

Volunteer Policy

Compass Disability Services

Units 11 – 12 Belvedere Trading Estate
Taunton, TA1 1BH

September 2010
Review Date: August 2015

Scope

This policy is relevant to all volunteers within Compass Disability Services and its projects. This definition includes Trustees as volunteers, however Trustees must also be referred to other policies such as the Trustees Policy, Trustees Agreement, etc. Where discrepancies arise between this policy and the specific Trustees' policies, this policy shall be overridden.

Introduction

Compass Disability Services is a user led organisation working to enable, empower and support disabled people to secure unrestricted access to services and facilities within the region.

We facilitate a number of projects including:

- Somerset Access and Inclusion Network (SAIN)
- Forum for Equality and Diversity in Somerset (FEDS)
- Wiltshire Direct Payment Support Service (WDPSS)

Compass Disability Services also have Meeting Rooms that are available for hire.

There are different roles within Compass Disability Services that volunteers may undertake, from conducting access audits and representing disabled people on boards and committees to assisting with administrative duties in the office and becoming a trustee of the organisation. Compass Disability Services recognises the valuable role that volunteers potentially have in creating and implementing our services, and in turn realise that volunteering should be a worthwhile and rewarding experience.

The work of all volunteers within Compass Disability Services will be considered enhancing and complimentary to the work of our paid staff and the services we offer, rather than considered essential – volunteers will not be used to replace the work of paid staff.

In line with our Equal Opportunities Policy Compass Disability Services is committed to identifying and eliminating all forms of discrimination, providing equal opportunities to all, promoting diversity throughout our organisation, and encouraging all persons to treat each other with respect.

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Recruitment & Selection

Appropriate means of advertising for volunteers will be used, in accordance with our organisational aims and Equal Opportunities Policy. Volunteers will be interviewed on the same basis as paid workers, an application form will need to be completed, and help can be given with this if necessary. Suitability will then be assessed against a role description and person specification, recognising that individuals who wish to volunteer will bring specialist skills to enhance our work that may only be identified at interview. If it is considered appropriate to the role the successful applicant will be asked for two referees, which will be taken up.

A criminal records check with the Criminal Records Bureau will be made for volunteers if this is relevant to the role. Having a criminal record will not automatically be a bar to volunteering with Compass Disability Services unless the Chief Executive considers the conviction means the applicant is unsuitable.

Induction and Training

Every new member of staff and volunteer will have an induction into the organisation; this will be prepared and delivered by your supporter.

A volunteer induction will include:

- The role of the volunteer and Volunteer Agreement
- A list of staff members and volunteers and an organisational structure
- Copies of all the relevant policies including; this Volunteer policy (A copy of which will be signed by the volunteer and held on their volunteer file in recognition that they have read and understood the policy), Confidentiality, Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities.
- Issue of a Volunteers Handbook – This contains useful information about the expected standards of behaviour, policies and procedures.
- Essential information and procedures, for example where things are and timekeeping
- Induction training and details of ongoing training
- Other information as appropriate.

All new volunteers will have a trial period of 3 months to give the organisation and the volunteer time to discover if they are suited to each other. A review will be made midway through the trial, and also at the end.

Volunteer Agreement

All volunteers that intend to volunteer regularly with Compass Disability Services will have a Volunteer Agreement. The Volunteer Agreement sets out what the organisation expects of volunteers, and in return what volunteers can expect from the organisation. One copy of the agreement will be for the volunteer to keep and a second copy will be retained and placed on the volunteers file. This form is not a contract in legal terms and reflects intentions not obligations. Amendments or adjustments can be made to this agreement at any time by the request of the volunteer or the organisation.

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Expenses

Compass Disability Services values its volunteers and we want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. All out-of-pocket expenses, if required, will be reimbursed, including expenses for travel (in the course of your role), and other expenses. In order to claim expenses, an expenses form must be completed and handed into the finance department. This process will be explained during induction.

Supervision and Support

All volunteers will have a named supporter with whom regular supervisions will take place. Supervisions are opportunities to discuss problems or issues that may arise, as well as to talk generally about the work and progress being made.

It will also be your supporter that inducts you to the organisation, completes your Volunteer Agreement with you, makes sure that you have adequate work space and equipment to perform tasks effectively and safely, and provide regular support.

Health and Safety

Compass Disability Services believes that adequate provision for health and safety is essential to working life. The maintenance of healthy and safe working conditions and the prevention of injuries are not only of vital importance to the organisation's efficiency, but also in the best interests of employees, volunteers and their families. It is essential that every employee and volunteer (regardless of status or position) is aware of, understands and cooperates with the organisational health and safety policy and that good communication exists throughout all levels of the company. Compass Disability Services aims to encourage a positive attitude to health and safety, and this policy will be included in your induction.

Insurance

Volunteers are covered under Compass Disability Services' Public Liability insurance so long as the work being undertaken is authorised by the organisation, and the volunteer is also authorised to do this work.

Confidentiality

Compass Disability Services Confidentiality Policy must be observed at all times by all staff including management, paid employees and all volunteers. The Confidentiality Policy will be included as part of your induction. In brief you should not divulge confidential information or details of the business to anyone unless expressly authorised to do so. All volunteers will be asked to sign a copy of the confidentiality policy. This signed copy will be held on the volunteers file and will form a legally binding agreement by the volunteer to respect all aspects of the confidentiality policy.

Conduct and Complaints

Compass Disability Services' Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures are not extended to cover volunteers, as these are for employees only. However

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volunteers are encouraged to discuss problems or issues at supervisions with their Supporter or at any other time as a situation may arise. If the volunteer does not feel this is appropriate or is not happy with this outcome they should raise the issue with a manager or the Chief Executive, each of which will do their best to resolve the situation. In addition, all volunteers will be made aware of the Complaints Policy and Procedure and will be provided with a 'Tell us what you think leaflet'.

If concerns are raised about the conduct or performance of a volunteer, their supporter should investigate to find out what is happening. This should include talking with the volunteer concerned.

If conduct or performance is unsatisfactory, the volunteer should be informed that he/she will be offered 'special guidance' for a period. The object of the 'special guidance' will be to encourage improvement. If a volunteer does not meet the targeted standards of performance, and the steps taken to encourage them to improve do not work, the volunteer should be offered more suitable alternative voluntary activities or leave with one weeks notice.

If behaviour viewed by Compass Disability Services' equivalent to gross misconduct has occurred the volunteer activity will be terminated immediately.

Ending Involvement

Compass Disability Services or the volunteer can end the volunteering at any time and without any notice. However, unless there is an emergency or misconduct, we will usually try to give volunteers at least one weeks notice and hope that they will offer the same to us. In all cases the volunteer will be provided with details and reasons why their involvement is no longer needed.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every five years and amended as necessary, or earlier in accordance with any forthcoming legislation. All employees should pass suggestions or recommendations for the revision of any aspect of this policy through normal channels to the Chief Executive.

Additional Information:

- **Compass Disability Services' Volunteer Agreement**
- **Volunteer Bureau or Council for Voluntary Services (CVS)**
These can be found in your local yellow pages or phone directories
- **Volunteering England**
Telephone 0845 305 6979, www.volunteering.org.uk

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