



Volunteering Policy

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OPAL Services aims to provide a range of services to older people in rural areas who are socially isolated.

OPAL recognises the valuable contribution made by volunteers to the success of these services, providing new skills, experience and perspectives, and increasing our links with the local communities which we serve.

OPAL aims to encourage active participation of its volunteers in the services they help to provide.

1. Principles

This Volunteer Policy sets out the principles and practices by which we involve volunteers.

The Volunteer Handbook provides further details about the support and procedures in place for volunteers.

OPAL Services:

- Is committed to involving volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities and to ensuring that our volunteering opportunities are as accessible as possible.
- Recognises that voluntary work brings benefits to volunteers themselves, members and paid staff.
- Recognises that volunteers require satisfying roles and personal development and will seek to help volunteers to meet these needs, as well as providing appropriate support and training to enable them to undertake their role effectively.
- Will endeavour to identify and cover the costs of involving volunteers.
- Is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare, dignity and rights of older people and adults at risk and expects all volunteers to share this commitment.

2. Status of Volunteers

A volunteer is not an employee and will not have a contract of employment with the organisation (OPAL Services).

The organisation will agree a volunteering role with the volunteer; however, there is no obligation on the organisation to provide work, nor on the volunteer to accept or continue volunteering.

It is also expected that both the organisation and the volunteer will give as much notice as possible if unable to meet these expectations.

3. Recruitment

Recruitment of volunteers will generally be open to all members of the community, and appropriate methods will be used to advertise for volunteers locally that adhere to OPAL's Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policies.

People interested in volunteering with OPAL Services will be invited for an informal meeting (face to face or telephone conversation) with the Volunteer Coordinator to discuss their reasons for volunteering and to establish the individual's suitability to carry out the required tasks. They will be given an information pack which will include general information about the nature of the organisation's work and specific information on the range of volunteer opportunities available.

All volunteers will be asked to complete an application form and to supply two references, help will be provided with this if required.

Volunteers with OPAL Services will encounter vulnerable people and/or be in a position of trust. For some volunteer roles, the volunteer may be required to undertake an appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, including an Enhanced DBS with barred list check where the role constitutes regulated activity with adults. This will be arranged by OPAL Services prior to commencing their volunteer role. Please refer to the OPAL DBS Policy for further information.

All volunteers will be recruited in line with the organisation's Adult Safeguarding Policy, including safer recruitment practices.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar people from volunteering with us. This will depend upon the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences as outlined in the OPAL Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy.

Information about the volunteer not relevant to the performance of the volunteering role will not be considered by the organisation in terms of recruitment and selection.

Trustees will be given a role-specific induction and information pack by the Chair.

Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task for any reason will be provided with feedback and given the opportunity to discuss alternative volunteering roles within the organisation or referred to the nearest Volunteer Centre.

4. Volunteer Agreement and Volunteer Role Description

New volunteers will receive a Role Description and a Volunteer Agreement containing information about their chosen volunteering role and a clear idea of the organisation's responsibilities towards the volunteer and the volunteer's responsibilities to OPAL Services.

The Volunteer Agreement is not intended to be legally binding or to create an employment relationship but to outline expectations.

5. Induction and Training

Volunteers will be made aware of and have access to all the organisation's relevant policies, Volunteering Policy

including those relating to volunteering, health & safety, safeguarding, lone working and equal opportunities.

All volunteers will be given an induction appropriate to their specific volunteering role, skills and experience.

All volunteers working with older adults will complete Safeguarding Awareness for Volunteers to help inform them of how to recognise and report safeguarding concerns. This will be supplemented by further safeguarding training appropriate to their role.

Volunteers that will be alone with members in their own home are to read the OPAL Lone Working Policy and Lone Working Information sheet and any other information provided to them by their Organiser once a member has been assigned to them.

The provision of training and support for volunteers is a priority for the organisation to equip them with the necessary information and skills to carry out and develop their roles appropriately and gain relevant experience. It is the responsibility of the Volunteer Coordinator to ensure that this training is provided and it is the responsibility of the volunteer to attend the relevant training.

Training for staff in the support and supervision of volunteers will be provided by the Volunteer Coordinator.

6. Expenses

Volunteers are unpaid; however, OPAL Services value our volunteers and want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. All reasonable out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed, including expenses for travel, provision of refreshments including the cooking of meals.

OPAL Services has a consistent approach to the reimbursement of expenses which is the same for paid staff and volunteers and as approved by HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC).

The Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that all volunteers are aware of the procedure for claiming reimbursement of expenses and the procedure for approval of expense claims, including the submission of receipts.

7. Policies and Procedures

Volunteers are expected to comply with all the organisation's policies while they are on its premises or undertaking any of their volunteering duties. Their induction will include an explanation of these policies and procedures including safeguarding, confidentiality, data protection, lone working, complaints and whistleblowing

8. Insurance

OPAL Services will ensure that volunteers are covered for insurance purposes in respect of personal injury. OPAL Services will also ensure that volunteers are provided with public liability insurance. The insurance will not cover unauthorised actions or actions outside the

volunteering agreement, and volunteers must act within the scope of their agreed role to be covered by insurance.

The organisation does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage.

9. Health and Safety

The organisation has a responsibility for the health and safety of volunteers. Volunteers should, always follow the organisation's health and safety policies and procedures. Volunteers have a duty to take care of themselves and others who might be affected by their actions. Volunteers should not act outside their authorised area or work. Volunteers should report all accidents to their supervisor.

OPAL Services will provide volunteers with appropriate guidance on any health and safety issues that arise.

Where volunteers undertake lone working or home visits, appropriate risk assessments and lone working procedures will be followed.

10. Equality and Diversity

OPAL Services is committed to providing equality of opportunity in volunteering and seeks to remove barriers to volunteering and will make reasonable adjustments where possible to support volunteers. OPAL Services monitors the volunteer base to ensure it reflects the communities we serve.

Volunteers are expected to apply the OPAL Services Diversity - Equal Opportunities Policy.

11. Data Protection

OPAL Services processes volunteers' personal data in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Personal data will be collected, stored and used only for purposes directly relevant to volunteering and will be held securely. Volunteers have rights in relation to their personal data, including the right to access and rectify information.

Volunteers are required to maintain confidentiality and must not misuse personal or sensitive information relating to service users.

Inappropriate access or disclosure of personal data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the organisation's data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the organisation's disciplinary procedure.

12. Resolving Problems

It is important that OPAL Services can maintain its agreed standards of service to the people who access its services and support and it is also important that volunteers should enjoy making their contribution to this service.

The Volunteer Coordinator is responsible in the first instance for the handling of problems regarding volunteer complaints or conduct. In the event of a problem, all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible.

If the problem is between the Volunteer Coordinator and the volunteer, details will be given to the OPAL Services Manager who will endeavour to resolve the problem in an informal manner.

If an informal resolution proves impossible, the organisation's disciplinary, grievance or complaints policies and procedures applicable to volunteers, will be referred to.

At all times volunteers will be freely able to state their case and can have a friend to accompany them.

13. Volunteer Drivers

Where the volunteer will be using his/her own vehicle, he/she must provide a copy of the vehicles insurance policy and, if appropriate, the MOT certificate. Volunteers must confirm that their insurance policy covers volunteering or business use, as appropriate.

The volunteer must report any accidents to the organisation. He/she must also report any motoring offences or police cautions to the organisation. OPAL Services will not pay any parking fines accumulated by the volunteer.

14. Endings

When volunteers move on from their role with OPAL Services they will be asked to provide feedback on their volunteering experience by way of an exit questionnaire. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss their responses to the questionnaire with the Volunteer Coordinator, or OPAL Manager or a member of the Board of Trustees.

Volunteers must return any property, records or confidential information on leaving.

Based on length of their volunteering or extent of their commitment, volunteers will have the right to request a reference. Volunteers will be supported to move on to other options.

15. Monitoring and Evaluation

OPAL Services will systematically monitor and evaluate its involvement of volunteers with reference to this Volunteering Policy.

This Volunteering Policy is freely accessible to all and will be reviewed at least every three years or sooner if legislation or guidance changes.

16. Associated Policies and Documents

- Adult Safeguarding Policy
- Safeguarding Awareness for Volunteers Module
- DBS Policy and Procedures
- Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Lone Working Information Sheet
- Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Driving on OPAL Business Policy