



the
westway
a community hub for all

Volunteer Policy

Leads: Mary Marsden, Andrew Brownless

Effective Date: 25.07.2025

Review Date: 25.07.2026



1. Introduction

The Westway recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers make to our work and community. This policy sets out the principles and framework that guide our volunteer involvement.

2. Purpose

This policy is designed to:

- Ensure a consistent and fair approach to involving volunteers.
- Define the roles and expectations of both the centre and its volunteers.
- Provide guidance on recruitment, support, and management of volunteers.

3. Scope

This policy outlines The Westway's approach to involving volunteers. It explains why we value volunteering and how volunteers are recruited, supported, and managed. Specifically, this policy aims to:

- Provide a clear framework for volunteer involvement.
- Explain the role of volunteers within The Westway and the nature of their relationship with our services.
- Introduce the procedures we use to support and manage volunteers effectively.
- Ensure volunteering is open, inclusive, and based on fairness and equality.
- Help create a safe, welcoming, and rewarding experience for everyone who chooses to volunteer with us.

4. Principles

- The Westway values the contributions of volunteers and recognises the positive impact they have on both our services and the wider community.
- Volunteers bring fresh perspectives, lived experience, and diverse insights that help us better reflect and respond to the needs of our local communities.
- Volunteers are an essential part of The Westway team, working alongside paid staff to enhance the services we offer.
- Volunteer roles are designed to complement and extend the work of employed staff, not to replace them.

5. Volunteer Definition

A volunteer is someone who offers time and skills freely, for the benefit of the community, without expectation of financial reward. Volunteers are not employees and do not have a contract of employment.

6. Applying to be a volunteer

A key quality of a volunteer is either the ability to perform the tasks required or the willingness to learn them. Equally important is a genuine interest in being part of The Westway and supporting its vision and mission.

The recruitment process begins with the completion of a simple application form, with support available if needed. Prospective volunteers are then invited to an informal meeting, interview, or group 'taster' session, where staff members and/or current volunteers will introduce the service and the volunteering opportunities. This also provides a chance for volunteers to ask any questions they may have. Volunteers are welcome to bring a friend along if that would make them feel more comfortable.

6. Recruitment and Selection

- The Westway is committed to fair and inclusive recruitment in line with our Equal Opportunities Policy and volunteer recruitment procedures.
- Volunteers are recruited for specific roles that support our services. Opportunities are advertised as needed.
- Individuals are welcome to express their interest in volunteering at any time.
- We actively encourage applications from people of all backgrounds and experiences to ensure our volunteer team reflects the diversity of the community we serve.
- All volunteers will require an enhanced DBS check due to the nature of clientele who use The Westway.
- References may be requested for some roles.

7. Volunteer Information and Selection

Following The Westway's recruitment procedures, all volunteers are asked to provide certain information to help us ensure a safe and supportive environment:

- **Proof of identity and address:** Typically a passport, driving licence, or birth certificate, along with a recent utility bill.
- **References:** Usually one employer or previous volunteering reference, plus preferably a character reference. We understand that some volunteers may find it challenging to provide two referees, and in such cases, we can assist by suggesting alternatives such as a GP, community leader, teacher, or similar.
- **Parental consent:** Volunteers under 16 years of age must have written permission from a parent or guardian before starting.
- **Health information:** A health questionnaire to disclose any medical conditions and emergency contact details for health and safety purposes.

8. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

Volunteers who will have regular and direct contact with children or vulnerable adults are required to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. This check is provided free of charge to the volunteer.

DBS checks can take some time to process. In certain circumstances, with prior approval, volunteers may be able to begin supervised volunteering while awaiting clearance.

Having a criminal record does not automatically prevent someone from volunteering with The Westway. Most convictions will not affect your ability to volunteer.

If a DBS check reveals information that may indicate a potential risk, The Westway will discuss this confidentially with the volunteer. Factors considered include:

- The nature and seriousness of the conviction or disclosed information
- How long ago the incident occurred
- Whether there is a pattern of offending and evidence of rehabilitation
- The Westway reserves the right to exclude applicants from volunteering following a thorough investigation and at its discretion.

9. Inclusive Volunteering

The Westway warmly welcomes applications from volunteers with disabilities and special educational needs. Wherever possible and practical, we are committed to making reasonable adjustments to support access requirements, specific learning needs, and diverse abilities, ensuring an inclusive and supportive volunteering environment for all.

10. Induction and Training

The Westway is undergoing a governance review, which will look at the nature of induction for volunteers. At current:

- All volunteers will receive an induction from the management team. This should cover the organisation's values, health and safety, safeguarding and information about their specific role.
- The Westway will provide additional role-specific training where appropriate.
- Ongoing support will be provided by a named volunteer, supervisor, or the volunteer co-ordinator.

11. Volunteer Roles and Expectations

Each volunteer will receive a **role description**, outlining:

- The tasks involved
- Expected time commitment
- Who to report to
- Any required skills or training

Volunteers are expected to:

- Be reliable and punctual
- Act in accordance with our values and policies (e.g. safeguarding, EDI, confidentiality)
- Raise concerns or issues with their supervisor

12. Dress Code

For events and open days, The Westway has a designated uniform which must be worn by all volunteers. Outside of these occasions, there is no formal dress code; however, volunteers are expected to dress in a manner that is appropriate, presentable, and suitable for their role.

13. Code of Conduct

The Westway expects all employees and volunteers to conduct themselves professionally at all times, acting with honesty, respect, and courtesy toward everyone. We are committed to fostering an environment that values equality, diversity, and inclusion, and volunteers should ensure their behaviour reflects these principles by treating all individuals fairly and without prejudice.

As representatives of The Westway, volunteers are expected to carry out their roles in accordance with our policies and uphold the organisation's values.

14. Supervision and Support

- Volunteers will have regular contact with a named supervisor.
- We will offer opportunities for feedback and ensure volunteers feel heard and supported.
- Volunteer contributions will be recognised through informal thank-yous, certificates, events, and references where appropriate.

15. Volunteer Feedback

- The Westway warmly welcomes feedback from volunteers and values any ideas for improving our services. Volunteers are encouraged to share their thoughts directly with their designated supervisor or Chair of Trustees at any time.

16. Security

- All volunteers are expected to follow The Westway's security procedures to help maintain the safety and security of our buildings, property, and overall work environment.

17. Health and Safety

- The Westway is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for everyone involved in our work; including staff, volunteers, visitors, and contractors.
- We expect all employees and volunteers to follow and promote our Health and Safety Policy, embedding good practice into all activities to help protect people, property, and the environment.
- Health and safety procedures, including fire safety, will be covered as part of the volunteer induction.
- Please note that The Westway operates a strict no-smoking policy across all its premises.

18. Safeguarding

- We are committed to safeguarding all individuals we work with. Volunteers are required to read and follow our Safeguarding Policy, and report concerns to the designated safeguarding lead.

19. Confidentiality and Data Protection

- Volunteers are expected to treat all information they encounter while volunteering as confidential. This includes any details relating to The Westway's services, staff, fellow volunteers, donors, partner organisations, and internal policies or practices.
- To maintain effective communication, volunteer contact details are securely stored and used only for specific purposes; such as keeping in touch, contacting a next of kin in case of emergency, or providing references at the volunteer's request.
- All personal information is handled in line with data protection laws and The Westway's Data Protection Policy.

20. Insurance

- The Westway holds Public Liability Insurance that covers all volunteer activities. This includes protection in the event of accidents involving volunteers, as well as any unintentional injury or damage a volunteer may cause to staff, visitors, or property while carrying out their role.

21. Resolving Issues and Complaints by Volunteers

The Westway is committed to addressing any concerns or problems that arise during volunteering promptly and fairly. If a volunteer has a complaint about their role or a colleague, they should first raise it with their supervisor, who will discuss the issue with them. Every effort will be made to resolve matters informally and amicably.

If a volunteer feels they have been treated unfairly or inconsistently, they will be given the opportunity to raise their concerns so the service can learn and prevent similar issues in the future.

Should the issue remain unresolved, the volunteer or their supervisor may escalate the matter to The Westway Manager for a formal investigation. This process will be completed within 14 days, and the Manager's decision will be final.

22. Resolving Issues and Complaints about Volunteers

If a complaint is made by a staff member, visitor, or volunteer against a volunteer, the volunteer concerned will be informed promptly and involved in discussions as appropriate. All complaints will be thoroughly investigated in accordance with The Westway's policies, and the findings will be communicated to all relevant parties, including the volunteer involved.

Where possible, issues will be resolved informally, with efforts made to address concerns through dialogue, support, or additional training.

However, if a volunteer is suspected of serious misconduct such as theft, bullying, violence, or sexual abuse their volunteering role will be suspended immediately pending a full investigation. If the complaint is upheld, the volunteer will no longer be permitted to continue with The Westway.

Volunteers who are dissatisfied with the outcome may appeal to the Manager, whose decision will be final.

23. Ending the Volunteer Relationship

In most cases, volunteers choose to end their placement, often for positive reasons such as moving on to new opportunities or gaining employment. These decisions are usually amicable and agreed in advance.

When a volunteer decides to step down, we kindly ask for as much notice as possible. This helps us arrange a brief exit interview, which gives the volunteer a chance to share feedback about their experience and helps us improve our volunteer programme. It also allows time to plan for a suitable replacement.

24. Volunteer Co-Ordinator

When there is a vacancy of Volunteer Co-ordinator, please contact Mary Marsden

mary.marsden@thewestway.org

25. Policy Sign Off

This policy was written by Abi Chapman, Charity Manager on the 20.07.2025

This policy was approved by 06/11/2025

This policy will undergo a full review by the 20.07.2026