

# Volunteering

in



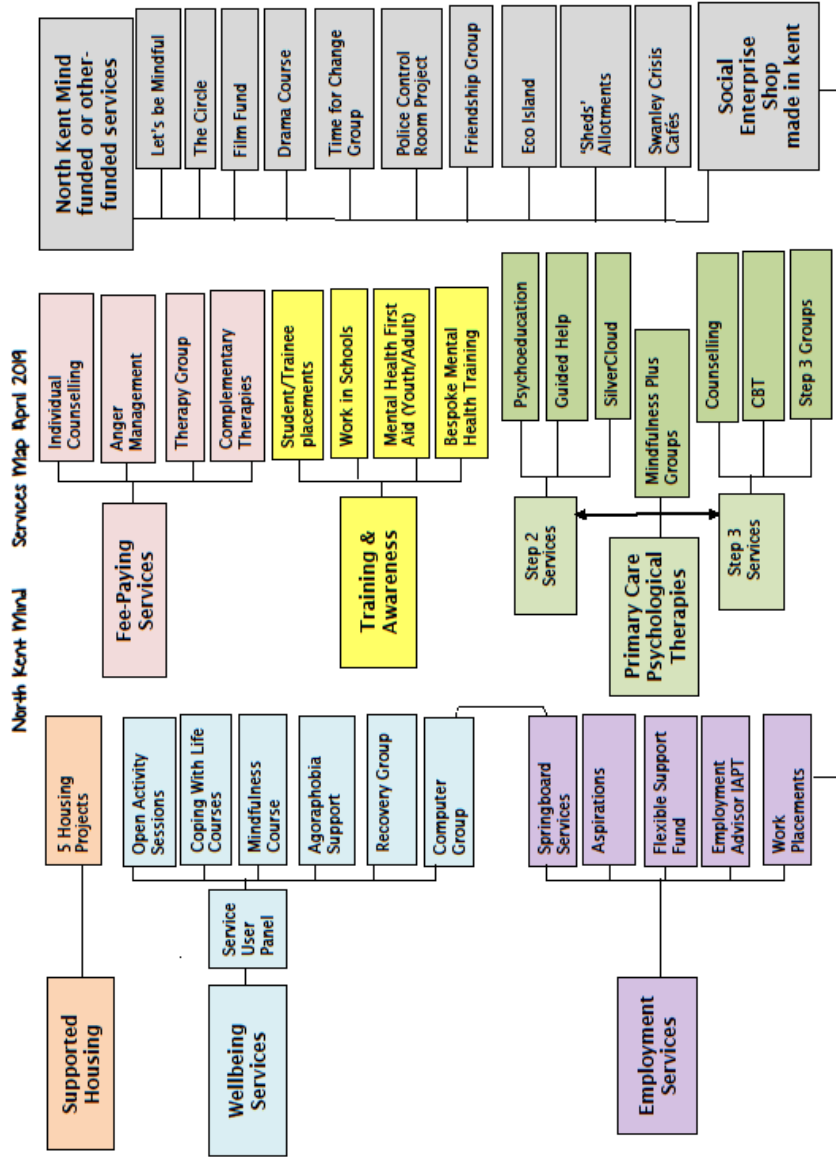
North Kent Mind  
The Almshouses  
20 West Hill  
Dartford  
Kent  
DA1 2EP  
Tel: 01322 291380  
Fax: 01322 285294

A Handbook for Volunteers  
in North Kent Mind  
October 2019

For your own notes.....

**Contents:**

Page	1	Welcome
Page	2	Venues
Page	3	Selection of Volunteers
Page	4	Volunteering Opportunities
Page	6	Agreement between NK Mind and Volunteers
Page	8	Investing in Volunteers
Page	9	Volunteers Expenses and Concessions
Page	10	Policies
Page	14	Understanding Boundaries
Page	16	Understanding Empowerment
Page	17	Understanding Recovery
Page	18	Understanding Look Out Call
Page	20	Service Map



Welcome to North Kent Mind! This handbook is designed to provide, in one place, most of the information you will need as a volunteer. Please keep your copy safely, some of the information here is confidential and not intended to be shared with service users. You will be issued with a new copy whenever the handbook is updated. An additional handbook is provided for volunteer counsellors, who have extra procedures to follow.

### CONTACT POINTS

The Almshouse office is staffed generally from 9-5 on weekdays. Although we do have services operating from here outside these hours (eg low-cost counselling, and Talking Therapies) we switch to answerphone at 5pm.

20 West Hill Dartford. DA 1 2EP  
 Tel: 01322 291380 Fax: 01322 285294  
 Email: [admin@northkentmind.co.uk](mailto:admin@northkentmind.co.uk)  
 Website: [www.northkentmind.co.uk](http://www.northkentmind.co.uk)

If you wish to email a particular staff member, insert their full name, as one word, before @northkentmind.co.uk

Your Key Supporter for your volunteering work will be:

.....

If they have given you a personal number to contact them in exceptional circumstances, you might like to record it here:

.....

We do of course use several other community settings for our work, and you may be based in one of these as a volunteer: please do not reveal mobile numbers to service users: these are for internal communication only, and available only when a session is taking place and 30 minutes on each side of this. Please use the official number of other agencies only when absolutely necessary.

Venue	Address	Town	Postcode	Phone
54 High St	54 High St	Gravesend	DA11 0AY	NKMind: 01322 291380
Crown House	Home Gardens	Dartford	DA1 1DZ	Their office: 01322 424500
Dartford Library	Market Street	Dartford	DA1 1EU	Their office: 0300 041 3131
Dartford Adult Education Centre	Highfield Rd	Dartford	DA1 2LP	Their office: 0845 6065606
Methodist Church Hall	43 Spital Street	Dartford	DA1 2DX	MindMobile: 07963 073511
MVA Building	5A New Road Av	Chatham	ME4 6BB	NKMind: 01322 291380
Orchard House	31 Orchard St	Dartford,	DA1 2DH	NKMind: 01322 291380
Orchard Theatre	Home Gardens	Dartford	DA1 1ED	Their office: 01322 220000
Riverside Centre	Dickens Road	Gravesend	DA12 2JY	MindMobile: 07501 203500
St Anselm's	89 West Street	Dartford	DA1 2HJ	Their office: 01322 280130
Thames Gateway YMCA	Overy Street	Dartford	DA1 1UP	Their office: 01322 282030
Waterman House	Lord Street	Gravesend,	DA12 1AW	Their office: 01474 330720
White Horse Surgery	Vale Rd	Northfleet	DA11 8B2	Their office: 03000300000
White Oak Leisure Centre	Hilda May Avenue	Swanley	BR8 7BT	MindMobile: 07968 470916

## Updating a Timed Activity

Pressing Speed dial 2 before the end of the time on the previous activity cancels any monitoring of the previous time and allows you to set up a new activity.

## Logging Off

Press and hold Speed dial 7 when the activity is finished and you are no longer at risk. If you do not do this, nor update by the end of the expected time, the system will call you to say it is about to raise the alarm. Entering your PIN number will cancel the alarm. Doing nothing will raise the alarm with North Kent Mind.

## Emergency

Where you require help immediately, pressing and holding down Speed dial 9 will raise the alarm with North Kent Mind. This will only work if you have already set up a timed activity.

There are other more advanced features on LookOut call, these are in the information sheets given with your training.

## Remember:

1. Keep your Mobile charged
2. Make sure you have credit on it

And especially:

3. Senior staff responding to a LookOut alarm concerning you out of normal office hours might need to visit your last known venue to check if you are still there. They do not have easy access to office systems to work out where you are. Please always give clear information to the system on precisely where you are.

## Understanding LookOut Call

It is a condition of lone working in North Kent Mind that the lone worker uses the LookOut call service we subscribe to. You will have received training in using this system if you are a lone working volunteer.

As a minimum you should programme into your mobile phone the following speed dial numbers:

Timed Activity	01223 594750	Speed dial 2
Log Off	01223 594751	Speed dial 7
Emergency	01223 594753	Speed dial 9

### Setting up a Timed Activity

1. Press and hold Speed dial 2 for a couple of seconds
2. When asked, state **who** you are, **where** you are going to be and with **whom**. This is the recorded message North Kent Mind will hear if there is a problem, so be precise about the location; **give the full address** not just "Mr Brown's".
3. After recording this message press hash (#).
4. When asked, type in the 4 digits to represent the time you expect to be engaged in this activity. 0130 = an hour and a half, 0040 = 40 minutes etc.
5. The system confirms your expected time. Press hash (#) to confirm, star (\*) to correct or re-enter the time, again with hash (#) to confirm.
6. End the call

## Selection of Volunteers

At North Kent Mind we have a process to ensure that volunteers are appropriate to work with our service users. This involves:

1. A completed application form
2. Initial screening to be carried out by 2 staff meeting the potential volunteer. This is designed to check out: that the person appears to have the competencies needed to fill the role; that they share the values of North Kent Mind; that they know what they are letting themselves in for; that they are likely to have a positive experience with North Kent Mind.
3. Participation on the North Kent Mind Training course. Attendance Certificates for this course are provided.
4. Successful references and DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check if necessary.
5. Probationary period of 6 months, then a review will take place.

### Who is a North Kent Mind Volunteer?

A North Kent Mind Volunteer is someone who has been officially accepted as a volunteer through the above process. People who are service-user representatives, who sit on service-user panels or interview panels, who do occasional practical tasks for us without charge, who are on work experience with us, or provide expert-by-experience input on training courses, are not registered as volunteers.

The Made in Kent Shop in Gravesend, which is a subsidiary of North Kent Mind, runs its own volunteering system and such volunteers are not volunteers of North Kent Mind.

## Volunteering Opportunities

The main opportunities for volunteering within North Kent Mind are:

### 1. Open Sessions

Generally assisting in a variety of regular large group sessions, all of which have some activity-based elements such as Tai Chi, Keep Fit, Music, Arts and Crafts.

### 2. Activity Groups

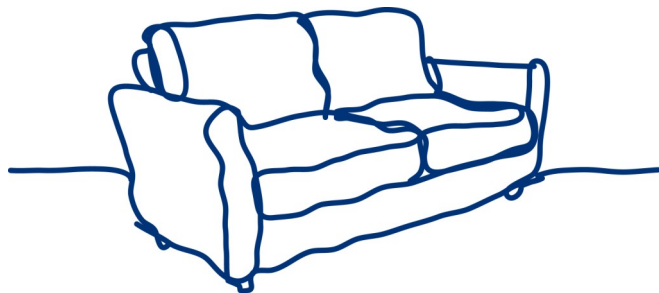
A range of specific activities taking place outside the open sessions, on a weekly basis. The Computer Group, Drama Course, Saturday Group, Allotment, Eco-Island are all examples of these.

### 3. Self-Management groups

These are more recovery-orientated than the above, and include Coping with Life Courses, the Recovery Group, Mindfulness Course, and other support groups where participants talk about their mental health issues, and find ways in which to manage these.

### 4. Housing

The Supported Housing Service uses volunteers to provide individual support for tenants. Length of involvement with the individual tenant is negotiated on an individual basis.



## Understanding Recovery

Recovery in mental health means that we believe that many people experiencing mental health issues can be helped to move through these issues to a place where they are no longer prey to them. At the same time, people who will continue to experience mental health issues can be helped to achieve a higher quality of life. Implementing a recovery approach means that we work with optimism and hope, and do not fall into the trap of writing people off because their mental health issues might be long standing.

Research has found that some of the key factors on the road to recovery are:

- Good relationships
- Financial Security
- Satisfying Work
- Personal growth
- The right living environment
- Developing one's own cultural or spiritual perspective
- Developing resilience to possible adversity or stress in the future

And that further factors highlighted by people as supporting them in their road to recovery are:

- Being believed in
- Being listened to and understood
- Getting explanations for problems or experiences

All volunteers and paid workers in North Kent Mind need to ensure these principles inform the work they do.

## Understanding Empowerment

Empowerment means helping the people who use our services to become as independent as they are able to. It means encouraging people to take control over those aspects of their own life for which they have become reliant on others, or where others - professionals or family and friends - have taken control away from them.

Empowering service-users is not just a matter of merely expecting people to take more control, for there are skills to be learnt and fears to be overcome if this is to be a success. Support, training and mentoring may be needed along the way, not least where there are setbacks, or where things do not work out as planned.

We believe in empowerment because in achieving it, a person is not only rightfully back in control of their own life, but they also will experience the improved self-esteem, confidence and well-being that comes with it: and this in turn improves their mental health.

As an organisation which seeks to help people, North Kent Mind must be aware at all times of the danger that people using our services may become over-reliant on them, or on the staff or volunteers who deliver them, and that this itself would be a disempowering experience.

We must try therefore to be skilful enough to provide help in a way which enhances, rather than overrides, existing coping skills. Where, during periods of great vulnerability, the level of dependency on the organisation or its staff is increased, care must be taken to plan for a return to optimum levels of empowerment at the end of this period.

## 5. Low-cost Counselling

Volunteer counsellors must be at least in the second year of accredited counselling training. They take at least 3 clients at any one time. There are also opportunities to co-facilitate anger management courses. As these are people on placement with us, no travel expense are paid, but those who remain with us once qualified are entitled to expenses.

## 6. Office Volunteers

Volunteers work in the office on a variety of administrative tasks: often allocated to a particular service.

## 7. Employment Services

Volunteers work with individuals or groups, helping people refine their job-seeking skills, access further training, or supporting them to become volunteers, normally for external organisations.

## 8. The Board of Trustees

The Trustees who are ultimately responsible for the organisation are volunteers too. To become a Trustee a person must be a member of North Kent Mind, and elected at an Annual General Meeting or co-opted by the existing Trustees. They commit to attending Board meetings and may have other set duties too.

## 9. Other Initiatives

We also welcome ideas from existing volunteers as to how they might help our services and organisation develop. Where these ideas are viable we will help develop the new initiative.

## Agreement between North Kent Mind and its Volunteers

### What you can expect from us:

- Support from a named member of staff
- To be kept informed of any significant changes within the organisation
- The offer of volunteer expenses
- Opportunities to be engaged with North Kent Mind in other roles
- Opportunities for self-development and further training as these occur
- A clear statement of your volunteering task
- Provision of honest references if you wish to work in other agencies
- To be valued and thanked
- Time out for up to a year if needed
- To be notified where paid opportunities arise.

Where more valuable gifts are thrust on you, you can only accept on behalf of the organisation as a whole. Non-perishable gifts can be used by North Kent Mind as raffle prizes; perishable gifts might be shared amongst colleagues; flowers look nice in the office reception.

### Physical Contact:

Physical contact means different things to different people, and might easily be misunderstood, especially between different genders and different cultures. Initiating a hug with a service user is probably always a mistake: if the person is in deep distress, then offering comfort might hinder your real task which is to help them work through the distress. In these situations touching their arm with your hand is probably as far as physical reassurance should ever go.

If you accept a hug or a peck on the cheek initiated by a service user without comment then you are failing in your work to help them understand what is socially acceptable and what is not.

If you find yourself having crossed boundaries concerning physical contact, it is a matter to discuss with your staff supporter, they will understand that we are all human, but should encourage you to consider whether it was your needs, or those of the service user, that caused the incident to occur.

### Lending Money

Personally lending money to service-users is not permitted. Where in extreme circumstances a service user might need a small amount for their own safety (eg a lost bus fare) this can be loaned by the organisation, and you will be recompensated for any outlay by the Service User Hardship fund.



## Understanding Boundaries

Your relationships with service-users should be friendly, but they are not your personal friends. You will have seen from the training that the level of boundaries you need to maintain differ according to the work you are involved in. Here is a recap:

### **Giving out information about yourself:**

Sometimes it might be appropriate to reveal some details of your circumstances, what you have done etc, in order to achieve good relationships with a service-user, though counsellors are generally trained not to do this. However, for your own safety, you should certainly not give out details of your home address, home phone number etc.

You are advised to exercise extreme caution in placing personal details on internet social networking sites such as Facebook, where they may be accessed by clients. Certainly you should not accept friend requests from clients.

### **Accepting Gifts:**

You should be very cautious about accepting gifts of any kind from service-users, and generally you should politely decline. At times, if the gift is of low value say under £10 and more of a token, eg if the person has made it themselves, it might seem to be very disparaging to refuse to accept it, and you may decide to accept it with a reminder to the giver that this is a one-off event.

You also need to think about when, in your relationship with a service-user the gift is given: if it is at the end of a successful piece of work and your work is terminating (e.g. at the end of a course), this might be more appropriate than at other times. Be wary of accepting gifts from individuals in a group situation, as this might open you to accusations of favouritism.

In all cases, you should report the event to your staff supporter and to the Central Services Manager who keeps a log of all gifts accepted.

### **What we expect from you:**

- That you abide by the procedures in this booklet, and work within the policies of North Kent Mind. You should especially note policies around Confidentiality, Information Governance, Lone Working, Health & Safety
- That you adhere to the values of North Kent Mind, treating all service-users with respect, and working in a way which is empowering, and enhances their own coping skills
- That you are available consistently at the times and places where you have agreed to do your volunteering work
- That you undertake the North Kent Mind 3 day training course prior to, or within 6 months of becoming a volunteer
- That you attend support sessions as arranged
- That you give us prior notice if you will be unavailable for your volunteering task or support meetings
- That you make yourself aware of fire evacuation procedures in whichever venue you are working
- That you are DBS checked once every 3 years where appropriate
- That you alert us to any issues which you believe pose a danger to yourself or the service-users you are working with
- That you maintain appropriate boundaries in your work with service users.

## Investing in Volunteers

North Kent Mind subscribes to the Investing in Volunteers Standard:

1. We have an expressed commitment to involving volunteers, and recognise this is a two-way process benefiting volunteers and the organisation.
2. We commit sufficient resources to working with volunteers.
3. We wish to recruit volunteers who reflect the diversity of the local community.
4. We develop appropriate roles for volunteers.
5. We are committed to protecting volunteers, as far as is possible, from any physical, financial and emotional harm arising from volunteering.
6. We use fair, efficient and consistent recruitment procedures for all potential volunteers.
7. Our system of taking up references and official checks is equitable for all volunteers, and takes into account the nature of the work.
8. We have a clear process to introduce new volunteers to the organisation and its work.
9. Everyone in the organisation is aware of the need to give volunteers recognition.
10. We take into account the varying support needs of volunteers.

### Implications for Volunteers:

Behaviour which is working against the standards or values of the organisation will be subject to a disciplinary process. These are listed in detail in the full policy, available on the website.

### Policies: Grievance Procedures

#### Summary:

An expression of dissatisfaction made by a staff member or volunteer about the behaviour of the organisation, or about an individual staff member or volunteer, is called a Grievance. There is a set process for dealing with these fairly.

### Implications for Volunteers:

Where you experience difficulties with the organisation, or people working in it, the first thing to do is to try to sort out the issues informally with the person or people involved. If this is unsuccessful, you have the right to implement the grievance procedure.

### Policies: Complaints Procedure

#### Summary:

North Kent Mind welcomes complaints as a way of learning and improving what we do. We have protocols about investigating complaints and reporting back to the individual who originally made the complaint.

### Implications for Volunteers

Encourage service-users to put in a complaint if they have an issue with something about the way we deliver our services, and reassure them that it will be taken seriously.

## **Policies: Equal Opportunities**

### **Summary:**

We are an organisation that recognises the link between discrimination and mental distress. We strive to be non-discriminatory in all our work.

### **Implications for Volunteers**

You must not behave in anyway that is, or could be seen to be, racist, sexist, or otherwise discriminatory. These are disciplinary breaches of our code. Where you are involved in the planning of any event or service, you must consider how this impacts on Equal Opportunities.

## **Policies: Lone Working**

### **Summary:**

We have strict limits on when lone working can occur, and a strategy to minimise the risks involved. This includes: initial visits to somebody's house must be carried out by two people, there must be an assessment of the risks, and lone workers must be trained in the use of the Look-out call system.

### **Implications for Volunteers**

Always use the LookOut call system when lone working. You are not permitted to take service-users in your car unless this has been authorised in writing by your supervisor. Remain alert to potential dangers at all times when lone working. Leave if you feel uncomfortable with the situation, and summon the police if required.

## **Policies: Disciplinary Procedure for Volunteers**

### **Summary:**

There is a set process for suspending or terminating a volunteer's involvement with the organisation: such decisions would be taken only when it was clear that the volunteer's behaviour was detrimental to themselves, to clients, or to the organisation.

## **Volunteering Expenses and Concessions**

### **1. Travel**

We reimburse travel expenses for volunteers, including travel from home to place of work. We cover the cost of public transport or 45p per mile where a private car is used (motorbike allowance at 22p per mile), to a maximum of £10 per day. These figures are reviewed by the Finance and Personnel Committee on an annual basis. People whose volunteering with us is actually on the basis of a training placement do not generally get travel expenses from home.

### **2. Sandwich Allowance**

Where a volunteer is working for a continuous period of 5 hours or more, a sandwich allowance of up to £2.50 is claimable. Where, exceptionally, food is provided to service-users by North Kent Mind, this is free to session volunteers. Reasonable meal expenses will be provided for Conference/Training courses attended by volunteers. These figures are reviewed by the Finance and Personnel Committee on an annual basis.

### **3. Child Care**

We are unfortunately not able to cover the costs involved in Volunteers making arrangements for the care of their children while engaged in volunteering.

### **4. Incidental Expenses**

Where other expenses are involved, volunteers should check with their staff supporter before submitting a claim.

### **5. Additional Support**

Where a volunteer requires help from one of our own fee-paying services, for instance low-cost counselling, we are prepared to offer them up to 6 sessions, with costs being met by North Kent Mind.

## Policies

Written policies and procedures are needed to ensure that everybody working in the organisation is consistent in their approach. The following pages give brief notes to those which are most relevant to volunteers. Full details of all North Kent Mind policies are available on our website: [www.northkentmind.co.uk](http://www.northkentmind.co.uk)

### Policies: Health and Safety

#### Summary:

North Kent Mind has a duty to identify and assess all risks and hazards associated with its work, and to take steps to minimise the risk of danger to staff, volunteers, service users and the public. We undertake risk assessments on our activities, and make sure fire precautions, first aid and food hygiene regulations are all met.

#### Implications for Volunteers

If you identify hazards you must take action to eliminate these by taking at least one of the following actions as appropriate:

- reporting the matter
- removing the danger
- letting people know the danger is there (eg putting up a notice).

You must report it if you are in contact with a contagious disease.

You must report any concerns you have about your own personal safety.

Using the LookOut Call system (see page 17) is a requirement of all staff, volunteers and sessional workers engaged in lone working.

## Policies: Confidentiality

#### Summary:

Information about individuals' personal lives will not be disclosed outside the organisation without the permission of that individual. Within the organisation, there are certain agreed protocols for how far personal information can be shared, and when any stored information must be destroyed.

#### Implications for Volunteers

You must respect the confidentiality of all service users, but you cannot promise absolute confidentiality, because where you have concerns about a service-user being a real danger to themselves or others, you have a duty to report this to staff.

## Policies: Information Governance

#### Summary:

Personal data we hold on clients and service users must be protected at all times.

#### Implications for Volunteers

You must take all steps to ensure there is no danger of confidential information getting into the wrong hands: any information sent by fax, text, post or email must be double checked to ensure it is going to the correct recipient; electronic data and paper records must be held securely at all times, personal details must not be left, even in the office, where others might see it. Service-users have a right to see the information we hold on them, and that information may only be used for the purposes it is intended.