**BRISTOL REFUGEE RIGHTS**

**VOLUNTEER POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

**THE POLICY**

1. **PURPOSE**
   1. This policy is written to lay down the principles and practices for those working with volunteers at Bristol Refugee Rights (BRR).
   2. This Policy and Procedure has been developed to ensure the safety of all those volunteering and visiting BRR by ensuring that volunteers are recruited using safe processes, are properly inducted into the organisation and receive the training the support their need to fulfil their roles as volunteers.
2. **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**
   1. We aim to provide constructive and meaningful volunteering opportunities for the mutual benefit of the members, volunteers and BRR.
   2. BRR strives to be an agency of best practice in all aspects of working with volunteers. We believe that support and training are vital for any role we ask volunteers to carry out, and for BRR staff involved in the supervision of volunteers.
   3. BRR work with a large variety of refugees and asylum seekers. We acknowledge and welcome that by working with volunteers from all backgrounds, including refugees and asylum seekers, we are better able to respond to and work with the needs of our members.
   4. BRR welcomes and seeks to promote the variety of skills, interests, life experiences and cultural backgrounds that volunteers bring to the organisation.
   5. BRR recognises that volunteering can be an important route into paid employment, particularly for people without UK work experience. BRR seeks to improve the employment prospects of its volunteers and, if requested, references will be provided.
3. **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**
   1. **Volunteer Manager**
      1. The Volunteer Manager(s) is (are) responsible for recruitment, induction and training of volunteers.
   2. **Volunteers in AID, BRILL and Crèche**
      1. Where a volunteer is placed in one of these teams, the responsibility for the training of that volunteer is shared between the Volunteer Managers and the Team Manager. It should be agreed between them who will do what. The volunteer will still be expected to attend the standard induction for all volunteers.
   3. **Supervision**
      1. Supervision is the responsibility of the Staff Member who manages the volunteer team in which the volunteer is placed.
4. **RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND POLICIES** 
   1. This Policy complements, and should be considered along with other BRR Policies:
   * *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy*
   * *Disclosure Check Policy*
   * *Safeguarding: Child Protection Policy*
   * *Safeguarding: Vulnerable Adults Policy*
   * *Volunteer Handbook*
   * *Safeguarding: Safe Spaces Policy*
   * *Grievance and Disciplinary Policy*
   * *Lone Working Policy*
   * *Information Security and Confidentiality Policy*
   1. This Policy is informed by the following legislative requirements:
   * *Equality Act 2010*
   * *Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Acts (2006)*
   * *Human Rights Act (1998)*
   * *Data Protection Act (1998)*
   * *Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974)*
   * *Protection of Vulnerable Adults Act 1999/Criminal Justice and Court Act 2000*
   * *Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) (Vetting and Barring – Independent Safeguarding Authority)*
   * *Protection of Children Act 1999/Criminal Justice and Court Act 2000*
5. **SCOPE**
   1. This policy and procedure applies to all volunteers not including Trustees.
   2. The policy does not cover all aspects of BRR’s work in relation to volunteers and therefore should be read in conjunction with other policies which relate to all those involved in BRR as set out in paragraph 4 above.

**THE PROCEDURES**

1. **RECRUITMENT**
   1. Any staff member may identify a need for a volunteer. Where they do so, this should be communicated to the Volunteer Manager(s) who will decide whether it is appropriate to recruit a volunteer into the role identified.
   2. The Volunteer Manager(s) will ensure that a Role Description exists for the volunteering role and be responsible for writing role descriptions for newly identified roles in consultation with other staff members as required.
   3. All role descriptions must be written in accessible, plain English with the minimum use of jargon or terminology which volunteer candidates might not understand.
   4. Job descriptions should include the following:

* A brief description of the role
* A more detailed list of duties involved
* Skills and experience that will be gained from the role
* Whether any previous experience would be useful to the role

6.5 Volunteer vacancies will be advertised in the following ways: via our

website and social media; internally via volunteer newsletter; by posters in the Centre; via Voscur and/or Volunteer Bristol. Where possible we will take positive action to encourage people from a diverse cross section of society to volunteer.

6.6 All non-member volunteer applicants will be required to complete a

standard volunteer application form (there is a different one for the crèche). Member volunteers also complete a standard member-volunteer application form available on reception. CVs will not be accepted.

6.7 Application forms will be made available to all applicants along with

* Role description
* Equal Opportunities monitoring form
* Equal Opportunities statement
* Policy Statement on Rehabilitation of Offenders (crèche applications only)
  1. Applicants will not be asked to provide details of criminal convictions unless they are volunteering in the crèche.
  2. Returned applications and equal opportunities monitoring forms will be coded and separated for monitoring purposes.
  3. The Volunteer Manager(s) will be responsible for selecting volunteers from applications received. It will not normally be necessary to interview applicants however this may occur where more applications are received than places are available or there are concerns about the suitability of the applicant. Normally the Volunteer Manager(s) would assess the paper applications received against the Role Description and having regard to Bristol Refugee Rights’ Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. Positive action in recruitment may be used where appropriate.
  4. Applications will only be accepted from volunteers who are aged 18 or over. We may consider opportunities for work experience for under 18s where appropriate volunteers should be over 18.

#### The application is an essential part of the safer recruitment process and the Volunteer Manager(s) should seek to ascertain the motivation, attitudes and beliefs of the candidate, as well as their experience and qualifications. If there are any concerns, the Volunteer Manager(s) should arrange to interview the applicant to allow the opportunity to ask direct questions for example on safeguarding, maintaining professional boundaries, attitudes to young people, adults at risk etc.

6.13 Where the application is for a role in the AID, BRILL or crèche teams the opinion of the Manager of that team may be sought by the Volunteer Manager(s) before deciding to offer a volunteer position if he/she considers it to be appropriate.

6.14 The Volunteer Manager(s) will keep records of reasons for deciding not to accept an application.

6.15 All applicants should be informed in writing of whether or not their application has been successful. If their application has been successful they should be informed of the next date of a volunteer induction and asked whether they are able to attend. If the application has been unsuccessful they should be offered the opportunity to discuss the reasons for this.

6.16 Applicants for crèche volunteer roles are required to complete a DBS check before they start volunteering so a start date should not be agreed until the DBS process has been completed. Other volunteers are exempt from the requirement to complete a DBS application as they are supervised and therefore not engaged in regulated activity. If a crèche volunteer is from overseas we should inform them that we may also need to ask for Certificates of Good Conduct from Embassies or police forces.

6.17 BRR recognizes that in order to protect children and adults at risk it needs to adopt safer recruitment practice. Much of this is incorporated into the above recruitment procedures.

6.18 In addition, it is important to recognise that throughout the recruitment process there should be a thorough gathering and analysis of all information on candidates (from the application, qualifications, employment history, references, disclosures, interview etc.) which must be analysed to see if there are any concerns relating to safeguarding that need to be explored further.

6.19 Safer recruitment does not end with the appointment of a volunteer, but also relates to addressing safeguarding issues throughout the induction and probationary period and as part of their on- going supervision.

* 1. For all successful volunteers two references should be obtained prior to them starting to volunteer. References should be requested using the standard form. We recognise that particularly for member volunteers providing two standard references may be difficult. For this reason we will accept references from friends of members, who may not have known the individual very long, if necessary. We further recognise that working with members from overseas means that it may be necessary to “take extra care” in accordance with guidance for employers and it may be necessary in these circumstances to carry out extra checks e.g. following up references by asking other members, volunteers or staff (with the individual’s permission) whether they know of any reason the person should not be a volunteer.
  2. There is no requirement for volunteers to supply us with proof of their eligibility to live and work in the UK but applicants will be advised on the application form to check with UKVI that they are not breaching the conditions of their stay in the UK by volunteering.
  3. All application paperwork relating to the successful candidate will be kept on their volunteer file for at least one year after termination of volunteering.

1. **HOURS OF VOLUNTEERING**
   1. Volunteers are expected to commit to a minimum of one shift of 4 hours per week. Volunteers can if they choose take on a longer shift or work more than one shift but this should not be expected of them and must be agreed with the Volunteer Manager(s) or relevant project manager
2. **VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**
   1. Each volunteer will be supplied with a Volunteer Handbook which should provide them with information about the following:
      * BRR’s history, mission and vision
      * Their role and the expectations of them
      * How they will be supported, supervised and consulted
      * What they can expect from BRR
      * Summarised versions of relevant BRR policies
   2. Volunteers should be advised of how to access full text versions of BRR policies if they would like to see them.
3. **VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT**
   1. All volunteers will be asked to sign a volunteer agreement setting out:

* What is expected of them;
* What they can expect of BRR
  1. The agreement includes a confidentiality agreement and volunteers will be informed about the contents of our Information Security and Confidentiality Policy at the time of induction.

1. **INDUCTION AND PROBATION PERIOD**
   1. All volunteers will be invited to attend a standard induction programme before commencing their volunteering role. Volunteers will not be able to start volunteering until they have attended an induction.
   2. The induction will cover as a minimum:
      * Health and Safety
      * Fire procedures/fire drills
      * Equality, diversity and inclusion policy and practice
      * Introduction to BRR policies around safeguarding
      * Mission statement, values
      * Who are our members
      * Introduction to the asylum process
      * Our services
      * Who’s who
   3. The Volunteer Manager(s) and Team (AID, BRILL or Crèche) Manager should also identify whether there are additional things on which individuals should be inducted or trained depending on their knowledge, experience and the role they will be undertaking.
   4. Approximately 3 months after commencing a volunteer role, each volunteer will be invited to a **Peer Review Session**, where they will meet with other volunteers to reflect on their experiences so far.
   5. Owing to the sensitive nature of BRR’s work, new volunteers are on probation for three months. During this period a volunteer may be asked to leave if the placement proves not to be working. In exceptional cases, this period may be extended.
2. **VOLUNTEER EXPENSES**

11.1 The Volunteer Manager(s) will agree normal working hours and associated expenses with the volunteer and the volunteer must seek prior agreement with the Volunteer Manager(s) or if not available, shift coordinator, before incurring additional expenses.

## 11.2 Principles

* If any individual has financial issues which makes it difficult for them to volunteer we will ensure that they are able to volunteer by paying expenses in advance.
* All reasonable volunteering expenses will be reimbursed.
* Only actual ‘out of pocket’ expenses will be reimbursed.
* All expenses should be receipted wherever possible.

**11.3 What expenses can be claimed for**

* Travel to and from the place of volunteering.
* Travel undertaken in the course of volunteering.
* Meals taken during the course of volunteering where no food is provided on site or the volunteer is working off site over meal times.
* Postage or telephone costs (if working from home).
* Other reasonable volunteering expenses with prior agreement of the coordinator. Where these are more often than a one-off payment, it should be agreed by the BRR Treasurer.

**11.4 Expenses Rates**

The Trustees, in consultation with the Volunteer and Interpreter Managers and other paid and unpaid staff, will review the rates on a regular basis. Current rates are:

* Transport to and from office: £5 maximum per day.
* Car journeys on BRR business

A) within Bristol – 35p per mile

B) long distance – at cost of petrol

* Additional expenses: as agreed with the Volunteer Manager(s)/ shift coordinator

**11.5 Conditions**

Volunteers should travel by the cheapest form of transport available. Telephone costs are paid on production of a bill with pertinent calls marked.

**11.6 Procedure for claiming expenses**

The volunteer must fill in a volunteer’s expenses form with attached receipts.

**11.7 Volunteer expenses float**

Volunteers who cannot afford or are not willing to pay expenses in advance can, in rare cases, have a float agreed. This float will usually be enough to cover a week’s normal volunteering expenditure. Volunteers must sign an agreement to repay this float on leaving BRR.

**11.8 Childcare expenses**

BRR does not wish to deny anybody the opportunity of volunteering because of childcare responsibilities. However, BRR does not have the resources to pay for unlimited amounts of childcare for its volunteers.

1. **TRAINING**
   1. Volunteers will be provided with in house and external training as needed and as funds allow.
2. **SUPERVISION**
   1. Volunteers receive regular and day to day supervision from a coordinator who is on site and available at all times. For this reason volunteers, other than in the crèche, are not engaging in regulated activity and we cannot legally request a barred list check on these volunteers.
   2. All volunteers will be invited to attend one to one review meetings, at least twice a year. These “121’s” will provide the volunteer with an opportunity to look at the wider aims of the placement and reflect on their role in the organisation.
   3. Volunteers will be told who will be their main point of contact whilst they are volunteering and who else they can go to with concerns.
   4. See appendix 1 – standard 1-1 form.
3. **VOLUNTEER CONSULTATION AND INVOLVEMENT**
   1. BRR is committed to consulting and including its volunteers about its operation and service delivery. This is not only because volunteers are a valuable part of BRR but also because volunteers are an important voice from their communities, many of which will be the communities that BRR seeks to represent and provide services for. Volunteers also have large amounts of knowledge to bring to the organisation.

14.2 On a day-to day basis, the co-ordinator should ensure that he/she listens to, respects and acts on as appropriate the views and ideas of the volunteers.

14.3 Volunteers meet together with staff at the end of each day for a debriefing and discussion session.

14.4 Volunteers will be involved in evaluation work of the organisation

14.5 Volunteers are free to attend Board meetings if they wish and to receive minutes. Occasionally, volunteers will be involved in away days.

14.6 Volunteers should receive a weekly newsletterkeeping them informed of BRR’s developments and news.

1. **VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES OFF SITE**

15.1 As part of the volunteer role BRR volunteers are not required to take members off site unless part of an activity organised by staff. However, on occasion volunteers do decide to take BRR volunteers off site. Volunteers should be trained in understanding our Health and Safety and Safeguarding policies and therefore should be aware of the risks of doing that.

15.2 Volunteers will be asked to inform us if they are taking volunteers off site but will be informed that they will be responsible for activities organised by them off site, whether or not they have made BRR aware.

1. **INSURANCE**

16.1 Volunteers will be covered by insurance while carrying out agreed duties. Volunteers are covered by BRRs insurance whilst on site and whilst off site on BRR business which does not include when off site on an activity/excursion arranged themselves.

16.2 Volunteers using their vehicles in the course of BRR business should ensure that they are covered for business use.

1. **EXIT INTERVIEWS**
   1. When volunteers move on from their role at BRR they will be asked to provide feedback on the volunteering experience by way of an exit questionnaire. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss their responses to the questionnaire more fully with a Volunteer Manager.
   2. See appendix 2 – Exit interview questionnaire
2. **VOLUNTEER RELATIONSHIP ENDING**
   1. On the basis of their voluntary work, volunteers will have the right to request a reference. Volunteers will be supported to move on to other options.
   2. BRR has a policy on how it will deal with any disciplinary issue regarding a volunteer which is separate from this policy.
3. **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**
   1. BRR will systematically monitor and evaluate its use of volunteers.

Date Agreed: 12 May 2015

Signed by Board Member:

Date for Review/Who to Review: This policy will be reviewed three yearly by the Staffing Sub-Committee.

**Appendix 1 – Volunteer 1-1 Standard Form**

**Volunteer** **One to One**

Name of Volunteer:

Name of Listener: Date:

**1**. **How long have you been volunteering with BRR and what is your current role in BRR?** List the key tasks – good opportunity to remember all of the important things you do here!

**2**. **What do you like best about your volunteering?**

**3. What do you find difficult?**

**4. Is there anything Bristol Refugee Rights/the co-ordinators can do to help you with this/these difficulties?**

**5. What have you learned about yourself whilst volunteering with us?** (e.g. Have you found out something new or developed new skills?)

**6. Do you feel you understand all of the work that Bristol Refugee Rights does? Or would you like more information?**

**7. Is there anything you need training in to help you in your role as a volunteer?**

**8. Are there any areas of BRR’s work you’d be interested in moving into? Or are you happy as you are? Do you have any plans that mean you will have to stop or limit your volunteering with us in the future?**

**9. Anything else you’d like to feedback?**

**11. Practical Questions:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Do you Know how to claim expenses? If not look in the Volunteer File on Reception | |  |
| Do you have a Volunteer Policy? If not look in the Volunteer File on Reception | |  |
| Do you have new contact details ? If so, what are they ? |  | |
| Do you have a volunteer badge? | |  |
| Do you receive the Newsletter ? Is it useful ? | |  |

**12. There’s been a lot of changes recently – changes to staff, new policies, funding problems, new projects – this would be a good time to talk through these:**

**13. Any other messages to discuss with the volunteer?**

**Q13. A) Traffic Light System** – please tick the box that you think most applies

Red: Action needs to be taken by BRR staff urgently to support this volunteer in their role

Amber: Action should be taken in the next month to support this volunteer

Green: No problems – No need for action

**Q.13 B) Please describe the action which needs to be taken:**

**Q.14 Are these notes an accurate record of the meeting?**

**Signed Volunteer........................................................**

**Signed Listener............................................................**

**Appendix 2 – Exit Interview Form**

Name of Volunteer:

Date:

We are sorry you are leaving BRR, thank you for your contribution. BRR could not happen without our volunteer team!

As a final voluntary effort for BRR would you mind taking the time to fill in this short questionnaire about your time with BRR.

1. **How long have you been volunteering with us?**

Less than 3 months 3-6 months 6-12 months 12-18 months more than 18 months

1. **Which roles have you carried out whilst volunteering with us?**
2. **What did you enjoy about BRR?**
3. **Have you developed your knowledge, skills or understanding through volunteering at BRR?**

Yes/No

*Please tell us more:*

1. **Were there any challenges you experienced while volunteering with us?**
2. **How well did you feel supported while at BRR?**

Not at all Not very well Adequately Well Very well supported

1. **Do you feel more should have been done to support you at BRR?**
2. **Why are you leaving BRR?**
3. **Any other comments you would like to share regarding your experience of volunteering with Bristol Refugee Rights?**