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Document Description

Volunteers are essential to Chapter 15 (C15) in providing support at every open session of the centre as well as all leadership roles. This document sets out C15's values, what is expected of volunteers and how they will be supported.

Implementation and Quality Assurance

Implementation is immediate and this Policy shall stay in force until any alterations are formally agreed.

The Policy will be reviewed every three years by the Board of Trustees, sooner if legislation, best practice or other circumstances indicate this is necessary.

All aspects of this Policy shall be open to review at any time. If you have any comments or suggestions on the content of this policy please contact Mike Griffin (Centre Coordinator) or John Jones (Trustee)

Supporting Thetford's homeless and those recovering from homelessness

Thetford Homeless Centre, Riversdale Centre Annex, Tanner Street, Thetford IP24 2BQ

e: hello@chapter15.co.uk w: chapter15.co.uk

Registered charity No: 1188310 (England and Wales)



Volunteer Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The aim of Chapter 15 is to provide homeless people living in Thetford with:

- Access to showers and laundry facilities.
- Basic hygiene supplies, clothing and other essentials such as sleeping and camping equipment (when available).
- Refreshments during centre opening times along with friendship, support and encouragement.
- Access to local authority advice and support as well as access to the support of other charities within Thetford.

1.2 To provide people recovering from homelessness in Thetford (who have been provided with accommodation but who remain vulnerable) with:

- Refreshments during centre open times along with friendship, support and encouragement.
- Access to local authority advice and support as well as access to the support of other charities within Thetford.

The overall objective of the charity is to support people out of homelessness and ensure they remain and flourish in suitable accommodation with the value, security and dignity that this should afford.

1.3 Chapter 15 is committed to involving a diverse range of people in our work, of all ages and abilities. We do this because we believe that:

- Volunteers, in their diversity of age, experience, cultural background and faith bring to our work a value which adds to our ability to fulfil our charitable objectives.
- We work more effectively and sustainably because we provide opportunities for people to use their skills, knowledge and experience through volunteering.
- We add value, wellbeing and purpose to the lives of those who volunteer with us.
- People volunteer with us because they find it rewarding, supportive and enjoyable.
- Volunteers are essential to every area of C15's work and without their contribution C15 would not exist.

1.4 A volunteer is anyone who freely chooses to undertake supporting C15 through the giving of their time, skills and experience without financial remuneration. It is support undertaken by choice and is unpaid.

1.5 We aim to ensure that volunteers enjoy their involvement with us.

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2. Purpose of this policy

Our purpose in adopting this policy is to:

- highlight and acknowledge that every aspect of C15's work is carried out by volunteers and celebrate their value and contribution.
- reflect the purpose, value, standards and strategies of C15 in its involvement of volunteers.

3. Scope of the volunteer policy

This policy applies to all volunteers undertaking to support C15.

4. Statement of principles of good practice

In involving volunteers we will be guided by the following principles of good practice:

- Tasks will be clearly defined so that all concerned with volunteers' activities are sure of their respective roles and responsibilities.
- C15 volunteer policies are reviewed every three years and consideration will be given as to how any changes will affect volunteers.

5. Recruitment and selection

- Volunteer opportunities will be promoted in a manner that ensures there is wide accessibility to the positions we offer. Our equal opportunities statement applies to the recruiting and selecting of volunteers.
- Prospective volunteers will be required to complete an application form. This will include the taking up of two references.
- Volunteers will be invited to an induction where every aspect of the work and our centre will be explained to them. We are committed to ensuring all our volunteers feel supported and are confident in their role.
- A Volunteer Handbook will be issued to all volunteers and will explain what is expected of volunteers in relation to time, commitment, necessary skills, experience and specific duties required.
- Following their induction volunteers will be asked to sign a Volunteer Agreement stating that they understand their role and what conduct is expected from them and how they can expect to be supported by the C15 leadership.

6. Equal Opportunities

C15 is committed to providing an environment where everyone is respected and valued. C15 wholeheartedly supports the principles of equal opportunities and is determined that everyone will have equality of opportunity in respect of volunteering. C15 opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, age or disability and are aware of equal opportunities legislation including:

- Equal Pay Act 1970

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- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Civil Partnership Act 2004
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998

Our policy is based on the principles laid out within these Acts:

- Fairness - Everyone has a right to a fair hearing
- Respect – Everyone should expect their privacy and confidentiality to be respected
- Equality – Everyone should enjoy freedom from discrimination
- Dignity - Everyone has a right to expect freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment
- Autonomy – Everyone has the right to be involved in decisions that affect them.

Providing equality of opportunity means understanding and appreciating the diversity of our volunteers, ensuring a supportive environment which is free from harassment. To help ensure this C15 encourages people to challenge discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for all.

Equal opportunity does not mean treating everybody exactly the same. It means recognising that all people are individual and unique and therefore we will aim to adapt the way we work in order to ensure that everyone is treated fairly, equally and have access to the same opportunities as is reasonably practicable.

C15 recognises the guidelines of the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Conduct, the Disability Discrimination Act, the Race Relations Act and the Sex Discrimination Act.

7. Support for Volunteers

- C15 will provide appropriate insurance cover for volunteers (Public Liability Insurance).
- Volunteers will be kept up to date with any changes to the operation of C15 and wherever appropriate be asked to contribute their knowledge and experience before decisions are made.
- Opportunities for relevant training will be offered when these are available.
- Volunteers will always have access to the C15 leadership and the opportunity to share ideas and concerns.
- C15 will endeavour to hold social events throughout the year as an opportunity to thank the volunteers for their invaluable service.
- Volunteers will be made aware of C15's complaints procedure and whom to contact if they have a complaint about any aspect of their role with the Charity. This can be found in the Volunteer Handbook.

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8. Reporting an accident, incident or near miss

The priority of C15 is always the safety of its volunteers and guests (service users).

1.1 So what is an accident, incident or near-miss?

- An accident is an unexpected event that causes damage, injury, or harm.
- An incident is any injury, loss, damage or abuse to a volunteer, staff member, or to property or equipment.
- A near miss is an incident that had the potential to cause harm, loss or injury but was prevented.

1.2 Accidents and incidents must be recorded in the Accident Book and the Centre Coordinator informed. Information recorded should include:

- The date and time of any accident, incident or near-miss
- Details of the person concerned, including name and occupation / volunteer role
- Factual details of the accident, incident or near-miss itself
- Action required to prevent a recurrence

All records relating to any accident, incident or near-miss will be retained by C15 for a period of not less than fifty years.

1.3 Near-misses need to be reported using the appropriate form found with the Accident Book.

1.4 It will be the responsibility of the Centre Coordinator or in their absence the nominated volunteer to investigate the accident, incident or near-miss. The investigation will establish root causes and identify any action required to prevent a recurrence and or to reduce risk.

9. Violence and Aggression in the Workplace

C15 does not tolerate any type of workplace violence committed by or against volunteers. Volunteers are prohibited from making threats or engaging in violent activities.

1.1. Prohibited Conduct

The list of behaviours, while not exhaustive, provides examples of conduct that is prohibited:

- Causing physical injury to another person.
- Making threatening remarks.
- Acting out in an aggressive or hostile manner that creates a reasonable fear of injury to another person or subjects another individual to emotional distress.
- Intentionally damaging the charity's property or property of another volunteer or guest.
- Possessing a weapon while attending a C15 session or while on the charity's business.
- Committing acts motivated by, or related to, sexual harassment or domestic violence.

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1.2 Reporting Procedures

Any potentially dangerous situations must be reported immediately to the Team Leader of the session. The Team Leader will endeavour to address the incident and will report it to the Centre Coordinator. Any concerns can also be raised directly with the Centre Coordinator.

1.3 Response:

- Reports or incidents warranting confidentiality will be handled appropriately and information will be disclosed to others only on a need-to-know basis.
- The results of investigations will be discussed with all parties involved.

While C15 does not expect volunteers to be skilled at identifying potentially dangerous persons, volunteers are expected to exercise good judgment and to inform their Team Leader if any volunteer or guest exhibits behaviour which could lead to a potentially dangerous situation. C15 has a panic alarm linked to the 999 emergency call centre and all volunteers should be familiar with its use and feel confident to use it if the situation demands. Instructions for use can be found in your Volunteer Handbook and on the inside wall cupboard door nearest the serving point.

10. Fire Safety Procedure

The fire safety and evacuation poster is displayed on the noticeboard. In the event of a fire it is the responsibility of the volunteers to evacuate themselves and the guests to the muster point outside the Methodist Church. It is not the responsibility of the volunteers or guests to attempt to extinguish the fire. In the event of a fire:

- The volunteer identifying the fire will sound the alarm and inform the Team Leader of the fire.
- The Team Leader will instruct the volunteers to lead all the guests to the muster point. Care must be taken crossing roads. If guests refuse to be evacuated it is not the responsibility of the volunteers to stay with them, but to evacuate themselves to the muster point.
- If any guests have remained behind, the volunteer must inform the Team Leader who will pass this information on to the emergency services.
- The Team Leader will ring the Fire Brigade and state the address including the postcode **IP24 2BQ** and What3Words **slant.race.paddocks**
- The Team Leader will keep a safe distance from the building and ensure no guests or volunteers return.
- The Team Leader will be the point of contact for the emergency services.

11. Raising a complaint

We are really sorry if anyone feels that we have let them down and they have cause to complain. We hope by following this accessible, open and transparent procedure we will be able to resolve any complaint to your satisfaction and in a reasonable time frame.

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1. If you have cause to complain about something we have done, or not done, could we ask in the first instance you contact Mike Griffin, Centre Coordinator. This can be in person, by email or phone, whichever you are most comfortable with. Hopefully, we will be able to resolve the complaint at this point.
2. If the complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction you can ask for the matter to be referred to the Trustees. Please do so in writing stating both your original complaint and why you feel the Centre Coordinator has not been unable to satisfactorily respond to it.
3. If the complaint is about the Centre Manager you can refer it directly to the Trustees.

12. Responsibility for the policy

Overall responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and review of policy lies with the Board of Trustees and on a day to day basis with the Centre Coordinator who will report to the Board on a regular basis.

If you have any comments or suggestions on the content of this policy please contact Mike Griffin on mikeg@chapter15.co.uk

13. Chapter 15 contact details

Centre Coordinator

Mike Griffin

Chair of the Trustees

John Jones

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