



The  
Happy Mums  
Foundation

# POLICY

## Volunteering

### Introduction

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in The Happy Mums Foundation CIC (HMF).

HMF acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways, that their contribution is unique and that volunteering can benefit users of services, staff, local communities and the volunteers themselves. HMF values the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions throughout the organisation and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which further develop volunteering.

HMF recognises its responsibility to arrange its volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship as well as an important component of democracy. Volunteers are people who are unpaid and of their own free will contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community.

At HMF we see volunteering as a mutual and reciprocal arrangement where volunteers get as much as they give. In this way, volunteering may be an opportunity for an individual to build their self-confidence, workplace skills and experience or reflect on their lived experience of mental health problems.

### Scope

It is of relevance to all within the organisation, including volunteers, staff, members and Directors.

## Principles

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by HMF and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment. The role of volunteers complements but does not replace the role of paid staff.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between staff and volunteers.

Volunteers will not be used during times of industrial action to do the work of paid staff.

The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise the organisation cannot be compelled to provide either regular tasks, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the organisation.

## How we work with volunteers

### a) Volunteer Co-ordination

All volunteers will have a nominated member of staff as a point of contact, and to offer guidance and advice to help the volunteer carry out tasks effectively.

The nominated post holder with overall responsibility for the development of voluntary activities within the organisation is the Managing Director. This person is responsible for the management and welfare of the organisation's volunteers including: recruitment, training, support, access to supervision where appropriate, coordination, communication, celebration, and managing exits. Some of these tasks will be delegated where appropriate.

### b) Recruitment & Induction

*(This is a brief overview in relation to volunteers. For more information please see the overarching Recruitment & Induction Policy)*

HMF is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs or offending background that does not create a risk to vulnerable groups including children. The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out agreed tasks. Information about the

volunteer not relevant to the performance of the volunteering tasks concerned will be disregarded by the organisation in terms of recruitment and selection.

Volunteering opportunities will be first promoted to the women who currently and previously receive(d) support from HMF. After that, the opportunities will be further promoted in ways that makes them accessible to all members of the community.

All volunteers will be asked to complete an application form, produce two references and will be invited to attend an informal interview.

Those volunteers who will be carrying out activities involving working directly with vulnerable groups (children and/or adults) will be asked to undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check. This will be refreshed via the DBS Update Service on an annual basis.

Volunteers will be asked to indicate which of the voluntary roles they wish to undertake (this may be more than one). Each role has a clear description which outlines the activities and commitment expected, along with any pre-requisites for example, personal experience of maternal mental health problems. A summary of the requirements for each role is at appendix 1.

The volunteer roles are:

- Support Group Facilitator
- Support Group Helper
- Support Group Welcomer
- Inclusion Champion
- Ambassador
- Director

Please see appendix 2 for role descriptions.

New volunteers will be required to attend or complete a 2-day (or equivalent length) induction training course which covers the ethos & values of HMF, health & safety, safeguarding, wellbeing & support, equality & diversity, GDPR and more.

All volunteers are required to undertake online safeguarding training. Access to this course will be provided by HMF. If the prospective volunteer has already undertaken safeguarding training to the appropriate level (eg. through their paid job) and can produce the original certificate to confirm this, they will not need to complete the online training.

Role-based training will be provided depending on the role(s) the volunteer has chosen to undertake. This may be in-person, online, or self-directed (eg. short videos or reading).

Volunteers will have access to a password-protected area of the HMF website, where a Volunteers Handbook, policies and procedures and other information is stored.

For an overview of the recruitment and learning development processes please see the flowchart at appendix 3.

c) Learning & Development

It will be the responsibility of the designated person referred to above to see that any necessary training is provided. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to attend/complete relevant training.

Support Group Facilitators will undertake consolidation training around a year after starting to facilitate groups.

Volunteers may also choose to undertake training in mentoring in order to support new volunteers joining the organisation.

HMF will provide ongoing access to training opportunities, both internal and external. Continuing Professional Development will be offered through Team Days, and all training undertaken will be recorded on the volunteer's personal file and can be accessed by them at any time by requesting this via the Operations Coordinator.

d) Support, Supervision and Recognition

Volunteers can take their volunteering concerns to, and seek guidance and support from, their nominated point of contact or Managing Director.

Where possible, new volunteers will be matched with a Mentor who is a volunteer who has completed their induction and mentoring training, and has been actively volunteering and is willing to support them in their new role for a specified period of time.

Volunteers will have access to regular 'support chats' with a supervising member of staff, either in-person, online or over the phone. This will enable both the volunteer and the supervisor to identify, monitor and evaluate the volunteer's involvement, recognise achievements and identify individual training needs, including those relevant to their particular volunteering role and to their wider personal development. The frequency, duration and format of these sessions will be negotiated between the volunteer and their point of contact.

In reflection of the fact that we know that when former service users begin volunteering it may feel like they have lost their opportunity to benefit from the peer support they previously received as a group member, we are committed

to exploring ways of providing peer support within the volunteers. Currently a Monthly post-group volunteer get-together is being trialled.

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions about HMF with the organisation's wider staff, at meetings and through surveys and questionnaires.

Support Group Facilitators must attend online external supervision every 6 weeks. Where a Support Group Facilitator does not attend supervision on more than two occasions without good reason, they may be asked to step-down from group facilitation for a period of time. This requirement is part of our commitment to maintaining safety and wellbeing for everyone involved with HMF. For more information please see the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

Formal recognition of the contribution of the organisation's volunteers may be made through articles in newspapers and newsletters and thank you letters etc, or at Team Days. This will be agreed with the volunteer before announcement/ publication and is in no way compulsory. We will respect the decision of the volunteer as to whether they wish to receive public recognition or not.

e) Expenses

*(This is an overview in relation to volunteers. For more information please see the overarching Expenses policy).*

HMF recognises that the reimbursement of expenses incurred in traveling to and from the place of volunteering or in the course of volunteering is important in order to ensure that everyone (regardless of financial position) has the opportunity to access volunteering opportunities.

The organisation's volunteers can claim for mileage undertaken as part of their voluntary role, as well as reasonable out of pocket expenses, subject to the production of receipts as evidence of the expenditure. What can be reclaimed from the organisation and the calculation of expenses will be explained to the volunteer as part of their induction training.

HMF is careful not to give amounts that could be seen as going beyond a reimbursement of actual expenses. HMRC sets limits on how much mileage allowance can be paid back tax-free for travel costs, so that people don't make a profit from these payments. These are upper limits on how much can be reimbursed tax free, not recommended rates for organisations to pay. The limits reflect costs such as wear and tear and fuel.

In order to protect the resources of the organisation there is a cap on the distance that volunteers will be asked to travel and can therefore claim mileage expenses for. This limit is 15 miles from their home/ starting point. If a volunteer chooses to travel further than 15 miles from home to volunteer on

behalf of HMF they will only be able to claim for the first 15 miles. In exceptional circumstances it may be possible to pay for additional travel, but this should be approved by the Managing Director before undertaking the journey.

It is the responsibility of the Managing Director to make volunteers aware of the procedure for the reimbursement of expenses.

f) Insurance

The organisation's liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them.

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

Volunteers using their own vehicles in their voluntary activities should tell their insurers. They should make it clear that they will only receive out-of-pocket expenses, to make it clear that this is not commercial use of the vehicle.

There shouldn't be higher premiums for this, as volunteering should be regarded as part of the 'social, domestic and pleasure' use of the vehicle. Some insurers may see volunteering as a business use, but they should not raise the premium.

For more information please see the overarching Risk Management Policy.

g) Confidentiality

*(This is a summary in relation to volunteering. For more information please see the overarching General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Policy.)*

HMF's Code of Behaviour which is signed by all volunteers, staff and Directors, specifies the organisation's expectations regarding confidentiality.

The organisation will advise the volunteer on its confidentiality and GDPR policies and procedures as part of their induction. This would include those relating to personal information held by the organisation relating to the volunteer.

h) Settling Differences

The organisation aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. The organisation seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly and aim for a positive and amicable solution based on the organisation's guidelines for settling differences.

The Managing Director is ultimately responsible for handling problems regarding volunteer complaints or conduct and these should be referred to her. In the event of a problem, all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible.

Support will be provided by the organisation to the volunteer while it endeavours to resolve the problem in an informal manner. If an informal resolution proves impossible, the organisation's wider performance management, capability, grievance, disciplinary policies and procedures (which include volunteers) will be referred to.

If a volunteer's behaviour is repeatedly or seriously unacceptable, they may be asked to change their role, or to leave the organisation.

i) Rights and Responsibilities

The organisation recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- know what is (and what is not) expected of them
- have adequate support in their volunteering
- receive appreciation
- volunteer in a safe environment
- be insured
- know their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong
- receive relevant out-of-pocket expenses
- receive appropriate training
- be free from discrimination
- be offered the opportunity for personal development

The organisation expects volunteers to:

- be reliable
- be honest
- respect confidentiality
- make the most of training and support opportunities
- carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of the organisation
- carry out tasks within agreed guidelines
- respect the work of the organisation and not bring it into disrepute
- comply with the organisation's policies

### **Data Protection**

The information provided to HMF by the volunteer (eg. bank details for expenses payments, DBS information and next of kind details) will be treated in compliance with data protection regulations. For more information please see our policy on GDPR.

## **Related information**

- Recruitment and Induction Policy
- Learning and Development Policy\*
- DBS data handling Policy
- Performance Management Policy\*
- Capability Policy\*
- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Risk Management Policy\*
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Expenses Policy
- Volunteer Handbook\*
- Code of Behaviour

\*policies are currently in development

## **Review**

This policy is reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors every three years, or more frequently where updates are required due to changes in legislation, guidance or good practice.



## Appendix 1: Summary of requirements for volunteer roles

Job Role:	Completed Application Form	Shortlisting Process	Interview (2 members of staff)	Qualifications checked (paid Roles)	Induction Training	Facilitator Training	ZARefs	Signed Code of Conduct	Declaration of Interest form	Standard DBS	Enhanced DBS	Right to work in UK (paid roles)	Safeguarding training level 1&2	Safeguarding training Level 3	Suicide Prevention training within 1st Year	First Aid Training
All Staff	V	V	V	V	V		V	V	V			V	V	Safeguarding lead and Deput	V	V
Group Facilitator	V	V	V		V	V	V	V			V	V	V		V	V
Group Helper	V	V	V		V		V	V			V	V	V		V	V
Inclusion Champion	V	V	V		V		V	V			V	V	V		V	V
Ambassadors	V	V	V		V		V	V			V	V	V		V	V
Welcomers	V	V	V		V		V	V			V	V	V		V	V
Directors	V	V	V		V		V	V	V			V	V		V	V

Version: 2.0

Date approved: 12/01/2024

Next review due: 2026

## Appendix 2: Volunteer Role Descriptions

See [www.happymums.org.uk/volunteering](http://www.happymums.org.uk/volunteering)

### Appendix 3: Recruitment and Induction Flowchart

