

The Clock Tower Sanctuary - Volunteering Policy

Reviewed December 2021

What is volunteering?

The National Centre for Voluntary Organisations defines volunteering “as any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives. Central to this definition is the fact that volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual.

This can include formal activity undertaken through public, private and voluntary organisations as well as informal community participation and social action. Everyone has the right to volunteer and volunteering can have significant benefits for individuals”.

Why do we involve volunteers in our work?

Volunteers support the organisation to fulfil the mission and values of The Clock Tower Sanctuary. This is ‘to work with young people who are homeless or insecurely housed to enable them to move from crisis to independence’.

Volunteers have always been integral to the work of The Clock Tower Sanctuary (CTS). They are central to our service delivery and always have been since we were founded in 1997. We could not run in our current capacity without our team of volunteers.

We view volunteering with us as a partnership. Whilst volunteers enrich the service, we provide for our clients we also aim to enrich the experience of the volunteer, understanding the differing motivations that bring people to the CTS to volunteer. For example: to bring a skill, gain experience for work, understand and help the community we support or to meet like-minded people.

Recruitment

We welcome applications from all ages and backgrounds and will manage any reasonable adjustments we can to keep them post as accessible to all. We are unable to accept applications for those who are under 18 due to the nature of our work.

We usually advertise via the CTS website and social media channels, on the Community Works Volunteer Search and local University Volunteer Volunteering pages. We will diversify our advertising to encourage greater representation from underrepresented groups (such as the BAME and LGBT Communities).

Recruitment for the Volunteer Support Worker role is by an initial application form. If the application reaches the next stage, then an informal interview with the Volunteer Co-ordinator and client representative takes place at the Centre.

The Volunteer Co-ordinator will call the applicant the following day, to confirm the outcome and agree next steps. If someone is unsuccessful, the Volunteer Coordinator will provide advice and support in response. On offer and acceptance of the role, two referees will be emailed by the Volunteer Co-ordinator. An enhanced DBS check is then undertaken.

A volunteer can only begin volunteering when:

- **References are returned and satisfactory**
- **A DBS check has come back, and no concerns are raised***
- **Mandatory training has been undertaken.**

*** A criminal record does not prevent someone from volunteering at the CTS. Please see our policy document related to Rehabilitation of Offenders.**

Induction and initial training

Volunteers are given a tour of the Centre and are introduced to members of the team and other volunteers, following interview wherever possible.

Prior to starting volunteers are required to attend four mandatory half day training sessions including:

- **An Introduction to The Clock Tower Sanctuary, Safeguarding and Youth Homelessness**
- **Difficult and motivational conversations with Young People**
- **Professional Boundaries**
- **Diversity and inclusion**

These sessions provide essential information required for volunteering and also provide a forum to meet other volunteers, meet a client and hear their journey and gain a feel of organisation. They will also learn about opportunities to develop skills and experience that can then be followed up with the Volunteer Coordinator or Activities Coordinator.

On a volunteer's first day at the Centre an induction is provided by the Volunteer Coordinator, handing over to the shadowing of an experienced volunteer. A Volunteer checklist is provided for the volunteer to work through. Shadowing continues for several shifts until a volunteer feels confident to undertake some independent tasks or support. We aim to move at the pace of the volunteer, recognising that the environment in which we work can be demanding.

Expenses

The Clock Tower Sanctuary will repay any out-of-pocket expenses that a volunteer incurs. These are any travel costs or food expenses (up to £5 for lunch), although you are welcome to eat the hot food we provide for clients, as this helps us to build a sense of community in the Centre. We actively encourage repayment for any out-of-pocket expenses. Repayment can be made via BACS or smaller expenses can be refunded in cash.

Support, supervision and feedback

At the start of each day, volunteers are given a de-brief of any client issues, risk factors and jobs to be done. There is plenty of opportunity for volunteers to share ideas and ask questions. It's also a good time for volunteers to raise anything that is of concern and to share how they are feeling. At the end of each day centre session, we de-brief again. This gives us a chance to chat through anything that has come up during the session, handover any outstanding tasks and 'check out'. Both sessions are facilitated by at least one member of the Services Team.

The Services Team operate an 'open door' policy for volunteers and someone will always be on hand to support you, when needed. One to one support sessions with the Volunteer Coordinator can also be arranged.

Quarterly volunteer meetings are held on a weekday evening. We aim for these to be volunteer-led, with volunteers chairing and setting the agenda. A member of the Senior Management Team attends, along with the Volunteer Coordinator.

We undertake a bi-annual volunteer survey, the results of which influence the way in which we deliver the service (please note we were unable to do so in 2019. The latest survey took place in 2021 and the report is available via email and on request). The survey and report is coordinated and compiled by a Trustee.

Training and Development

As well as mandatory training, we offer a year-round programme of development opportunities, both internal and external. Training courses are relevant to the work we undertake and are also an opportunity for the volunteer to develop their skills and knowledge.

There are other ways for our volunteers to develop their roles, by undertaking one to one work, running groups, activities and delivering life skills training. We are always happy to look into new ideas that volunteers may have and make these happen wherever we can.

Lone Working

Volunteers will sometimes need to lone work with clients. We will always ensure that the volunteer is happy to do so. Lone working protocols must be followed, in line with

the Lone Working policy. Failure to comply with the protocol may impact on your volunteering at the Centre.

Insurance

Volunteers are covered by our Public Liability Insurance.

Equality and Diversity

We are committed to an inclusive working environment and volunteers are covered by our Equality and Diversity policy. This means that we recognise that all volunteers should have the same opportunities regardless of age, race, disabilities, sexuality or gender. If you feel that this is not the case, then we would appreciate your feedback. From the first point of contact we aim to make the experience as accessible as possible for all.

Health and Safety

The health and safety of volunteers is of utmost importance to us at CTS. Volunteers are covered by our wider health and safety policies and agreements in which you will be fully trained. Any changes, including risk management will be communicated by the most suitable method.

As many people like to volunteer in the kitchen, we encourage participation and pay the costs of the Food Safety Level 2 Hygiene Certificates. We run a yearly First Aid course which is open to volunteers and clients.

If there's problem or concern

If a volunteer has a problem or concern, then in the first instance they should make the Volunteer Coordinator aware. Where this cannot be resolved by the Volunteer Coordinator the issue will be referred to the Services Manager, followed by the Chief Executive. In event that this is still unresolved, or an agreement is unsatisfactory to either party, it can be taken to our Board of Trustees.

Volunteer Breaches of Code of Conduct

Where a volunteer is operating outside of Volunteer Code of Conduct this will be initially raised as a verbal warning from the Volunteer Coordinator or Services Manager. At this stage any training or support should be identified that may assist the volunteer to be able to comply with the Code of Conduct. If there are further concerns a formal written warning will be issued by the Services Team Manager or Chief Executive. This will remain on record for six months

If the further breaches occur, or the breach puts clients, volunteers or staff at significant risk then the volunteer placement can be ended immediately.

Confidentiality

Within the organisation, confidentiality operates on a 'need to know' basis. Information obtained about any young person cannot remain confidential to one individual volunteer and must be properly reported at the end of day briefing. Equally, volunteers need to be aware of which information must be kept confidential. Personal information about CTS's young people, applicants for services, CTS staff or other volunteers must be regarded as strictly confidential. Information about such individuals may only be released outside the organisation with the written consent of the individual concerned. Breaches of confidentiality are against the Code of Conduct and will result in the warning procedure being activated.

Related policies

Equality and Diversity

Volunteer Strategy (currently under review)

Lone Working Policy and Procedure

Recruitment of Ex-Offenders policy

Code of Conduct

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Children Policies and Procedures.

These policies can be found in the Volunteer Handbook and can be emailed on request.

Author: Claud Murray, Volunteer Coordinator. Next review date: November 2022