

## Tower Hamlets GP Care Group Volunteer Policy

Date Issued	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2017
Date to be reviewed	Periodically or if statutory changes are required
Title	Volunteer Policy
Supersedes	All previous Policies
This policy will impact on	All staff
Financial Implications	No change
Policy Area	Governance
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Author	Ruth Walters
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### Approval Record

	Committees / Groups / Individual	Date
Consultation	Human Resources team, Governance Committee	March 2017
Approved by	Dr Joe Hall, Chair, Governance Committee Tower Hamlets GP Care Group Board	April 2017



## **Background**

Volunteers make a unique and valuable contribution to improving the experience of patients, and supporting staff. They are not only an essential resource in helping us to achieve our goals, but by providing opportunities for volunteering, THGPCG promotes active citizenship and social inclusion.

There are a range of reasons why people volunteer. Volunteering can be seen as a way to improve employment prospects and to gaining new skills, knowledge and experience. People may see volunteering as a way to increase their self esteem, to meet new people and to get to know the local community. Many people volunteer because they want to make a difference to the lives of others and the community that they live in.

The policy provides a framework to support volunteers to undertake duties that improve the patient experience, whilst ensuring consistency in the way they are recruited, supported and managed. The policy ensures that equal value and support is provided to voluntary roles undertaken across the organisation.

Voluntary activity should complement the work of paid staff, not be a substitute for it and the action of volunteers should not threaten the livelihood of paid staff.

A volunteer is defined as anyone whose offer of help, without payment, is accepted by THGPCG and who attends by invitation or appointment, is by definition a volunteer. Volunteers are not employees and most employment rights are not applicable although they are subject to the THGPCG's Equality and Diversity and Health & Safety policies. This policy therefore applies to all people who help in the organisation in whatever capacity?.

Work experience placements and elective placements are not included in the scope of this policy.

### **Volunteer Recruitment Process**

THGPCG will recruit volunteers direct wherever possible and advertise opportunities through a variety of local media. However, there may be occasions when volunteers may be sought through external sources such as Healthwatch.

Services may advertise locally through publications produced by the service or via notices displayed at the services premises. It is also possible that managers may receive speculative enquiries from potential volunteers.

A role description should be produced for all volunteer placements setting out the nature of the role and what the volunteer is required to do.

It is a requirement for all potential volunteers to complete an application form (refer to appendix one).

An interview must be held with all potential volunteers and notes should be taken to keep a record of the interview. The interview will generally differ from interviews for paid posts in that we will not be selecting from a number of people to fill one vacancy and interviews are primarily held to assess suitability against selection criteria rather than selecting between candidates.. This should be explained to potential volunteers. However, if there are more potential volunteers than placements then selection will have to take place and this should also be explained.

An interview with a potential volunteer is more informal than when recruiting to a paid post. It is about explaining the role, providing background information about the service, and finding out more about them.



However it still needs to be structured and organised in order to ensure that the right placement is found for the volunteer.

At the end of the interview the manager should agree what will happen next and advise the individual when we expect to be in touch again.

### **Checking Processes**

**References** - Two written or oral references need to be obtained by the service prior to an individual starting a volunteer placement. References can come from a present or past employer, a tutor at college, a minister of religion or any reputable person. Oral references should be documented and retained on the volunteer's file. Tower Hamlets GP Care Group would not wish to exclude anyone who may not feel they have the connections with people who could give them a reference due to the limitations imposed through their current role or situation, this is particularly relevant to the the volunteers recruited by the Patient Experience Team who may have been in poor health for a long period and their carers. Any difficulties obtaining suitable references should be referred to the HR team for further advice.

**Disclosure & Barring Service Check** A DBS check is required for all volunteer roles. The level of CRB check is determined by the Service Manager. DBS checks are undertaken by the recruitment team at the manager's request. A satisfactory DBS check is required prior to starting a volunteer placement. If the DBS reveals a trace then an objective assessment needs to be completed and signed off by the Director of Quality & Assurance or the Chief Operating Officer prior to the individual starting the volunteer placement. Please refer to the THGPCG Disclosure & Barring Policy

DBS checks can take some time to complete. The service should ensure that it keeps in contact with their potential volunteer during this process.

**Health Issues** – A medical check is not required to become a volunteer. However all volunteers are requested to declare any health issues on the application form. Any issues arising will be considered in relation to the appropriate role description. This is not intended to assess if a volunteer is fit to undertake a role but to protect the individual from any adverse affects on their health from volunteer work. Further guidance is available from your HR Officer.

A volunteer agreement must be completed by all volunteers before they start their role (refer to appendix B).

### **Induction and Management**

All volunteers should receive an initial induction into the THGPCG and their role in advance of or on the first day of the placement, induction will usually continue after commencing the volunteer role.

A named supervisor should be assigned to each volunteer to serve as their main point of contact during their placement. The supervisor will be responsible for arranging any training, resources or equipment needed to fulfil agreed tasks, providing advice, guidance and opportunities for volunteers to feedback and authorising expense claims.

Appropriate training and development opportunities will be available to volunteers. Volunteers should be given the opportunity to develop new skills and, where appropriate, encouraged to take on new roles or assume greater involvement.



### **Volunteer Performance and Capability**

The volunteer's supervisor is responsible for holding regular one-to-one meetings with the volunteer. At these meetings, performance will be reviewed and any capability issues addressed through additional support, training and any reasonable workplace adjustments. If after a reasonable period of time the volunteer fails to achieve the required improvements in performance then the volunteering opportunity will be terminated. As a guide a reasonable period of time for reviewing an improvement plan is 8 -12 weeks

### **Volunteer Conduct**

Volunteers are expected to abide by the THGPCG Code of Conduct. A volunteer is not an employee therefore the THGPCG's disciplinary procedure will not be applied. However any unacceptable conduct by a volunteer will be treated seriously. Minor misconduct will be addressed by the volunteer's supervisor in the first instance. Discussions will be used to find out if there is an underlying problem. Further training or advice will be offered if appropriate.

If there is a serious allegation of inappropriate behaviour (equivalent to gross misconduct) the volunteer will be suspended while a full investigation is undertaken.

A volunteer placement will be ended if a serious allegation is substantiated or if there is repeated occurrences of minor misconduct.

A volunteer, who is also a THGPCG employee, may be suspended from his/her employment role while serious conduct issues occurring in the volunteer role are investigated if the allegation is relevant to the employee's employment role, and could constitute off duty gross misconduct. For example, if it is alleged that a volunteer has mistreated a child and he/she is also employed to work with children, the employee will be removed from the volunteer duties and suspended from work while the allegation is investigated.

### **Supporting and Recognising Volunteers**

There are many ways in which the work of volunteers can be supported and recognised. Everybody needs to feel that they are valued and a 'thank you' is the simplest way of showing this. The key to effective support and recognition is to ensure that whatever method is chosen, it fits the type of achievement and the volunteer concerned – make it personal and meaningful. Be honest and sincere – most people can see through superficial praise. Be consistent and fair – don't have different rules for different people.

### **Health and Safety and Risk Assessment**

Volunteers must be made aware of any relevant health and safety procedures and rules as part of their induction. Written risk assessments must be in place for each of the roles that volunteers will be performing, to establish the level of risk and agree the mitigating actions required.

Adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and suitable safety equipment must be provided where needed, together with appropriate instruction.

### **Expenses**

Volunteers approved expenses are payable in accordance with the THGPCG Policy. Volunteers must complete an expenses form and provide corresponding receipts, travel tickets or other evidence of expenditure. Volunteers must keep clear records of journeys taken as volunteers, noting mileage, time, date and purpose of journey.

Voluntary work should not affect entitlement to any benefit. Individuals should seek advice from [Job Centre Plus](#) or about their individual benefits situation.

### **ID Badges**

Volunteers should be provided with a THGPCG volunteer photo ID card as appropriate. Where issued, ID cards must be returned at the end of a placement.



### **Insurance**

THGPCG holds indemnity for its employees. For the purposes of this insurance employee means any person whose work or service is directed and controlled by the Insured under a contract of or contract for service with any Insured and shall include a worker hired by or seconded to any Insured and /or a volunteer , including a person on a course of study with any Insured while engaging in working for any Insured in connection with the Business

### **Confidentiality**

All personal information and recruitment paper work will be stored by the service. It is recommended that a volunteer file is set up for each volunteer. Files must be stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

### **Raising Concerns**

Volunteers should discuss any issues or concerns with their supervisor in the first instance. If this is not appropriate or the volunteer is not happy with how the matter is handled, they should raise their concern with the Director of Quality & Assurance and/or the Chief Operating Officer.

Volunteers should raise any concerns that they have about working practices with their supervisor in the first instance. Volunteers can use the THGPCG's Whistleblowing Policy if necessary to raise concerns about the running of the THGPCG.

### **Evaluation and Review**

All volunteers will be asked to complete an evaluation form as part of an informal exit interview at the end of their placement to enable monitoring of the quality of the volunteering experience.



**VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM**

<b>1. Personal details</b>		
Title:	Date of Birth:	National Insurance No:
Surname:		Forename:
Address: ..... ..... ..... Postcode:.....		<b>Contact information:</b>
		Email:
		Home:
		Mobile:
		Work:

<b>2. Emergency Contact Details</b>	
Name:	Relationship:
Address: ..... ..... ..... Postcode: .....	<b>Contact Information:</b>
	Mobile:
	Home:
	Work:
Email:	

<b>3. Volunteer Role</b>
Which areas of volunteering are you interested in?
<b>4. Please tell us about any relevant work experience or qualifications.</b>
<b>5. What are you hoping to gain from volunteering?</b>
<b>6. Tell us about any hobbies or special interests which you would be interested in using within your role. (such as music, sports, arts and crafts etc)</b>



7. If you are currently a student, please tell us what you are studying and which year of study you are in.

8. Do you drive?

9. Do you have your own transport?

10. Are there any particular reasons why you want to volunteer for the Tower Hamlets GP Care Group

When are you available to volunteer?

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
A.M.							
P.M.							

11. Would you like an ongoing role or are you just available for a specific time period such as summer holidays?

12. How did you hear about us.

13. Reference -

Please supply details of two people other than a family member who can provide a character reference.

Please sign below to confirm that the details you have given are accurate:

Signature: ..... Date: .....

Email to:





## VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

Volunteer Name: .....

Volunteer Role Area: .....

THGPCG acknowledges the added value that volunteers bring to the organisation as a whole.

1. Roles carried out by volunteers will complement the work of employees and will not be used as a substitute. Volunteers are people who come of their own volition, in their own time and who do not receive any financial benefit.
2. THGPCG recognises everyone has a contribution to make to society and a right to equal treatment.

### Volunteer Responsibilities

- To undertake the duties outlined to you in accordance with the Volunteer Role Description
- To have knowledge of where to access and reference THGPCG Policy and Guidance.
- To behave professionally and to treat others with respect and dignity at all times and adhere to the principles of the THGPCG's Policy relating to equal opportunities and diversity in employment.
- To maintain confidentiality for all service users/patients of the Service
- To adhere to the Safeguarding THGPCG Policies for Children and Vulnerable Adults
- To be punctual and reliable
- To adhere to the dress code for the area in which you volunteer
- To aid recognition by staff, service users and visitors you must wear their ID badge at all times
- To attend all appropriate training as agreed
- Any concerns about your volunteer role should initially be discussed with the manager of your volunteer area. If the concern remains unresolved it should then be referred to your Manager to agree a way forward.
- Your Manager will ensure that you are fully supported during your volunteer role.

### THGPCG Responsibilities

- Reimburse the cost of travelling expenses from home to and from the volunteer role area (usually within a 20 mile radius)
- Endeavour to provide volunteers with opportunities for relevant training and development
- Ensure that all members of staff who have contact with volunteers have an understanding of the involvement of volunteers in service delivery and the value they bring to the THGPCG in complementing the work of staff.





- Take up two references, identity check and undertake DBS check prior to placement

Signature

..... Date: ..... Service Manager

Signature

..... Date: ..... Volunteer

**This Agreement is not intended to be a legally binding Contract of Employment**