

Last Review	
Next Review	

FRIENDS OF CATHJA
Volunteer Policy
Approved by the Board of Trustees

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Friends of Cathja is part of the London Borough of Hounslows voluntary sector and without its volunteers, would not be able to offer many of its services. We value our volunteers and aim to support them in all aspects of their volunteering; ensuring that it is a fulfilling experience. Services provided by volunteers should enhance and not replace those provided by paid staff.

Friends of Cathja 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”.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

1. Equal Opportunities.

1.1. Friends of Cathja is committed to equal opportunities and seeks to recruit and retain volunteers from all sectors of the community. In particular, we welcome applications from people who have experienced difficulties with their own mental health or who have used mental health services.

2. The Advertising of Volunteer Positions

2.1. We recognise that potential volunteers respond to a range of advertising, so would seek to use as many diverse means as possible including giving talks to community groups, local press, leaflets, posters and advertising through the CVS in Hounslow.

3. The Application Process

3.1. Volunteer applicants will be provided with a Volunteer Pack containing a standard application form and relevant Friends of Cathja information. Prospective volunteers will complete the standard Friends of Cathja application form setting out basic personal details, skills, experiences and areas of interest. All volunteers will provide details of two referees whom they have known for two years, and who are not related to them, which will be taken up prior to the commencement of a placement.

- 3.2. All applications will be considered by the Project Director. If the application is realistic then the prospective volunteer will be invited to an interview with the Project Director
- 3.3. The interview will consist of a number of standard questions and will be carried out in as relaxed a fashion as is possible. The interview is a two way process enabling the organisation to assess if the applicant meets the criteria to become a volunteer and for the volunteer to gain as much information as possible about the organisation.
- 3.4. Shortly after the interview the volunteer will be informed by the Project Director of the result of their application and if successful an invitation will be made to visit the scheme or schemes of interest on an informal basis and discuss their role.
- 3.5. Should the visit prove successful and provided no concerns are raised a placement will be offered pending suitable references being received by the organisation.

1 Training and Support

- 1.1 On taking up their role all volunteers will be asked to sign a volunteer agreement form outlining the terms and conditions of their placement. All volunteers will also complete a form giving emergency contact details. A copy of this will be held in the project and also centrally.
- 1.2 All volunteers will receive a basic induction from the project manager covering the general orientation on the nature and operation of the project or activity for which they are recruited, and a specific orientation on the purposes and requirements of the position which they are accepting.
- 1.3 Volunteers will receive basic guidance on Health and Safety Issues, fire instructions, confidentiality, equal opportunities and what to do in the event of an emergency. Volunteers will have access to the relevant policies which are held in each project.
- 1.4 Where it is necessary for volunteers to receive training in order to work effectively with Friends of Cathja projects, we undertake to provide training which will enhance volunteers' skills and promote their confidence in working with Friends of Cathja.
- 1.5 Opportunities for supervision and/or support will be given to all volunteers on a regular basis. Supervision will involve discussing the volunteer's ongoing work, exploring any training needs, looking at ways that the service can be improved and resolving any difficulties that the volunteer may be experiencing in their work.

2 EXPENSES

- 2.1 Volunteers will be paid all reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred through their volunteering with us and will need to keep receipts and fill out a volunteer's expenses claim form.

4. INSURANCE

- 4.1. Volunteers are covered by Friends of Cathja's public liability and employers liability insurance policies

5. ABSENCE

- 5.1. Volunteers give freely their time and skills and this is greatly appreciated, however, because volunteers are very valuable they will be asked to inform the project manager beforehand if they are going to be away and to ring in when unwell.

6. ENDING THE AGREEMENT

- 6.1. Volunteers are free to end their agreement to work for the organisation without obligation but the charity requests as much notice is given as is possible.

7. GRIEVANCES

- 7.1. It is hoped that most difficulties will be minor and can be resolved by the relevant project manager. Where this is not the case the following procedure should apply -

- Stage 1
A formal discussion with the project manager.
- Stage 2
If the matter is unresolved the grievance should be put in writing to the Project Director who will investigate the situation and respond within ten days.
- Stage 3
If the matter remains unresolved the volunteer should appeal to the Chair of Trustees. The decision of the Chair is final.

8. DISCIPLINE

8.1. If the project organiser finds the work or behaviour of a volunteer unacceptable the following procedure should be followed.

- Stage 1
A meeting with the Project Manager to see if the matter can be resolved.
- Stage 2
If the matter is unresolved a warning is issued by the project manager.
- Stage 3
If the matter is still unresolved a meeting with the Project Director will be called.
- Stage 4
If the situation remains unresolved the volunteer will be informed in writing his/her services are no longer required.

9. UNSUITABILITY.

If after 4 weeks, a new volunteer is found to be unsuitable, at the review meeting, after consultation with the staff team at the project, a Project Director, will explain to the volunteer in question, that it has been decided that they are not suited for volunteering with Friends of Cathja.