



## **Volunteer Policy**

We recognize that volunteers play a vital role within our organisation and that their contribution enables us to deliver our services. We want to ensure that there are good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers, and that volunteers are well supported.

- We welcome volunteers from different backgrounds who can bring their different skills and experiences to our work
- Volunteers can help to extend the services we are able to offer.

### **Who is a volunteer?**

A volunteer is any individual who undertakes unpaid activities on behalf of our organisation of their own free choice. Work experience placements are different to volunteering.

Volunteers may be involved in short or long-term activities or as a one off. Typical activities may include:

- Supporting fundraising or awareness raising events
- Involvement in direct delivery of our services and projects
- Working away from front line services on IT related projects

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Each volunteer will be supported and supervised by the manager and other experienced volunteers within the organisation. They will provide guidance, support and supervision to the volunteer to ensure that the volunteering experience is a positive and rewarding one.

The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no contractual obligation for the volunteer to attend or to undertake particular tasks. However, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability and a reciprocal set of expectations:

Volunteers can expect:

- To have clear information about what is and is not expected of them
- To receive adequate support and training
- To be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment
- To be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner

- To receive reimbursement for reasonable expenses directly related to the Care Farm, eg purchasing resources
- To have opportunities for personal development
- To be recognised and appreciated
- To be able to say 'no' to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable
- To know what to do if something goes wrong

The organisation expects volunteers:

- To be reliable, open and honest
- To uphold the organisation's values and comply with organisational policies
- To make the most of opportunities given, e.g. for training
- To contribute positively to the aims of the organisation and avoid bringing the organisation into disrepute
- To carry out tasks within agreed guidelines
- To adhere to Corn Close Care Farm's confidentiality policy at all times
- To read and familiarise themselves with the information in the Staff and Volunteer Information Pack.

## **Recruitment**

Some volunteers already have a long-standing association with our organisation and therefore will not be subject to a formal recruiting process.

Others may approach us directly and offer their time. If this is the case and the person is known to the organisation, an induction session will be arranged so that both parties can assess the suitability of the volunteer for the role required.

If the organisation specifically wishes to recruit volunteers and begins a formal recruitment process, this will usually involve an expression of interest form, informal interview and the taking of references. In this case, two references will be required.

All volunteers will need to have enhanced DBS checks, which will be undertaken in accordance with the latest guidance.

All volunteers will need to undertake Level 2 Safeguarding Training which will be organised and paid for by Corn Close Care Farm

Corn Close Care farm will ask for the names and contact details of 2 referees, one of which should be the most recent employer.

Equal opportunities principles will be adhered to when choosing and recruiting volunteers.

Where it is reasonable to do so we will be flexible with the tasks within role descriptions – e.g. where some tasks may be difficult for a person, or to better fit the interests of the individual.

## **Induction and Training**

Volunteers will receive a full induction which will include:

- 1) An introduction to any other volunteers and staff members who they may work with.
- 2) A tour of Corn Close Care Farm if they are not already familiar with the site.
- 3) A Staff and Volunteer Information Pack and details of where to find our policies and procedures.
- 4) Health and Safety procedures including verbal instruction regarding the Fire Evacuation Procedure
- 5) Housekeeping e.g. use of the kitchen in the classroom, location of toilets.

In general, training will be provided on an 'on the job' basis, but some roles may require formal training – e.g. in safeguarding issues. If this is the case, training will be provided.

Training will be offered to all volunteers on a regular basis.

## **Support and Supervision**

All volunteers will always work with a member of Corn Close Care Farm staff or an experienced volunteer.

The member of staff/experienced volunteer is responsible for training and supervising the volunteer, as well as giving feedback and answering queries.

Volunteers are encouraged to speak to a member of staff/experienced volunteer if they have any questions or concerns.

Volunteers without a current enhanced DBS certificate will never be left alone with a visitor.

## **Recognition**

Volunteers will be given the opportunity to share their views and opinions with us. We will also recognise their contribution on our website, through social media, and by saying thank you.

## **Confidentiality**

All volunteers are bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as staff, as laid down in any Corn Close Care Farm policy or by verbal instruction from a member of staff. Breach of confidentiality is taken very seriously and may result in us asking the volunteer to leave.

We are bound by the Data Protection Act to ensure that we treat volunteer information with respect. Only staff who need to see information for purposes related to volunteer involvement will be able to access it. We will not pass information on without permission.

## **Expenses**

It is the policy of Corn Close Care Farm to reimburse any relevant volunteer expenses – eg for resources. The volunteer will need to provide a receipt for our records.

## **Problem-solving Procedure**

Corn Close Care Farm acknowledges that sometimes problems do arise. In the first instance, any volunteer with a complaint or concern should bring it up with their supervisor. If the issue cannot be resolved by informal discussion, then it can be taken up formally through the complaints procedure. This is included in the Staff and Volunteer Information Pack.

## **Health and Safety**

Corn Close Care Farm appreciates that all staff and volunteers have the right to work and volunteer in a safe environment. Therefore, all staff and volunteers must carry out their duties in line with Corn Close Care Farm's Health and Safety Policy whilst engaged in their work/volunteering activity.

Volunteers are covered by Corn Close Care Farm's Public Liability Insurance but if they wish to use their car to carry out any aspect of their volunteering role, the onus is on the volunteer to notify their insurance company to ensure that they are covered on their vehicle insurance.

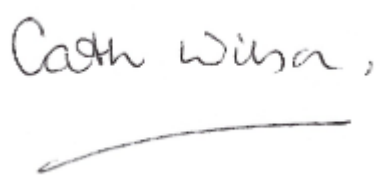
## **Moving On**

When volunteers leave their role, they will be asked to complete an exit survey to provide feedback on their volunteer experience. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss their responses more fully if they wish to do so. Responses from exit surveys should be anonymised and kept confidentially, although key information should be used to inform Corn Close Care Farm's volunteering offer and ensure continuing good practice.

## **Diversity**

All volunteers will be expected to have an understanding and commitment to equal opportunities and diversity and should therefore ensure that they have read Corn Close Care Farm's Equality and Diversity Policy. Volunteers are expected to comply with this policy at all times. Volunteers may also request training in respect of diversity issues if they feel that would assist them in their volunteering role.

Corn Close Care Farm is very sensitive to different cultures, lifestyles, backgrounds and languages and strives to ensure equality of opportunity to ensure that individuals are given equal access to information, services etc and requires all staff and volunteers to follow these principles. We will strive to provide extra support and make reasonable adjustments, if needed, for volunteers with additional needs including disability, language or mental health.

Date of policy	05.08.22
Review date	04.08.23
Name	Cath Wilson
Signed	
Position	Manger