




INVOLVING VOLUNTEERS Corporate Policy


Title of Policy Document	Involving Volunteers
Issue Date and Version	November 2024 (Version 10)
Policy Reference Number	63
Has Equality Impact Assessment been completed?	N/A
Categories	<input type="checkbox"/> Core <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate <input type="checkbox"/> Equal Opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Health and Safety <input type="checkbox"/> Housing <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources <input type="checkbox"/> Information Governance <input type="checkbox"/> IT and Communications <input type="checkbox"/> Learning and Development <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Practice and Standards <input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment <input type="checkbox"/> Service Management <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder Involvement <input type="checkbox"/> Support Planning and Risk Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Service Provision – CQC services <input type="checkbox"/> Service Provision
Signed off by	 Chief Executive
Renewal date	November 2027
First issue date	October 1997

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Creative Support recognises and values the important contribution volunteers make to our services, the clients we support and our organisation. Volunteers bring a range of skills, life experiences and dedication that enriches the lives of the people we support and helps our staff provide person centred support services.
- 1.2 We are committed to supporting volunteers who support our organisation through an active process of induction, support and supervision as well as personal development opportunities, regular communication and recognition of their contribution to Creative Support. To highlight this and to ensure good practice throughout Creative Support, we have committed to achieving 'Investing in Volunteers', a nationally recognised quality mark for volunteer-involving organisations.
- 1.3 We are passionate about ensuring our volunteers receive the same respect and consideration from colleagues, managers and our clients that we expect for all our staff. Creative Support's [Equal Opportunities](#) policy applies in full for all volunteers, we actively seek to recruit volunteers who reflect our services and client groups.
- 1.4 As a matter of principle volunteers will not be recruited to undertake tasks as a substitute for paid staff.

2. TASKS APPROPRIATE FOR VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

- 2.1 The following tasks and areas have been identified as potential opportunities for voluntary roles within Creative Support:
- Assisting staff in their day to day work with clients (e.g. accessing community services, providing emotional support etc.)
 - Carrying out a befriender role with a specific client or clients
 - Peer support, that can take the form of one to one peer relationships, group support and/or telephone-based support
 - Sharing specific skills with clients in recreational, training or informal learning situations
 - Providing specific skills to the organisation (e.g. translation, IT advice, legal or financial knowledge etc.)
 - Assisting in programmes of research and evaluation
 - Assisting with general administrative or organisational tasks (e.g. filing, responding to emails, managing a social media page etc.)
 - Contributing to specific events (e.g. exhibitions, conferences, open days etc.)
- 2.2 This list of potential volunteer activities is not exclusive and other areas may be identified as suitable for volunteer involvement.
- 2.3 Tasks and areas not appropriate for volunteer involvement:
- Any role in which the volunteer might acquire either formal or informal case accountability in respect of a client.
 - Tasks involving issues of major sensitivity either to the client or to Creative Support. Examples include; liaising with the press or third party organisations on behalf of Creative Support; attending meetings where sensitive and confidential matters will be discussed about a client or handling information that is sensitive to Creative Support's business interests.

Involving Volunteers	Version 10	Issued November 2024	Approved by: 
----------------------	------------	----------------------	---


- Any tasks involving the collection or holding of money.
- Any tasks involving medication or personal care.

3. SPECIFYING VOLUNTEER TASKS


- 3.1 Volunteer opportunities will be identified by our Head Office based Volunteer Team in collaboration with local Managers, Development Officers and other Senior Staff. A volunteer role description including an overview of the service, a list of tasks and person specification will then be prepared and approved by the Volunteer Team.
- 3.2 Volunteer role descriptions will not be approved for advertisement without a named volunteer supervisor at the service. The role description must also make clear what tasks the role includes (e.g. setting up the activity room, supporting clients to learn basic Maths, taking a register at an activity etc.).
- 3.3 Volunteer opportunities are publicised on the Creative Support voluntary role board, and on local volunteer centre or other relevant websites. Volunteer roles are also promoted in Creative Support newsletters, on our social media platforms, including Facebook, and through other Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations.
- 3.4 Volunteers are required to complete a Creative Support [Volunteer Application Form](#) to apply for a volunteer role. This is available on our website, or by contacting our Head Office to request a copy in the post. A number of our volunteers have additional support needs, or communication difficulties; therefore we anticipate that some prospective volunteers will be supported by a member of staff, family member or friend to complete their application form.

4. RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

- 4.1 Any person is welcome to approach Creative Support staff to informally discuss the possibility of a voluntary role. This type of placement requires a volunteer role description and approval from our Volunteer Team before proceeding.
- 4.2 We welcome applications for voluntary placements from existing or former clients of Creative Support.
- 4.3 All volunteers must be signed off as ready to volunteer by a member of our Volunteer Team prior to commencing their placement with us. Volunteers are not permitted to undertake any roles or tasks prior to sign off, this includes 'shadowing'.
- 4.4 Where volunteers are placed via an external placement agency we will be proactive in co-ordinating and delivering feedback to that agency.
- 4.5 Prospective volunteers will be interviewed as part of the volunteer recruitment process. We have a set volunteer interview form that includes a range of skill and scenario-based questions to ascertain whether the volunteer is appropriate for the role and whether they are likely to require additional support (for some roles, such as peer support roles, local services may amend these questions to fit the role). At the end of the interview, the interviewer(s) must note whether they have been successful. Where the prospective volunteer is unsuccessful the interviewer(s) must clearly note the reason so this can be communicated back to the volunteer.

Involving Volunteers	Version 10	Issued November 2024	Approved by: 
----------------------	------------	----------------------	---

- 4.6 Prospective volunteers who are not considered suitable for a placement will be entitled to an explanation as to why their application was unsuccessful. This will be done via letter, and we will signpost the prospective volunteer on to other voluntary opportunities in their local community where this is deemed appropriate.
- 4.7 All details of the role and associated tasks will be clearly agreed and set out in writing, including the name and contact information of their named volunteer supervisor, address of placement, approximate number of hours each week or month and any resources the volunteer requires to undertake the role.
- 4.8 Two references will be required from volunteers; these can be either personal, educational or business references (at least one of the references should be from a person who has, in some capacity, supervised or managed the prospective volunteer).
- 4.9 All volunteers are to complete the agency Criminal Declarations Form in which they must declare all convictions and cautions, including convictions which would otherwise be spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.
- 4.10 There is a statutory requirement that all providers of care must ensure that a Disclosure and Barring Service Disclosure (this includes an Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) barred list check) is received prior to commencement of employment or a volunteer placement. Creative Support applies for enhanced DBS checks for all volunteers.
- 4.11 Creative Support will also apply for a Children's Barred List check as part of the DBS check if individuals are likely to have unsupervised access to people between the ages of 16 and 18 on an ongoing basis. A volunteer placement in a care position must not be offered to an individual who is on the ISA barred list or Children's Barred List in line with section 89(1) of the Care Standards Act 2000.
- 4.12 Criminal conviction or cautions do not necessarily bar a prospective volunteer from undertaking a voluntary placement; this is looked at on a case-by-case basis and an assessment will be completed by a representative from Human Resources or a Service Director to ascertain the level of risk. Where someone is deemed unsuitable for a voluntary placement with Creative Support, this will be communicated to them and we will signpost them on to other voluntary opportunities in their local community where this is deemed appropriate.
- 4.13 We advise volunteers to register their DBS certificate online with the Update Service when they receive it; this means it can be used for other voluntary opportunities. Registering with the update service is free for volunteers.
- 4.14 When a volunteer placement has been authorised, the volunteer is notified by letter by our Volunteer Team. They will also be sent a copy of our [Volunteer Handbook](#), which is also available in a more accessible format. The volunteers named supervisor is also notified and asked to arrange a volunteer induction at the service.
- 4.15 Copies of the role description and any agreed conditions of the placement will be authorised by a member of our Volunteer Team. This information, along with an application form, references, interview notes, and details of convictions or checks undertaken will be held on file by Creative Support. Volunteers have free access to all information relating to them on file, other than third party information.

Involving Volunteers	Version 10	Issued November 2024	Approved by: 
----------------------	------------	----------------------	---

- 4.16 All volunteers are bound by Creative Support's [Code of Conduct & Professional Boundaries](#). This is clearly noted in the [Volunteer Handbook](#) and is covered as part of the volunteer induction.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 5.1 Creative Support is committed to promoting equal opportunities and celebrating diversity in our employment practices, volunteer opportunities and within the services we provide for our clients. Creative Support values and actively celebrates the diversity of the communities we provide services in and we aim to reflect this in our workforce and pool of volunteers. We also seek to promote an understanding of different cultures, religions, age groups, genders and sexual orientations within our workforce and services, ensuring we are responsive to the specific needs of our clients and volunteers. We believe that the active promotion of equality and diversity is essential to the provision of high quality and person centred support services.
- 5.2 We have a number of corporate policies and procedures relating to equal opportunities that apply to volunteers, including: [Equal Opportunities](#), [Anti-Discriminatory Practice Bullying and Harassment at Work](#) Policy, [Code of Conduct and Professional Boundaries](#) and [Recruitment and Selection](#).

6. INDUCTING VOLUNTEERS

- 6.1 The induction process is essential for ensuring new volunteers feel welcome in our services. This is important as it provides an opportunity to speak to the volunteer about the service and client group, and to ensure the volunteer knows how to carry out their role safely.
- 6.2 All volunteers must attend an induction at the service at which they are volunteering. This will be carried out by the volunteer's named volunteer supervisor or someone assuming this role and should cover the following topics:
- **Role Description, expectations of the role and service overview**, including a tour of the service, overview of the volunteers role and our expectations and general housekeeping (e.g. who to contact at the service, fire and evacuation procedure etc.)
 - **Overview of Creative Support**, including our core values and the support we provide
 - **Key policies and procedures**
 - **Supervision and training**, including mandatory training courses and how to apply for training
 - **Communication, feedback and consultation**, and how to contact the Volunteer Team at Head Office
- 6.3 On the first day of a volunteer's placement, all volunteers should have a service induction. If it is not possible to complete the induction and training this should be completed within the first 4 weeks of placement.
- 6.4 The induction checklist, which is part of the Volunteer Portfolio, must be signed and dated by the volunteer and the staff member completing it with them.

Involving Volunteers	Version 10	Issued November 2024	Approved by: 
----------------------	------------	----------------------	---

7. SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION


- 7.1 Regular support and supervision for volunteers is essential for ensuring we are delivering safe, effective and person centred services for our clients. It is an integral part of staff and volunteer management and should be done regularly.
- 7.2 Creative Support recommends that volunteers receive support and supervision sessions every three months; although this will differ depending on; the nature of the role (e.g. befrienders and peer mentors might require more support due to the emotional nature of the role), the number of hours they volunteer, if they have any additional support needs or if there are concerns about their conduct or ability to carry out their role. There is a support and supervision template that can be used as a guidance tool which is available from the Volunteer Team.
- 7.3 In some instances, it might be appropriate to carry out telephone or group-based support and supervision sessions as this is a good way of ensuring regular communication and provides opportunities for socialising and sharing ideas.
- 7.4 Volunteers can request a support and supervision session at any time; they should be made aware of this during their volunteer induction.
- 7.5 At times, volunteers may provide emotional support and/or hear or witness distressing things. Where this does happen, the volunteer must be offered a support and supervision session immediately to ensure support has been provided to safeguard their mental wellbeing, and where appropriate we should signpost the volunteer on to specialist support organisations (e.g. bereavement counselling services).
- 7.6 As part of every volunteer's ongoing supervision, their volunteer supervisor or someone assuming this role should complete an annual Personal Development Plan and Review. This provides an opportunity to discuss the volunteer's role and experience to date with them, review the volunteer's training needs and discuss whether they would like to develop their role or try new opportunities. There is a guidance document for completing this which is available from the Volunteer Team.

8. INSURANCE

- 8.1 Creative Support's [Employers and Public Liability](#) provides insurance cover for volunteers.

9. HEALTH AND SAFETY AND MANAGING RISK

- 9.1 Creative Support recognises it has a duty of care to provide a safe working environment free from hazards and unacceptable risk.
- 9.2 Health and safety is discussed with volunteers as part of their induction.
- 9.3 For all new volunteers we will complete a risk assessment. In some instances, where a volunteer is undertaking tasks or duties that are deemed to put them at risk (e.g. meeting with clients in the community, volunteering in a catering kitchen etc.) we will complete a management plan relating to the volunteer's role.
- 9.4 Creative Support accepts volunteer applications from people aged 16 and over. Where a volunteer is under the age of 18, the volunteer must not undertake roles or tasks that

Involving Volunteers	Version 10	Issued November 2024	Approved by: 
----------------------	------------	----------------------	---

include lone working with clients or the use of potentially dangerous equipment (e.g. catering equipment). They should also be supervised at all times in their role.


- 9.5 We recognise that our volunteers will sometimes support clients who are deemed 'high risk' due to current or previous behaviours that might challenge (e.g. aggressive behaviours etc.). This is an inherent part of the work we do in our support services, and we have a duty of care to ensure volunteers are not put at unnecessary risk. It is the responsibility of the volunteer supervisor or a senior member of staff to assess whether it is appropriate for a volunteer to lone work (e.g. in the community or one to one in a room) with a client.
- 9.6 Volunteers will comply with the terms of the Health and Safety at Work Legislation.
- 9.7 Creative Support's Health and Safety policy applies to volunteers.

10. EXPENSES

- 10.1 Creative Support will reimburse out of pocket travel expenses incurred as a result of volunteering with Creative Support; this will normally be limited to £5.00 per day. In some instances we may agree to reimburse additional travel costs where the volunteer has travelled to a number of different sites on the same day as part of their role. This must be authorised by a senior member of the Volunteer Team.
- 10.2 Where a volunteer purchases a weekly or monthly travel pass, we will reimburse a percentage of the cost depending on the number of days they volunteer us.
- 10.3 Where a volunteer uses a car, we will reimburse them at a set rate per mile. The volunteer needs to note the number of miles they have travelled as part of their role on an expense form and we will reimburse them accordingly.
- 10.4 We will always attempt to reimburse expenses on the day. A number of our volunteer-involving services have local volunteer petty cash floats which can be used to reimburse travel expenses.
- 10.5 Volunteers must always provide a receipt (e.g. a bus ticket) for any travel expenses we reimburse. We do not need the original – a scanned copy of the receipt will suffice.

11. RESOLVING PROBLEMS AND MANAGING DIFFICULTIES

- 11.1 If there are concerns relating to a volunteer's behaviour, conduct or ability to complete their role, the matter should initially be discussed with the volunteer and steps should be agreed to address the concerns. This might include organising additional training, coaching or more regular supervision sessions. We will always endeavour to work positively with volunteers to resolve any issues or problems.
- 11.2 In the instance that additional support does not resolve the issues we reserve the right to cease the volunteer placement.
- 11.3 In some instances, where a volunteer has acted in a way which is deemed inappropriate or causes harm to themselves, a client or a staff member, we reserve the right to cease the volunteer placement with immediate effect.

Involving Volunteers	Version 10	Issued November 2024	Approved by: 
----------------------	------------	----------------------	---

- 11.4 Advice should always be sought from our Head Office Volunteer Team prior to ceasing a volunteer placement.
- 11.5 Where a placement has been ceased, the volunteer will always be notified by letter.
- 11.6 Volunteers are included under Creative Support's [Complaints and Compliments](#) policy.
- 11.7 Volunteers have the right to complain or raise concerns about Creative Support. This is clearly noted in the [Volunteer Handbook](#) in the 'How to Voice Concerns' section and staff should ensure they discuss Creative Support's [Complaints and Compliments](#) policy with volunteers during their induction.

12. TIME OFF


- 12.1 Volunteers are entitled to take time off for unpaid holidays and emergencies.
- 12.2 Where possible it is expected that advance notification of time off will be given to Creative Support in order to ensure continuity in support for clients and to take account of volunteer supervision requirements.

13. INVOLVEMENT

- 13.1 Volunteers will be invited to take part in meetings (e.g. staff team meetings) and events (e.g. social events, coffee mornings etc.) at their service.
- 13.2 Volunteers will be invited to participate in organisational planning and reviews as appropriate.
- 13.3 In some instances, volunteers will have access to case files and client information if determined appropriate by the Service Manager. This must only be done on a strictly need to know basis and with prior agreement from the client.
- 13.4 Volunteers will be invited to volunteer-specific consultation groups and events.
- 13.5 Volunteers may not make entries on case files but will complete a volunteer log which is to be kept on the given client's case file.

14. TRAINING AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 14.1 Creative Support is committed to providing the highest standard of training for our staff, volunteers and clients. We want to equip everyone within our teams with the right skills, knowledge and confidence to reach their full potential.
- 14.2 All volunteers must attend four courses as part of their induction process, namely:
- Safeguarding Adults and Children at Risk
 - Staying Safe in an Office Environment
 - Health and Safety
 - Data Protection & Information Governance

Involving Volunteers	Version 10	Issued November 2024	Approved by: 
----------------------	------------	----------------------	---


- 14.3 Any additional formal training needs that a volunteer may have will be identified and organised by their volunteer supervisor. These must be relevant to the role and where possible should be done via our e-learning training portal.
- 14.4 Informal training/coaching will be provided by Creative Support staff on an ongoing basis in any skill areas which have been identified as necessary to carry out the volunteer's role.
- 14.5 Volunteer training needs will be reviewed regularly as part of their supervision and annually as part of the volunteer's Personal Development Plan and Annual Review.
- 14.6 Information on training opportunities within the voluntary sector will be made available to volunteers through our monthly 'V-Bulletin' and at services. A number of regional or city-based volunteer centres provide fully-funded training opportunities for volunteers.
- 14.7 Volunteers will be supported to keep a record of their achievements, training and personal development whilst on placement. This information will be retained in their Volunteer Portfolio.

15. COMMUNICATION

- 15.1 Volunteering is a two-way process, so it is essential that as an organisation we commit to regular communication with our volunteers so they feel actively involved and up to date in regard to any changes that might affect them and any opportunities we might be able to offer.
- 15.2 We send out a monthly 'V-Bulletin' which includes relevant information about volunteering with Creative Support and an update on training opportunities available at local volunteer centres and other VCSE organisations. The bulletin also includes our monthly Volunteer Newsletter which celebrates the achievements of our volunteers.
- 15.3 Every volunteer is assigned a named volunteer supervisor and given their contact details. They are also encouraged to contact our Volunteer Team at Head Office with any feedback, concerns or ideas.
- 15.4 Volunteer supervisors and local staff must also endeavour to regularly communicate with their volunteers; this can be done via phone, scheduled meetings or via email. Volunteers should be notified of any changes to the service that might impact on their role.
- 15.5 We regularly seek feedback from our volunteers through consultation groups and our Annual Volunteer Survey. This ensures we are responsive to the needs and aspirations of our volunteers.

16. RECOGNITION AND CELEBRATION

- 16.1 It is important that we recognise and celebrate the valuable contribution volunteers make to the lives of people we support, our services and Creative Support as a whole. Volunteers are giving their time and energy to support the aims and objectives of our organisation. We can recognise and celebrate our volunteers in the following ways:
- Local celebration events (e.g. awards ceremonies, meals out, trips etc.)

Involving Volunteers	Version 10	Issued November 2024	Approved by: 
----------------------	------------	----------------------	---

- Recognising volunteer achievements in our monthly newsletter, 'Your Volunteer Voice'
- Supervision and support sessions
- Coffee mornings or social gatherings
- Saying 'thank you' to volunteers regularly
- Inviting volunteer's to Creative Support events at the service they volunteer at and regionally (e.g. annual Christmas parties, summer barbecues).

17. EMPLOYER SUPPORTED VOLUNTEERING (ESV)


- 17.1 Creative Support actively encourages Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV) within our services. ESV refers to the practice whereby a company or organisation releases their employee(s) for a set number of days for each year to undertake charity of community-based projects. There are a range of opportunities for people wanting to undertake ESV opportunities (e.g. helping at social events, day-trips, garden work).
- 17.2 ESV placements must be authorised by the Volunteer Team before confirmation is given to the company or organisation.
- 17.3 We do not undertake background checks for people undertaking ESV placements as they are classed as 'helpers'. The company or organisation retains responsibility for their employees during the course of the activity or project, and they must be supervised by a member of staff at all times.

18. HELPER ROLE

- 18.1 For the purpose of this policy, Creative Support defines a volunteer as someone who undertakes an unpaid, defined role which specifies set tasks at one of our services, or in the local community. Volunteers undergo a formal recruitment process, commit to undertaking the role for a set period of time each week or month and receive regular supervision.
- 18.2 Creative Support defines a 'helper', as a current service user or member of the public who undertakes specific tasks in an unpaid capacity on an ad-hoc basis, or as a 'one-off' (e.g. supporting at a Christmas social event). This means they do not have to go through the formal volunteer recruitment process, but they also can't undertake any tasks unsupervised.
- 18.3 We do not reimburse travel expenses for anyone who is classed as a helper.
- 18.4 If someone is regularly helping at a service (e.g. once a week) they are not a helper, they are volunteering. This means they must go through our formal volunteer recruitment process so we can carry out necessary background checks and provide adequate support to them.

19. REFERENCES

- 19.1 Volunteers who have satisfactorily completed a placement for over three months may ask their volunteer supervisor or the Volunteer Team to provide them with a reference for prospective future employers.


Involving Volunteers	Version 10	Issued November 2024	Approved by: 
----------------------	------------	----------------------	---

20. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

- 20.1 Creative Support maintains confidentiality concerning the personal details of volunteers in line with our corporate [Data Protection and Information Governance Policy](#).
- 20.2 Volunteers are expected to respect individual client confidentiality and the confidential nature of some of the information relating to Creative Support which they will be party to.
- 20.3 In some instances, when a volunteer has access to client and organisational information they may be asked to sign an agreement committing to maintain confidentiality.

21. WHEN A VOLUNTEER LEAVES

- 21.1 When a volunteer ends their placement with us our Volunteer Team must be notified, this ensures our centralised volunteer database is up to date.
- 21.2 When a volunteer leaves, staff should speak to them about the need for continued confidentiality after their placement has ended. This relates to anything confidential or sensitive relating to Creative Support or any service users they have supported during the duration of their placement with us.
- 21.3 All volunteers are asked to complete a Leaver's Questionnaire when they leave us; this provides us with feedback which will enable Creative Support to continue developing our volunteer programme. The questionnaire is available as a paper document and online.
- 21.4 A volunteer can request to be kept on our database if they feel they might like to continue with their volunteer placement at a later date (e.g. if they are a university student and they plan to continue volunteering during their holidays). Creative Support will hold volunteer details in accordance with Data Protection laws.

Involving Volunteers	Version 10	Issued November 2024	Approved by: 
----------------------	------------	----------------------	---