



Volunteer Policy

Introduction

The Volunteer Policy and accompanying guidelines are intended to provide guidance for everyone involved in Forest Read Easy Deal (FRED), including prospective Volunteers. In issuing this Volunteer Policy FRED wishes to:

- formally acknowledge and support the role of Volunteers in its work
- set out the principles governing the involvement of Volunteers and provide a set of guidelines to ensure good practice in working with Volunteers
- encourage and enable, rather than restrict, the involvement of Volunteers. The term “Volunteer” refers to those Volunteering for FRED.

FRED is an independent project working to improve reading and writing skills amongst adults in the Forest of Dean and immediate surrounding areas or having a connection with the Forest of Dean.

FRED trains Volunteers as Reading Coaches and matches them with people who wish to learn how to read or to improve very poor reading or writing skills. Learner tuition is free, one-to-one and lasts for no more than 30-60 minutes a session. Learners are encouraged to have two 30-minute sessions a week for optimum learning.

Volunteer Reading Coaches

Coaches enable FRED to provide a high-quality, effective service because they:

- guarantee learning will always be one to one which is vital for new Learners that are referred to FRED
- enable the service to be provided free of charge to Learners
- try to ensure that each Learner has the same Reading Coach for every learning session in order to develop a trusting and positive learning relationship
- ensure flexibility in terms of where and when learning can take place
- are well-placed to inform others in their local communities about FRED’s service.

Administrative Volunteers

FRED’s administration is carried out by a Management Team made up of Volunteers constituting Team Leader, Secretary, Treasurer and others offering expertise, advice and liaison. FRED also has a Volunteer Coach Co-ordinator. These Volunteers enable FRED to be effective and cost-efficient through:

- promoting FRED’s service to communities, referral organisations, potential donors and potential Volunteers
- fundraising activities
- organising training events
- recruiting, supporting and supervising Volunteers
- general awareness raising
- keeping appropriate records
- ensuring FRED works within Charity Commission guidelines
- ensuring FRED meets and adheres to current legislation

Aims of this policy

1. Diversity

FRED is firmly committed to diversity in all areas of its work. It believes it has much to learn and profit from diverse cultures and perspectives, and that diversity will make the organisation more effective in meeting the needs of its stakeholders. FRED is committed to developing and maintaining an organisation in which differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are fostered and valued, and where those with diverse backgrounds and experiences are able to participate and contribute.

The FRED Management Team will regularly monitor and evaluate its progress towards diversity in line with its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

2. Recruitment

FRED aims to recruit a diverse range of Volunteers who have the time and the skills to carry out its work accurately and competently. It needs people who are committed to the aims and values of the organisation, and who have the confidence, knowledge and personal skills to work effectively and appropriately with a wide range of people. No formal qualifications are required.

The FRED Volunteer recruitment process aims to be fair and consistent. Volunteers are selected on suitability. In recruiting effective Volunteers FRED will take into account that:

- advertising will be cost effective and recruitment materials will aim to attract applicants from a diverse range of backgrounds and experience
- those enquiring about Volunteering opportunities within FRED will be sent the following information:
 - Volunteer role description
 - FRED Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy with general statement and monitoring form
 - an application form which requests contact details and the nominations of two referees

All enquiries, application forms and references will be treated as confidential. Applicants should note the FRED practice with regard to ex-offenders Volunteering in section 9, below. At their discretion the committee and Coach Co-ordinator may exercise the right to interview or take up further references.

Those applicants who are not offered a Volunteering position with FRED will be informed in writing and referred to other Volunteer websites and/or organisations, to enable them to pursue other more suitable Volunteering opportunities should they wish.

3. Induction and Training

The Coach Co-ordinator will contact Volunteer Coach applicants either by phone or email.

Volunteer Coaches will be required to attend an initial induction training/selection workshop – either in person or remotely. Volunteer Coaches will start with an initial trial period of four weeks from being paired with a Learner, after which time they will have the opportunity to discuss their experiences with the Coach Co-ordinator so that a mutual decision to continue or otherwise is reached.

At the initial training, all potential Volunteers will be issued with information on FRED policies and details of where to access electronic and paper versions. All Volunteers will be expected to familiarise themselves with the relevant policies, i.e. Equality and Diversity, Lone Worker, Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults, and **must sign and return the Volunteer Agreement before they begin working with a Learner.**

When starting with a Learner, they will also be issued with a starter pack to include: an expenses form, a Learner Log, a mini white board and pen, two copies of the Turning Pages Manual: 1 for the Coach and 1 for the Learner.

4. Supervision and Support

The Coach Coordinator provides support, guidance and supervision either in person, by telephone or by e-mail. It is anticipated that minimum contact will be bi-monthly. Developments within FRED will be communicated regularly via emails, newsletters and correspondence. Volunteer Coaches are expected to attend further training workshops to share ideas and disseminate good practice.

5. Reimbursement of Expenses

FRED will pay reasonable out-of-pocket expenses such as travel costs and postage. Mileage is paid at 45p per mile on submission of an Expenses Claim Form with attached receipts. Any exceptional expenditure should be approved by the Management Team *before* it is incurred.

6. Insurance

FRED insurance will cover any injuries or damage that our Reading Coaches may cause to others during the course of their work with FRED, and any injury Volunteers suffer due to negligence by anyone in FRED.

Volunteers are responsible for informing their motor insurance company that they are using their car in the act of Volunteering.

7. Health and Safety

Accidents or incidents must be reported as soon as possible to the Management Team or, for Coaches, to the Coach Coordinator who will report to the Management Team.

All Volunteers are responsible for knowing and adhering to the FRED Health and Safety Policy and the FRED Lone Worker Policy.

8. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

FRED has a responsibility to protect those it works with, especially those deemed to be Vulnerable or At Risk. FRED reserves the right to carry out Enhanced Disclosure DBS checks (formerly known as CRB checks) on Volunteers where it is deemed necessary. This will only be in relation to Volunteers who are dealing with Learners who are vulnerable, as defined by The Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults Act, 2006 and adults at risk as defined by the Care Act 2014.

The term 'vulnerable adult' is defined by the pre-September 2012 definition in the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. In broad terms, a 'vulnerable adult' is defined as a person aged 18 or over, and:

- is living in residential accommodation, such as a care home or a residential special school □ is living in sheltered housing
- is receiving domiciliary care in his or her own home
- is receiving any form of health care
- is detained in a prison, remand centre, young offender institution, secure training centre or attendance centre or under the powers of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- is in contact with probation services

- is receiving a welfare service of a description to be prescribed in regulations
- is receiving a service or participating in an activity which is specifically targeted at people with age-related needs, disabilities or prescribed physical or mental health conditions or expectant or nursing mothers living in residential care (age-related needs includes needs associated with frailty, illness, disability or mental capacity)
- is receiving direct payments from a local authority/HSS body in lieu of social care services □ requires assistance in the conduct of his or her own affairs.

An adult at risk refers to any adult aged eighteen or over:

“who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation”

(No Secrets: Guidance on Developing and Implementing Multi-agency Policies and Procedures to Protect Vulnerable Adults from Abuse, DH, 2000)

An adult at risk may therefore be a person who:

- is elderly and physically disabled due to ill health or cognitive impairment
- has a Learning Disability
- has a physical disability and / or a sensory impairment
- has mental health needs including Dementia or a personality disorder
- has a long-term illness / condition
- misuses substances or alcohol
- is unable to demonstrate the capacity to make a decision relating to their safety and is in need of care and support.

9. Involving ex-offenders in Volunteering

FRED recognises that some potential Volunteers may have criminal records and are reluctant to apply for voluntary work where this would involve the disclosure of their record. FRED is committed to equality, diversity and inclusivity, and recognises the contribution that **all** people can make as Volunteers. FRED, therefore, welcomes enquiries of interest from everyone.

Policy Statement regarding ex-offenders

FRED works on the assumption that people apply for voluntary work in order to help others, meet new people, and develop new skills and that they have no ulterior motive in seeking such work. With this in mind, FRED will, wherever possible, provide opportunities for people and will do so in ways that will not put its Volunteers, staff or Learners at risk.

The FRED recruitment process will ask for disclosure of convictions that are not deemed spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. FRED will handle this information in confidence.

10. Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures

Volunteers who feel that they have been treated unfairly or inappropriately will have access to a grievance procedure, which involves meeting in person with two members of FRED Management Team who have not previously been involved with the Volunteer, in an attempt to address the Volunteer's grievance.

Volunteers who are considered to have behaved inappropriately will be subject to a disciplinary procedure which involves meeting with two members of FRED Management Team to seek an appropriate outcome for all involved.

11. Confidentiality

FRED will treat all personal information relating to its Volunteers in the strictest confidence. Personal matters relating to Learners should not be disclosed or discussed with any person outside FRED.

Please note - this policy is under regular review. FRED appreciates comments and suggestions for improvement. For further information, please contact:

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