures and
 - Failure to perform assigned duties satisfactorily.

Raising a Concern

A volunteer who has any concerns in relation to their volunteering placement can raise this in the first instance with their line manager. If following this meeting, concerns are still outstanding they can either request the assistance of the Chair. At any stage of the process, the volunteer may ask a friend or another volunteer to accompany them. After investigation, the Chair's decision will be final.

Confidentiality

Volunteers have same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff (see confidentiality policy).

Protection of Vulnerable Adult Policy

Aim of Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure the safety of vulnerable adults by outlining clear procedures and ensuring that all staff members and volunteers are clear about their responsibility.

This policy defines a 'vulnerable adult' as a person aged 16 years and over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Definition of Vulnerable

The services could be:

Any services provided by the independent hospital, independent clinic, independent medical agency or NHS body

Any services provided in an establishment catering for a person with special needs and or conditions

The conditions could be:

A learning or physical disability

A physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise including an addiction to alcohol or drugs

A reduction in mental or physical capacity

The disability may prove to be:

A dependency upon others in the performance of, or a replacement for assistance in the performance of basic physical functions

Severe impairment in the ability to communicate with others

Impairment in a person's ability to protect him/herself from assault, abuse or neglect

Definition of Abuse

"Abuse is the harming of another individual usually by someone who is in a position of power, trust of authority over that individual. The harm may be physical, psychological or emotional or it may be directed at exploiting the vulnerability of the victim in more subtle ways. This could be through denying access to people who could come to the aid of the victim, or through misuse or misappropriation of his or her financial resources. The threat or use of punishment is also a form of abuse". CPA 2014

Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse

Bodily assaults resulting in injuries e.g. hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanction

Bodily impairment

Medical/healthcare maltreatment

Sexual Abuse

Rape, incest, acts of indecency, sexual assault

Sexual harassment or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or was pressured into consenting

Sexual abuse might also include exposure to pornographic materials, being made to witness sexual acts and encompasses sexual harassment and not contact abuse

Psychological/emotional abuse

Includes threats of harm, controlling, intimidating, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, enforced isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks

Humiliation

Bullying, shouting and swearing

Neglect

Including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to a appropriate health, social care or educational services

The withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating

Financial or material

Including theft or fraud

Exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property possessions or benefits

Discriminatory

This can include racist, sexist, or based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or a similar treatment

Responsibilities

All members of staff have a responsibility to be aware of this policy and report any suspicions that they might have concerning adult abuse.

Right of Vulnerable Adults

Vulnerable adults have the right to:

- Be made aware of this policy
- To have alleged incidents recognised and taken seriously
- To receive fair and respectful treatment throughout
- To be involved in any process as appropriate
- To receive information about the outcome

Reporting

Anyone making a complaint, allegation, or expression of concern, whether staff, users or carers or members of the public should be reassured that they:

- Will be taken seriously
- That their comments will be treated confidentially but their concerns may be shared if they or others are at significant risk
- If a service user, they will be given immediate protection from the risk of reprisals or intimidation
- If staff, they will be given support and afforded protection

Recruitment and Training

The organisation will ensure that all volunteers whose roles include working with vulnerable adults are carefully selected, trained and supervised.

Disclosure

As part of the recruitment procedure, all newly appointed staff and volunteers that have contact with vulnerable adults will be disclosure checked at a level appropriate to their role.