

VOLUNTEER POLICY

CONTEXT

Kingwood enables people with autism and Asperger's to live in their own homes and enjoy full and active lives in the community. The Trust plays a pioneering role in developing new ways of supporting people with autism to realise their potential by concentrating on the individual and focusing on what's positive and achievable in their lives.

As part of its commitment to the people we support we recognise the contribution volunteers can make. This policy recognises that contribution and provides a framework for volunteering to occur within the organisation.

KINGWOOD VISION, VALUES AND MISSION

Kingwood's vision is that adults with autism will be valued by and contribute to society.

Our mission is to pioneer best practice which acknowledges and promotes the potential of people with autism and to disseminate this practice and influence the national agenda.

Kingwood has adopted **key values** to underpin this mission statement and these are applied in the support we deliver to adults with autism:

- **choice**
- **relationship and trust**
- **opportunity**
- **self-esteem**
- **respect and value for the person**
- **self-direction**
- **independence**
- **understanding and recognition**
- **individuality**
- **support and communication**

Kingwood is a charitable organisation. Our people are at the heart of everything we do. Our people include the people we support, their families and carers, our staff, our trustees and our volunteers. The contribution of volunteers to the work of Kingwood is especially valued and respected.

KINGWOOD VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers take on particular tasks on an ongoing basis.

- Undertaking administrative tasks or supporting the back office functions on a regular basis.
- Undertaking tasks that enable them to act as a bridge for the people we support to their communities by supporting them in various settings they may find initially challenging. For example by supporting someone to a social event.
- Helping the people we support to develop life skills for example by supporting someone to become travel independent or becoming a student buddy to them.
- Undertaking one off tasks with some of the people we support to enable them to live independently. For example by supporting someone to maintain their tenancy by helping them to tidy and clear their garden.
- Facilitating support groups on a regular basis.

PRINCIPLES

Our volunteer policy is guided by the following principles:

- Kingwood and its volunteers will follow this policy
- All regular volunteers will sign a volunteer agreement.
- Kingwood recognises that volunteers donate their time. Their contribution should be mutually agreed.
- The volunteer's role will be clearly explained and mutually agreed.
- Kingwood will provide its volunteers with induction, information, and training and will support its volunteers appropriate to their volunteer role.
- Kingwood will, whenever possible, give volunteers work that is satisfying and appropriate to their interest.
- Volunteers have the right to express their views within Kingwoods organisational structure.
- Volunteers will work together within Kingwoods rules, policies and procedures
- Volunteers will treat each other, staff and the people we support with respect and courtesy. This will be reciprocated at all times.
- Kingwood is committed to equal opportunities in relation to the recruitment, selection and involvement of volunteers.

PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Kingwood is committed to good practice when supporting its volunteers.

Kingwood will make ongoing efforts to recruit volunteers who match its specific needs. This selection process will be based on the skills and interests of the volunteer and the current needs of the organisation. Kingwood does not commit itself to accepting all offers of help; it endeavours to always give a volunteer a reason for declining their services and where possible refer them to another organisation that might be better placed to help them and/or accept their offer of support.

All volunteers will be asked to complete an application form, provide references and attend an informal interview. DBS checks may be essential for specific volunteering roles within Kingwood and will be requested where necessary.

Kingwood will treat all information collected in this process with strict confidentiality and any details will be made accessible to the volunteer on written request.

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT AND WORK OUTLINE

Regular volunteers will be asked to sign a volunteer agreement outlining the commitment and expectations of Kingwood and the role or specific tasks that the volunteer has offered to undertake. A representative of the Senior Executive Team will also sign the agreement.

The agreement is not a contract: it is simply a set of guidelines to help the volunteer feel supported and clearer about their responsibilities. Volunteers will also receive a copy of the Volunteer Induction Pack to keep and refer to when necessary.

COMMITMENT

Kingwood recognises that volunteers will often need flexible arrangements regarding the amount of time and level of commitment they are able to give. We will try to work within these constraints but this might affect the nature and type of tasks Kingwood can offer.

Whatever the level of commitment a volunteer is able to give we will recognise and value their contribution. In return the volunteer will be expected to follow the letter and spirit Kingwoods policies and procedures and meet mutually agreed time commitments or to give notice if this is not possible.

Volunteers are free to leave their voluntary role at any time.

Kingwood will always try to match what a volunteer feels able to undertake with our organisational needs. We will provide a warm welcome to volunteers, give adequate support and ensure that the volunteer's expectations are met when they join us.

INDUCTION, INFORMATION AND TRAINING

Volunteers will receive an appropriate induction, which will include information on the aims, background and organisational framework of Kingwood. Additional information will be provided to help the volunteer in their work.

Relevant training and information will be provided to support our volunteers in their roles. It is expected all volunteers who will be undertaking tasks with people we support will engage in an initial programme of training in order for them to function safely and appropriately. Opportunities to develop knowledge and skills will be provided as appropriate and possible.

SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

Volunteers will be supported and supervised by a named contact person by an appropriate individual within Kingwood. This person will provide the volunteer with feedback on their work and give them an opportunity to discuss future work and a chance to discuss any issues that may have arisen.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Kingwood will, as far as is practical, care for the health, safety and welfare of its volunteers. Volunteers will be provided with copies of relevant health and safety policies and procedures and receive appropriate training and support.

EXPENSES

Volunteers will be reimbursed travel and other approved expenses. Volunteers will be asked to claim their expenses at the end of each month on approved Kingwood documentation which must be supported by receipts.

Volunteers will be provided with a list of approved expenditure as part of the induction process.

HAVING A VOICE

Volunteers will be given the opportunity to express their views about issues concerning Kingwood and its work. Views can be expressed in a variety of ways, not least of which will be via the supervisory process.

INSURANCE

Volunteers will be covered by Kingwoods insurance policy whilst engaged in approved work for Kingwood.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

All volunteers will be required to make a commitment to equal opportunities. Volunteers will be provided with a copy of Kingwoods Equal Opportunities Policy and Positive Working Environment Policy and will be supported to put these into practice. Kingwood aim that all volunteers are treated in a fair and consistent way. Equally it is important to Kingwood that all volunteers understand and apply the principles of Equal Opportunities and Positive Working in all settings within Kingwood.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The nature of Kingwoods work may give volunteers access to sensitive and personal information about the people we support or sensitive information about the organisation such as financial information. All volunteers will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement and follow its principles.

Kingwood needs to be able to trust its volunteers with such information which is confidential. Volunteers suspecting the mistreatment or abuse of either another volunteer or a person we support should discuss the matter with their supervisor or a member of the Senior Executive Team as soon as possible. This person will make an informed decision about next steps to be taken.

RESOLVING CONCERNS

Kingwood aims to identify and resolve problems at the earliest possible opportunity. In the first instance a volunteer should discuss the problem with the supervisor. If the issue is not resolved they should contact the HR and Operations Manager who will discuss the matter with them within 14 days. If

necessary the matter will be referred to the Chief Operating Officer who will provide a final response as quickly as possible.