

Merton Mencap

Volunteer Policy

October 2012



Merton Mencap

VOLUNTEER POLICY

This policy has been adopted by Merton Mencap through its Executive Committee which remains responsible for its review.

Original signed version is kept at the Merton Mencap office.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____

Chair of Executive Committee

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____

Chief Executive

Record of adoption and review of this policy and procedure:-

Adopted:	16 September 2009
Reviewed:	2 June 2011
Reviewed:	15 October 2012

Merton Mencap

VOLUNTEER POLICY

1. Introduction

Merton Mencap provides services for children, young people and adults with a learning disability, and their parents and carers, in the London Borough of Merton. We aim, in particular, to improve the choice, opportunity and independence of people with a learning disability, to promote their inclusion in the community, and to raise awareness and increase understanding of learning disability.

We believe that volunteers offer a valuable contribution to our work, and we involve volunteers to:-

- help govern and guide our organisation
- work on our projects, supporting our service users
- bring new skills, experiences and perspectives to our work
- increase our contact with the local community

2. Principles

This policy is guided by the following principles:-

- We will ensure that volunteers are integrated into our organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to our work
- We expect all paid staff (employees and bank workers) to work positively with volunteers
- We recognise that volunteers need satisfying work and may wish to develop personally
- Volunteers will not be used as job replacement

3. Recruitment of Volunteers and Ongoing Support

Recruitment of volunteers is done in line with our *Recruitment Policy and Procedure*, which should be referred to for full details.

4. Commitment

We recognise that volunteers will often need flexible arrangements on the time they can give and the level of their commitment. We try to match what a volunteer can take on with the needs of our service users and of our organisation. We ask all volunteers to give as much notice as possible when unable to carry out volunteering work that they have previously committed to.

5. Standards, Policies and Procedures

Volunteers will be given copies of our Standards, Policies and Procedures and codes of conduct which are relevant to their work. Volunteers are expected to have an understanding of these policies and procedures and to comply with all of them, with particular reference to the following, which apply to all aspects of our work:-

- Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy
- Health and Safety Policy and Procedure
- Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure
- Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Whistle-blowing Policy and Procedure
- Media Policy and Procedure

6. Confidentiality

Volunteers must keep confidential all personal information about our service users and their needs in accordance with Merton Mencap's *Data Protection, Confidentiality and Security of Information Policy and Procedure*.

7. Support and supervision

We will provide volunteers with a named person as their main point of contact. This person will provide the volunteer with support, the appropriate supervision and will be able to discuss their volunteering role and air any problems. Contact details of this person will be outlined on their Volunteer Agreement.

Volunteers will receive informal and formal supervisions whilst at Merton Mencap which will discuss the volunteer's progress, any problems, confidence or training needs, if the volunteer role is right for that individual and feedback from both sides.

8. Volunteer Agreement and Code of Conduct

We will provide volunteers with our *Volunteer Agreement*, which demonstrates our support for volunteers and explains what we would like from our volunteers in return.

We require our volunteers to sign all relevant code of conducts to reflect the charity's basic requirements relating to the conduct of all our volunteers.

The relationship between Merton Mencap and the volunteer is not intended to create any contract. The *Volunteer Agreement* and *Code of Conduct* are intended to clarify the reasonable expectations of Merton Mencap and the volunteer, and do not oblige the volunteer to working any hours. Our procedures for the recruitment and selection of volunteers are intended to check suitability and safety of volunteer placements only,

acknowledging that volunteers enter into volunteer placements freely. The provision of any training, supervision, experience or expenses is not intended as analogous to any sort of payment in return for work.

Merton Mencap and the volunteer may end the volunteer arrangement at any time without either party having recourse to action for breach of any contract.

10. Volunteer duration period

All volunteers will have a trial period of up to 4 weeks or 4 sessions, depending on the frequency of volunteering, to ensure that they are in the right volunteering role for them. All voluntary placements have a maximum duration period, usually one year, after which the opportunity may end or be extended for that volunteer. This will depend on the circumstances, including the nature of the volunteering opportunity, the suitability of the volunteer and the needs of the business.

Merton Mencap or the volunteer are able to end the volunteer placement at any time without notice. However, Merton Mencap and the volunteer should provide as much notice as possible in relation to the volunteer placement coming to an end.

Merton Mencap is happy to provide references for volunteers for reasons such as jobs, universities and other volunteering opportunities after 6 months regular volunteering.

Merton Mencap will offer all volunteers the opportunity to have an exit interview. Feedback from the exit interviews should be made to the board of trustees and the meeting itself should be recorded using the '**Merton Mencap Exit Interview Form**'

11. Gifts, etc

For the protection of both volunteers and service users, volunteers must not accept any gift from any service user nor must they enter into any financial arrangement of any kind with a service user. In this context, volunteers should also refer to Merton Mencap's *Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers*.

12. Expenses

Volunteers will have reasonable travel and other agreed expenses reimbursed. Volunteers are required to provide receipts or other evidence of their expenses.

13. The Volunteers' Voice

Volunteers are encouraged to express their views about matters concerning us and our work. Volunteers can do this through their named person.

14. Insurance

All volunteers are covered by Merton Mencap's employer's liability insurance policy whilst they are engaged in any work on Merton Mencap's behalf.

16. Health and Safety

All Volunteers are offered Health and Safety training and are covered by Merton Mencap's *Health and Safety Policy and Procedures*.

17. Complaints/Problem Solving

If a volunteer has a complaint, the volunteer should speak to their named person about their concern. If the complaint is against this named person the complaint will be referred to another manager where possible.

We will try to resolve any volunteer complaint as quickly as possible, normally within 2 weeks. If a problem cannot be resolved within 2 weeks the volunteer will be contacted within this time and the problem will continue to be investigated and resolved as soon as possible.

Volunteer complaints can be made in writing if they are not satisfied that their oral complaint has been resolved.

18. Suspension/Dismissal

If it becomes apparent that the relationship between Merton Mencap and a volunteer is not working out, for whatever reason, it may be necessary to end the arrangement without notice.

Volunteers can also be immediately dismissed or suspended pending investigation for serious incidents such as breach of the code of conduct, allegation, theft, assault, harassment/bullying. Volunteers may be dismissed after suspension if returning to volunteer at Merton Mencap is inappropriate.

Volunteers do not have a legal right to appeal against a decision of dismissal from the organisation, however if a volunteer wishes to appeal a decision Merton Mencap will review each appeal on a case by case basis.

Volunteer Life Cycle Flow Diagram

