



For better  
mental health

Richmond Borough Mind  
Richmond Community Healthcare Hamlet  
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## Richmond Borough Mind Volunteer Policy

### **Mission Statement**

Richmond Borough Mind is rooted in the local community and exists to meet local mental health needs. Through our various services, staff and many volunteers, we provide high quality, individually tailored services so people can live full lives and be connected to other people in their communities. We work with others – from small local community groups to the Mental Health Trust – to minimise the impact of mental distress and in partnership we aim to improve people's experience of mental health services. In collaboration with local and national organisations, we raise awareness locally of the importance of mental health and recovery and tackle the discrimination faced by people who experience mental distress and their carers.

### **Overall Aim**

Our vision is of a society where people who experience mental distress and their carers are flourishing within their local communities.

### **Aims and Values**

As a Local Mind Association we subscribe to National Mind's values of Informed, Diversity, Partnership, Integrity and Determined. As a local organisation we also have our own values which underpin our work and these are known as SPARKS. Our values are brought to life through our work and our relationships with people in the local community.

**Socially inclusive:** our services will be rooted in the community and will harness the people power in the community, celebrating diversity and connecting people from all walks of life. We know that there are things that get in the way of social inclusion, so together we will creatively find ways to challenge, overcome or side-step these obstacles.

**Person Centred:** when we work with people we will learn about them as individuals and take their whole lives into account.

**Aspiring:** we will inspire hope and nurture the dreams that people have, as well as our dreams as an organisation.

**Recovery orientated:** even in the face of mental distress we will empower people to live fulfilling lives which people have control over.

**Kind:** kindness is about connecting with other people. Everyone has something to give and everyone has the capacity to be kind. We will give and we will expect others to give too, as giving is kindness, and kindness feels good.

**Supportive:** we will connect people with each other so they can support each other and benefit from strong social networks. We will support people in their times of distress with professional practical and emotional help.

## **Purpose of this Volunteer Policy**

RB Mind values the contribution made by volunteers. Volunteers give their time, skills and experience to RB Mind. Through their involvement and participation in the organisation they gain further skills, experience and fulfilment. This policy sets out our commitment to all our volunteers and the guidelines ensure that all volunteers are treated equally and are well supported.

RB Mind defines a volunteer as “a person who willingly undertakes work on behalf of others outside of their immediate circle not in return for wages or other form of consideration”.

This Volunteering Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- RB Mind will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to RB Mind’s work.
- RB Mind will not use volunteers to replace paid staff.
- RB Mind expects that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work.
- RB Mind recognises that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training for them to do their work effectively.

The following guidelines deal with practical aspects of the involvement of volunteers. More detailed information, including copies of the various documents referred to, is available on request from the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

## **Equal Opportunities and Diversity**

RB Mind welcomes new ideas and an approach generated by people from different cultures, backgrounds, genders, ages and outlooks and operates an equal opportunities policy to reflect this. In particular, we welcome volunteer applications from people who have experienced difficulties with their own mental health or who have used mental health services. A copy of the Equal Opportunities policy is available on request from the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

Some people face obstacles to volunteering and RB Mind will work with volunteers to overcome those difficulties where possible.

## **Who Can Volunteer?**

RB Mind welcomes anyone wanting to volunteer provided the volunteer has the skills for the specified roles that we need help with. The role descriptions will give the volunteer detailed information on what is included.

Current service users can apply to become volunteers with RB Mind but can only volunteer in projects which they do not regularly attend as service users.

A criminal record will not prevent someone volunteering unless the conviction is relevant to the volunteering role.



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## Recruitment

**Application Form:** Volunteer applicants will be provided with a standard application form and relevant RB Mind information. Potential volunteers are asked to complete the application form which asks for contact details, experience and skills relevant to the role, any additional support needs in order to carry out the role, details of two referees whom RB Mind can approach for references (Referees should ideally be people who can comment on a volunteer's skills in a unbiased and knowledgeable fashion. They should not be family members and should be people the volunteer has known for at least a year). The application form also includes a declaration of criminal convictions.

**Interviews/informal discussion:** All prospective volunteer applications will be considered by the Volunteer Co-ordinator. The prospective volunteer may be invited for an informal interview / discussion with the Volunteer Co-ordinator to find out more about what they would like to do, their skills, suitability and how best their potential can be realised. Their suitability to carry out any one volunteer role will be judged against the skills required for that role. The interview is also an opportunity for the volunteer to gain as much information as possible about RB Mind.

Shortly after the interview the volunteer will be informed by the Co-ordinator of the result of their application and if successful an invitation will be made to visit the project or projects of interest on an informal basis and discuss their role with the Project Manager. Should the visit prove successful and provided no concerns are raised by the Project Manager a placement will be offered pending suitable references (and, if applicable, a CRB check) being received by RB Mind.

**Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks:** Some volunteering roles within RB Mind require a CRB check, a procedure which gives details of a person's criminal record. This check applies when a volunteer could potentially be left alone, as part of their volunteering role, with either a child and / or a vulnerable adult (e.g. a person with diagnosed mental health difficulties). If a CRB check is required for a specific role, this will need to be completed by the volunteer with RB Mind's Volunteer Co-ordinator. The cost will be paid for by RB Mind.

If a potential volunteer has criminal convictions, their application and suitability for the role applied for will still be considered and discussed with the person concerned. More information is detailed in the Equal Opportunities Policy which is available on request from the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

**Role Descriptions:** All volunteers will have a role description with a clear explanation of the tasks that they are expected to perform. The role will be discussed and agreed with the volunteer before they start their placement. Some role descriptions will include a minimum or maximum time commitment from volunteers. Volunteers are not restricted to doing these tasks and can discuss changing the tasks if appropriate with agreement from the supervisor.

**Volunteer Agreement:** Volunteers are asked to sign a Volunteer Agreement establishing that they have read and understood what their voluntary commitment entails and what RB Mind undertakes to provide for them. The Volunteer Agreement is not a contract and RB Mind has no intention of creating an employment contract with any volunteers.

## **Induction of Volunteers**

All volunteers will receive an induction into RB Mind and their own area of work. This includes meeting relevant staff and volunteers, a tour of the building, and introduction to the systems and workings of the organisation. Volunteers will be introduced to the role and shown what tasks they will be expected to undertake. They will be given any relevant training.

**Volunteer Handbook:** Every volunteer will receive a copy of the Volunteer Handbook when they start volunteering at RB Mind. The Handbook gives details about all the services provided by the organisation, RB Mind's policies and guidelines about volunteering with us.

**Training:** Training will be provided as appropriate to the volunteering role. It may be on-the-job training or group training.

**The Volunteer's Voice:** Volunteers are encouraged to express their views about matters concerning RB Mind and its work during their supervision meetings.

## **Problem Solving / Complaints**

Whilst we hope that your volunteering with RB Mind will be a positive experience, during your time as a volunteer you may find you have cause to make a complaint against a member of staff, another volunteer or a service user of RB Mind.

We hope that most problems can be solved informally and encourage volunteers wherever possible to raise these directly with the person concerned so that they can be addressed. However, if that is not possible then you should refer to the Problem Solving Policy, which is available on request from the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

**Volunteer Expenses:** As a Volunteer Involving Organisation we are committed to ensuring that volunteers are not left out-of-pocket for volunteering with RB Mind. Therefore we reimburse travel and lunch expenses according to the guidelines below. More detailed information is in the Expenses Policy.

Travel: Reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses spent travelling to your volunteering placement and back home, covering London Zones 1-6 or up to a total of £10.00 per journey.

Lunch: Up to £5.00 reimbursed if volunteering for more than 4 hours a day.

## **Support and Supervision**

**Support:** In order to enable volunteers to carry out their tasks to the best of their ability, all volunteers will have a named person as their main point of contact from whom they can expect regular support and supervision. Volunteers will be provided with regular supervision to feed-back on progress, discuss future developments and air any problems.

**Absence/Illness:** Volunteers play a valuable role at RB Mind and are relied upon by staff to fulfil their agreed duties at stated times. Volunteers are asked to inform their supervisor as



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soon as possible if they are unable to turn up or expect to be late. We also appreciate advance notice in respect of holidays and days off.

**Leaving:** Where possible volunteers should make their supervisors aware of their plan to leave so that where possible there is enough time to recruit a new volunteer. Each volunteer will also have a leaving discussion, preferably with his or her supervisor, on the volunteer's last day. The purpose of the discussion is for RB Mind to learn how the volunteering experience has been for the volunteer and to make positive changes in future.

**References:** RB Mind will provide references for all volunteers who have given a minimum of three months continuous voluntary service.

**Volunteer Recognition:** RB Mind values the contribution made by all its volunteers and appreciates the time freely given to support the organisation. Volunteers are included in social events with Staff and Trustees throughout the year.

All volunteers across the borough are eligible to be nominated for the Community Awards, which take place annually. Volunteers and winners are invited to attend the Awards event.

## Other Policies

Volunteers are expected to comply with RB Mind's policies on Confidentiality, Data Protection, and Health and Safety, all of which are available on request from the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

**Insurance:** All volunteers are covered by the RB Mind insurance policy whilst they are on the premises or engaged in any work on behalf of RB Mind.

**Thank you** for reading this policy. We hope you will enjoy your time volunteering at RB Mind and find it a positive and rewarding experience.