**Together For Colwyn Bay**

**Volunteering Policy**

**Introduction**

This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practice by which we Together For Colwyn Bay (T4CB) involve volunteers and is relevant to staff, volunteers and directors within the organisation. It aims to create a common understanding and to clarify roles and responsibilities, to ensure the highest standards are maintained in relation to the management of volunteers.

*The volunteer agreement gives further details about the support and procedures in place for volunteers.*

**Our commitments**

T4CB recognise volunteers as an integral part of the project. Their contribution supports our collective mission and strategic aims, and complements the role of paid staff. We aim to encourage and support volunteer involvement to ensure that volunteering benefits the organization and the volunteers.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers. Volunteers will not be used to replace staff.

T4CB are committed to offer a flexible range of opportunities and to encourage a diversity of people to volunteer with us, including those from under-represented groups such as youth, people with a disability, older people and people from ethnic minorities.

We recognise that there are costs associated with volunteer involvement and will seek to ensure adequate financial and staffing resources are available for the development and support of volunteers. We recognise that people have a right to participate in the life of their communities through volunteering and can contribute in many ways. T4CB recognise our responsibility to organise volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

**Who is a volunteer?**

Volunteers are individuals who undertake activity on behalf of T4CB for no financial gain and of their own free choice.

The Welsh Government Volunteering Policy (2015) defines volunteering as activity which

• is undertaken freely, by choice

• is undertaken to be of public/ community benefit

• is not undertaken for financial gain

Work experience placements and internships are not the same as volunteering. Please refer to HR for further information about these. T4CB steering group members are volunteers with responsibility for governance of the organisation.

Volunteers may be involved on a one – off, short term or on a longer term, regular basis. They may be involved:

• on our board of management (the steering group)

• in community engagement to raise awareness of our work

• in one off events and promotional activities

• in our offices or in community venues

Volunteers are valued for:

• bringing additional skills and new perspectives to the organisations

• enabling us to be more responsive and flexible in our approach

• championing our cause within the wider community

• enhancing the quality of our work

• promoting and contributing to the wellbeing of the local community

**Standards of good practice**

T4CB management practice is informed the Building Communities Trust’s (BCT) policies and practices.

**Roles and responsibilities**

A designated staff member (The Volunteer Co-ordinator) has responsibility for the development and co-ordination of voluntary activity within T4CB including volunteering policies and procedures and the welfare of volunteers.

All volunteers will have a designated staff member/volunteer for guidance, support and supervision. Staff responsibilities for volunteers will be explicitly referred to in their job/role description.

The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, for the volunteer to attend or to undertake particular tasks or for the organisation to provide continuing opportunities for voluntary involvement, provision of training or benefits.

However, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what the T4CB expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of T4CB.

T4CB expects volunteers:

• to be reliable and honest

• to uphold the organisation’s values and comply with organisational policies

• to make the most of opportunities given, eg for training

• to contribute positively to the aims of the organisation and avoid bringing the organisation into disrepute

• to carry out tasks within agreed guidelines

Volunteers can expect:

• to have clear information about what is and is not expected of them

• to receive adequate support and training

• to be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment

• to be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner

• to receive out of pocket expenses

• to have opportunities for personal development

• to be recognised and appreciated

• to be able to say ‘no’ to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable

• to know what to do if something goes wrong

**Recruitment**

Equal opportunities principles will be adhered to in recruiting volunteers. Opportunities will be widely promoted, in English and in Welsh, so as to attract interest from different sectors of the community. Positive action to target recruitment may be used where appropriate.

Information will be made available to those enquiring about volunteering, and an offer made to meet with staff to discuss activities and roles. A risk assessment will be undertaken on all volunteer roles.

Recruitment will usually involve an informal chat, and mutual understanding of roles and expectations.

For roles which involve care giving and/or sustained and direct contact with young people or adults at risk, volunteers will be required to have a full DBS disclosure check which will be arranged by T4CB. DBS disclosures are dealt with in the strictest confidence. A criminal record is not necessarily a bar to volunteering.

**Induction and training**

Volunteers will be given induction and training appropriate to the specific tasks to be undertaken.

**Support and supervision**

Volunteers will be offered support and supervision as appropriate and this is discussed during induction. Arrangements vary according to the volunteer and the role undertaken, and may include telephone support, group meetings or one to one review.

**Recognition**

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with the organisation’s staff, at team meetings etc.

**Dealing with problems**

T4CB aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. It seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly.

We will attempt to deal with any problems informally and at the earliest opportunity. All volunteers will have a named person to whom they can turn in the case of any difficulty. Where informal resolution is not possible, T4CBwe would refer the matter to our parent organization BCT, for resolution and review.

Volunteers will be made aware of the T4CB complaints policy and how to use it. They will also be made aware of how inappropriate behaviour by volunteers will be addressed by the organisation.

**Expenses**

Volunteers will be given clear information about what expenses can be claimed and how to make a claim.

**Moving on**

When volunteers move on from volunteering with us, 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.

Volunteers who have remained with T4CB for at least 3 months will have the right to request a reference. Volunteers will be supported to move on to other options.

**Other relevant documents**

*The Volunteer Handbook includes detailed, useful information for volunteers:*

T4CB policies relevant to volunteers may include

Health and Safety,

Equal Opportunities,

Confidentiality,

Social media,

Safeguarding,

Complaints,

Settling Differences,

Expenses.

Date approved \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Person responsible \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_