

Volunteer Policy

October 2023

Volunteers play a vital role in the work of The Haven. For those who get involved in our counselling work in particular, it is no small commitment. However, it is our aim that this will be a mutually beneficial relationship, and that volunteers will flourish, be encouraged and enjoy a sense of personal development that is enriching and fulfilling.

As an organisation with a Christian ethos and working environment, our ethos is key to what we do and how we conduct ourselves. It is, therefore, a preference for our Schools Team and a requirement for our Advisors offering counselling that they are committed and mature Christians who are involved in and supported by their local church.

Recruitment

The Haven aims to recruit volunteers from a diverse range of backgrounds to reflect the makeup of the local community. We are committed to ensuring that volunteering opportunities are open to everyone and that our recruitment process is fair and transparent at all stages. We welcome the personal experience that some of our volunteers have around issues of crisis pregnancy, pregnancy loss and post abortion. We will require, however, that volunteers have been through a form of recovery, counselling and/or processed their own experiences before volunteering with The Haven.

We will use appropriate means to advertise for volunteers locally and within local churches, which take into account the principles of our Equal Opportunities Policy and support our Christian Ethos and practice.

The key volunteering opportunities of 'Schools Worker' and 'Trained Advisor offering Counselling' are accompanied by clear volunteer role descriptions, and a potential volunteer's suitability for the role will be decided in relation to this. Volunteers will be recruited, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy.

All volunteers who come into contact with young people or adults at risk at the Centre or in schools work must undergo a DBS check at Enhanced Disclosure Level, and their status will be reviewed on a three-yearly basis.

Upon successful completion of the assessment and training process (as outlined in The Haven Volunteer Procedures), the volunteer will be asked to sign the Volunteer Procedures to confirm their assent and will begin the induction process.

Induction and Further Training

All volunteers will have access to all policies relevant to their position. They will be asked to review these annually and confirm their understanding and agreement to comply.

Volunteer Advisors will be taken through an induction process by the Centre Manager.

We encourage Advisors to keep growing and learning by engaging in further training and development opportunities, either externally or, when provided, in-house, both for the benefit of the volunteer and our clients. Haven Advisors are required to attend annual Safeguarding and GDPR training.

Expenses

The Haven does not routinely pay expenses incurred whilst volunteering. However, reasonable expenses may be reimbursed if agreed beforehand with the Centre Manager. In such cases, receipts/tickets must be provided, as we cannot make a reimbursement if we do not receive a receipt.

Supervision and Support

We are committed to valuing and supporting our volunteers as much as we can.

All Advisors working with longer term clients are required to attend monthly group supervision with an external BACP registered supervisor, paid for by The Haven, to discuss and reflect on their client work. Advisors who are solely involved in short-term (1-4 sessions) Pregnancy Choices work will debrief one-to-one with the Centre Manager after each appointment.

Insurance

The Haven has full employee and public liability insurance. All volunteers are covered by this insurance policy whilst they are on The Haven's premises or engaged in agreed work as a volunteer, worldwide.

Health & Safety

A copy of the Health and Safety policy is held as a separate document.

Problem Solving Procedures and Complaints

We aim to identify and solve problems at the earliest possible stage. Please refer to the Volunteer Procedures in the Code of Practice, or if necessary, to our Complaints and Paudits Policy.

Ending the Volunteer Agreement

Apart from ending a volunteer agreement due to incompetence, inappropriate behaviour or unsatisfactory performance, volunteers should provide adequate notice for finishing their volunteering at The Haven.

- Schools Team volunteers: 2 weeks' notice minimum
- Counselling volunteers: 1 month's notice minimum, if not currently working with a long-term client. If working with a long-term client, you need to commit to finishing the support work with them.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Volunteers are bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff and will be provided with a copy of the Confidentiality and Data Protection policies.

Personal details of staff, volunteers, supporters and clients are treated in the strictest confidence and in accordance with GDPR. Information of a confidential nature should not be disclosed to anyone outside The Haven without prior permission from a trustee and explicit consent of the individual concerned, except in the circumstances set out in the policies.

For more information on anything mentioned in the Volunteer Policy, volunteers can refer to the Centre Manager.