

Volunteer Policy

Date	Review Date	Chairman	Vice-Chair	Centre Manager
01.08.18	01.08.19	Neil Jones	Anne Everitt	Sally Mills

The following are important telephone numbers that must be kept up to date:

Contacts	Home	Mobile
Chairman of Trustees Neil Jones		
Vice-Chair Anne Everitt		
Centre Manager Sally Mills	01483 813846	

This document sets out the principles, practices and procedures that will be followed in the recruitment, induction and support of volunteers.

The work of The Therapy Garden is strongly reliant on its volunteers, who may undertake one or all of the following roles:

- Support for clients and students in their horticultural activities
- Independent work in the garden
- Fundraising
- Volunteer drivers
- Administration support
- The Board of Trustees

We work with all parts of the community, and aim to be an inclusive organisation, which seeks to involve a diverse range of individuals who can contribute and add value and depth to our work.

As well as providing a valuable resource for the organisation, The Therapy Garden recognises the potential benefit of volunteering to the volunteer. We aim to acknowledge individual needs of volunteers, and where possible, provide the experience and opportunity to gain skills required. Volunteers give their time freely and in return they have the right to recognition for the assistance they provide, and involvement and participation throughout the organisation as appropriate.

1. Definitions and Scope

“Volunteering” can be defined as the act of a person choosing to give time without an expectation of financial reward for the good of others, society or the environment.

The aim of this policy is to set out good volunteering practice for use throughout The Therapy Garden, and to provide guidelines for volunteers and staff working with volunteers.

The policy should be reviewed in the light of any trends or new legal changes that affect volunteering and at least once every two years.

This policy does not extend to formal student positions as part of an academic course or student work experience positions for which separate procedures apply.

2. Our Commitment to Volunteers

Volunteers at The Therapy Garden can expect:

- to be respected for their knowledge and skills
- to be valued as an individual
- to have support, feedback, appreciation, and encouragement
- to have opportunities to contribute to improvements
- to have opportunities to discuss concerns or problems relating to their duties
- not to have their duties changed without prior discussion
- to be insured
- that we have an agreed volunteering policy
- up to date information about where they volunteer
- to have clear guidelines within which to carry out duties
- opportunities for training relating to their task; when appropriate
- to have an organised working schedule
- a safe working environment
- to have up to date and relevant information about the needs of clients and students

3. Our Expectations of Volunteers

The Therapy Garden expects its volunteers to:

- show commitment to the organisation
- treat staff, other volunteers, clients, students, and visitors with respect and courtesy
- have a flexible approach to their duties
- follow procedures and guidelines
- take instruction from the horticultural team regarding garden tasks
- inform the organisation in all cases of absence
- report sickness to the appropriate member of staff
- report any accidents promptly to staff
- respect confidentiality
- be prepared to undertake appropriate training
- carry out their tasks to the best of their ability
- discuss concerns with the appropriate staff member
- consult a member of staff if in need of help and guidance

4. Recruitment

All potential volunteers will be given clear descriptions of the tasks and responsibilities they would be expected to fulfil.

We aim to recruit new volunteers via:

- Voluntary organisations recruitment systems such as Better Impact
- Promotion and volunteer requests in local publications
- Volunteer recruitment events
- Via our website and social media
- Through universities and colleges

5. Application and Induction Process

We aim to provide a good understanding of the role required and information about the charity to allow the potential volunteer to make a fully informed decision about joining us. We expect potential volunteers to

provide information on their needs, aims and motivations as well as skills/experiences to ensure compatibility with available positions.

The application steps include -

1. All volunteers will need to complete the Volunteer Registration Form on the charity website.
2. On completion, potential volunteers will be invited for a site visit and meeting with a staff representative, usually the volunteer co-ordinator.
3. If both parties agree to continue the application, the volunteering opportunity may commence

An enhanced DBS check is required for all volunteers and will be paid for by the charity.

Written references may be taken up if appropriate. After a 3-month probationary period, there will be a review of the volunteer placement with a member of the horticulture team.

No previous gardening experience is required but volunteers should be willing to learn skills in order to support clients.

6. Support and Supervision

Volunteers shall be mentored by the horticultural staff / volunteer co-ordinator who will support and supervise the volunteer throughout the duration of their position. The Therapy Garden will ensure that the volunteer receives the following:

- a volunteer induction
- termly volunteer meetings with the Centre Manager, Garden Manager and Senior Horticulturists
- regular mentoring and support
- constructive feedback on their contribution
- equipment and services to perform their tasks effectively

Volunteers are expected to comply with all current working practices at the centre and understand that weekend watering duty may be unsupervised.

Training and Development

Volunteers will be provided with sufficient information and informal training to carry out allocated tasks. An induction will take place shortly after starting at the centre.

Volunteers will have the opportunity to attend events, training sessions or talks on relevant subjects to their role.

Volunteers may suggest training or information that might help them carry out their duties more effectively and can request feedback at any appropriate time from staff.

7. Equal Opportunities

In accordance with The Therapy Garden Equal Opportunities policy, volunteer positions will be open to individuals irrespective of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age or marital status and the policy will be adhered to in all interactions with volunteers. All staff are expected to work alongside volunteers and treat them with respect.

Applications from prospective volunteers with a form of disability will be looked at on a case-by-case basis. Our clients have a variety of needs and we do not generally have the resources to support volunteers with their own physical difficulties, learning difficulties or mental health issues.

However, depending on the extent of individual needs and the activities involved, we may be able to accommodate such volunteers where appropriate. This will be at the discretion of the Centre Manager and

Garden Manager and the approval of the Trustees may be sought in such cases. The health, safety and welfare of clients and students must remain paramount.

9. Resolving Concerns

We take any concerns raised seriously and will make every effort to resolve any issues as in the shortest time frame possible. In the event of a volunteer having a complaint, or if The Therapy Garden needs to resolve an issue with a volunteer, both parties can use the 'Problem Solving Procedure' (see appendix), a copy of which can be found on The Therapy Garden website or in the Centre Managers office.

If a volunteer's behaviour is unacceptable or detrimental to the running of the charity the The Therapy Garden reserve the right to end the volunteer placement. This will be at the discretion of the Centre Manager and the Garden Manager.

10. Absence and Leaving

Volunteers are asked to inform the staff if they will not be available for work for any reason. It is helpful if volunteers can give as much notice as possible so that cover may be arranged if necessary. There may be occasions when volunteers may wish to take a break for a period of time and we will respect this.

The volunteer is free to leave at any time, with a reasonable period of notice being appreciated by the Charity in order to help with planning. Feedback, including the reasons for leaving and the completion of the "Exit Form", is requested wherever possible. Where appropriate, a volunteer's position may be terminated where behaviour equivalent to gross misconduct has occurred. In all cases, the volunteer will be entitled to an explanation of the decision and action taken.

11. Dress Code

Volunteers working in the garden should wear clothing suitable for gardening and appropriate for the prevailing weather conditions, steel-capped boots, and gardening gloves.

12. Insurance

Employers liability insurance is in place for all volunteers while on the premises. This does not however cover your personal belongings. Volunteers are covered under our public liability insurance if working off site on behalf of the charity.

13. Copyright, Intellectual Property and Photography

The rights to any original works that you may produce in the course of your volunteering will belong to the charity unless otherwise agreed. Examples include photography, artwork or written work including research results.

We may use photographs of volunteers carrying out their roles for promotional purposes, for example in a leaflet, on our social media channels or the website. We ask volunteers to specify whether they consent to this on the initial registration form. If you would prefer us not to use your image please let us know.

14. Data Protection and Confidentiality

Volunteers should regard all information they have access to or are given as a result of their volunteering as being confidential unless advised otherwise. No information should be released to a third party without first seeking the agreement of a member of staff, trustee and/or the individual concerned, as appropriate.

Volunteers should not disclose personal details (home address, telephone number etc) to clients.

The Therapy Garden will fulfil its duty to safeguard the information contained within application forms etc. and will treat such personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

Any communication with the media regarding The Therapy Garden should be carried out by The Therapy Garden staff rather than direct communication by volunteers. Volunteers are not to make any comments to or statements that besmirch the reputation of the charity.

14. Health and Safety

The Therapy Garden has a statutory responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, not to harm or damage the health of volunteers through their involvement in the activities of the organisation.

All volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a safe manner and not to act in a way that may cause injury to others. It is the volunteer's responsibility to have an up-to date tetanus inoculation.

A copy of the charity's 'Health and Safety Policy' statement can be found on The Therapy Garden website or in the policy folder in the Centre Manager's office.

This policy was adopted on 01 August 2018 by:

Chair of Trustees Neil Jones		Date:	
Vice Chair of Trustees Anne Everitt		Date:	
Centre Manager Sally Mills		Date:	