



Volunteer Policy

Introduction

Neurodivergent Safe Space exists to;

1. For the public benefit, to promote, support, and protect the mental health of neurodivergent teens and young adults (aged 13-20 years) in the city of Southend and Essex and elsewhere in the United Kingdom, by means of, but not exclusively:
 - a. Providing evidence-based information and guidance for neurodivergent teens and young adults on understanding and improving their mental health needs, advocating for their rights, treatment options, and finding effective support;
 - b. Seeking to advance the knowledge and skills of mental health professionals, health and social care staff, and other primary points of contact for neurodivergent teens and young adults in providing effective, neurodiversity-affirming support;
 - c. Seeking to educate public service providers and the wider community on neurodiversity.
2. For the public benefit, to relieve the needs of neurodivergent teens and young adults (aged 13-20 years) in the city of Southend and Essex and elsewhere in the United Kingdom, by means of, but not exclusively:
 - a. Providing support and guidance to neurodivergent teens and young adults to increase social interaction skills, confidence, and self-esteem;

- b. Providing opportunities and guidance for neurodivergent teens and young adults to transition into the wider community.

In line with this mission Neurodivergent Safe Space seeks to involve volunteers to:

- ensure our services meet the needs of our clients
- provide new skills and perspectives
- increase our contact with the local community we serve
- Provide support to our clients

Principles

This Volunteering Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- Neurodivergent Safe Space will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to Neurodivergent Safe Space's work
- Neurodivergent Safe Space does not aim to introduce volunteers to replace paid staff
- Neurodivergent Safe Space expects that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work
- Neurodivergent Safe Space 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.

Practice guidelines

The following guidelines deal with practical aspects of the involvement of volunteers.

Recruitment

All prospective volunteers will be interviewed to find out what they would like to do, their skills, suitability and how best their potential might be realised.

Volunteer agreements and voluntary work outlines

Each volunteer will have a volunteer agreement establishing what Neurodivergent Safe Space undertakes to provide them. In addition they will

agree to a written outline of the specific work they will be undertaking. Neither of these documents is a contract; Neurodivergent Safe Space has no intention of creating a contract with any volunteers.

Expenses

All volunteers will have their travel and other expenses reimbursed. Volunteers working a minimum of five hours per day will be able to claim expenses for lunch.

Induction and training

All volunteers will receive an induction into Neurodivergent Safe Space and their own area of work. Training will be provided as appropriate. Where possible volunteers will be entitled to receive additional training.

Support

All volunteers will have a named person as their main point of contact. They will be provided with regular supervision to feedback on progress, discuss future development, and air any problems.

The volunteer's voice

Volunteers are encouraged to express their views about matters concerning Neurodivergent Safe Space and its work.

Insurance

All volunteers are covered by Neurodivergent Safe Space's insurance policy whilst they are on the premises or engaged in any work on Neurodivergent Safe Space's behalf.

Health and safety

Volunteers are covered by Neurodivergent Safe Space's Health and Safety Policy.

Equal opportunities

Neurodivergent Safe Space operates an equal opportunities policy in respect of both volunteers. Volunteers will be expected to have an understanding of and commitment to our equal opportunities policy.

Problem-solving

We aim to identify and solve problems at the earliest possible stage. A procedure has been drawn up for dealing with complaints either by or about volunteers.

Confidentiality

Volunteers will be bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as trustees.

Change Record

Date of Change:	Changed By:	Comments:
dd/mm/yy	XX	Policy approved by the Trustees