



Blue Flamingo Community Hub CIC

Volunteer Policy

Policy Owner: Blue Flamingo Community Hub CIC

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Designated Safeguarding Lead: Erin Singleton

Blue Flamingo Community Hub CIC is an inclusive community group whose mission is to provide a welcoming space for older people to socialise and access support in a familiar, friendly café-style setting. We are dedicated to supporting vulnerable able older adults, particularly those living with dementia and their Carers.

Our main hub is located in the church hall of St Michael's and meets weekly. A satellite hub is located at Preston Grasshoppers RFC and meets monthly. Another satellite hub is located at St Teresa's Parish Centre, Penwortham. The Blue Flamingo has two paid members of staff: Executive Director (ED) and Programme Co-ordinator (PC).

The Blue Flamingo Community Hub CIC promotes inclusivity with a 'no barrier to entry' ethos which means that we do our best to remove obstacles that would prevent people from attending our sessions.

We provide:

- * transportation to those who would otherwise struggle to attend the café, when we can
- * support to members via signposting and direct access to professional services
- * nutritious refreshment & food options
- * a friendly, consistent & welcoming environment for our members, a safe space.

We DO NOT:

- * charge for any of our services
 - * turn people away from the door
 - * require advance booking
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Who is a volunteer?

Volunteers are anyone who freely chooses to support The Blue Flamingo CIC by giving their time, skills and experience without financial remuneration beyond out-of-pocket expenses. Volunteers are required to complete a DBS check (paid for by Blue Flamingo) and complete a free Safeguarding Training course.

How do we recruit volunteers?

Recruitment is mostly informal and organic in nature ie: we would ask someone with a personal connection to dementia, who is from the local community who might also have a connection with another volunteer, the church or other volunteer-led organisation. We advertise on CVCL (UCLan).

How do we make sure we treat all volunteers fairly?

Our ethos is that each volunteer contributes in the way that best suits them, based on their individual strengths and interests. During our sing-along sessions, we aim to sit down for a quick meeting to discuss where help is needed on the day and where people prefer to go; this also serves as an opportunity for volunteers to contribute feedback. At these briefings, the Director will aim to update volunteers on recent developments with the Hub. All volunteers are encouraged to speak with the ED or PC to discuss any issues they may have.

Do we adapt roles to make them more accessible?

Where individuals aren't able to fulfil a certain task due to their individual limitations, we discuss where they may be best placed.

What is our volunteer induction and training process?

Our induction and training is informal. Prior to volunteering, the ED speaks with the individuals to get an idea of their background and why they signed up to volunteer. Existing volunteers are told in advance about new volunteers joining the team and are introduced in person on the day. As our needs are very straightforward, the training is simple and is done on the day at the start of session set-up. DBS checks are undertaken (as specified earlier). Ongoing specialist dementia training by a professional instructor is offered approximately twice a year.

How do we pay volunteer expenses?

Volunteers are consistently offered lunch. Our volunteers regularly offer to provide food for the café; they are entitled to receive reimbursement for contributions with a receipt. If any volunteers have incurred expenses to volunteer at the café, they are welcome to request reimbursement within reason and at the discretion of the ED. If volunteers are unsure about expense reimbursement, they are encouraged to speak to the ED in advance.

What is our supervision and support process for volunteers?

The ED supervises all volunteers, with support from the PC. Volunteers have a good, open relationship with each other and the ED. Open communication is encouraged to ensure everyone feels equally supported.

What is our health and safety policy?

Volunteers are not asked to undertake any jobs which are unsafe, or they feel unable or uncomfortable to complete. Please see the BF Health & Safety Policy for further detail.

What is the volunteers' role in confidentiality and data protection?

The volunteers do not have access to member's data and are not authorized to post any photos they take on social media platforms. Occasionally, volunteers, the ED or PC will share photos of the café on their private WhatsApp group for the purpose of keeping each other updated or to share special moments. These images are not to be shared elsewhere without consent from the ED. The ED keeps a record of members' email addresses, physical addresses, phone numbers, photo consent, and birthdays. Email addresses are collected through a physical mailing list form. The ED maintains this information and keeps it secure. Data is regularly updated so that information which is no longer needed is deleted. We only use email addresses to send out updates relating to the café. Addresses and phone numbers are kept so the ED can conduct home visits and in case of an emergency. Birthdays are only recorded on our birthday list for the purpose of singing Happy Birthday.

What is our problem solving and complaints procedure for volunteers?

A check-in meeting is held on at least a fortnightly basis with the volunteers to discuss operations and put forward suggestions for changes. This is an opportunity for volunteers to provide feedback. There is a volunteer WhatsApp group with an open line to each other as well as the ED and PC. There is also an email group in which bigger communication issues are discussed. The ED & PC regularly check in with the volunteers to make sure they are comfortable with their roles and how they feel things are working. Volunteers are always welcome and encouraged to offer feedback to the ED and/or PC to ensure that the group continues to meet the needs of the community and working methods are adapted to fit the changing needs of the group.

Blue Flamingo CIC volunteer roles include:

Set-up:

- set tables out in church hall
- check toilets are suitable & ready for use
- set tables with activities and games (these change regularly; unless the ED or PC advise on this, volunteers are welcome to take their initiative with what gets set out)
- set up Lending Library table with resources
- put name labels and pens on tables (1 sheet of labels and 2 marker pens per table)

- put 'open today' sign on door at the main hall entrance and attach 2 posters to the A-board and place outside at the entrance to the carpark
- One volunteer stationed on the door to welcome members.

Kitchen:

- power up boiler
- plate up food
- set up food tables with tablecloths, ensuring no contamination in gluten-free section
- brew coffee & tea and serve drinks to order when members arrive
- wash up dishes throughout the session as needed
- refill food items where possible
- collect dirty cups and plates from hall as needed

Greeting:

- offer a warm welcome to members as they arrive
- take note of names on the register
- any new members should complete a new member form and a photo consent form and be asked if they'd like to add their name to our mailing list
- invite members to make note of their birthday on our birthday list

During the session:

- chat with members to get to know them and get an idea of their needs (this is done as a very casual but genuine interaction)
- engage in games or other activities with members and help with special activities as needed
- help members with seating if necessary
- signpost members to support where needed – this could include notifying ED or PC of any issues, handing out leaflets, making notes of issues, providing advice, signposting to professional services (NHS, GP, specialist charitable organisations, OT, SALT, etc)
- offer support carrying refreshments or accessing the buffet

Main Hall Tidy-up:

- return resources (games, library items, etc) into to boxes
- remove tablecloths, fold & put away
- take down tables and store in appropriate areas

- check bathrooms are in respectable order
- empty rubbish bins as needed
- sweep floor
- put 'open today' posters and A-board away
- one volunteer stationed on the door to support & guide members out the door safely.

Kitchen Tidy-up:

- clear any leftover food from tables
- soiled tablecloths, tea towels and aprons to be given to PM to wash and return to hall
- turn off boiler
- clean coffee machine (being sure to empty filter cavity)
- wipe down surfaces
- sweep floor

Volunteer arrival times and numbers:

- Sing-along and Music Sessions (1st & 3rd Tuesdays) – arrival time is 11.45am, which allows for a 15 minute debrief meeting before members arrive. As many volunteers as possible during these sessions (2-3 in the kitchen, the rest on the floor).
- Quiet Activities Sessions (2nd Tuesdays) – arrival time is 12.30pm. At least 3 volunteers are required for these sessions (1 for the kitchen and 2 on the floor).
- Carer's Support Circle Sessions (usually the last Tuesday of the month, check schedule for confirmation) – arrival time is 12.30pm. At least 4 volunteers are needed for these sessions (1 for the kitchen and 3 on the floor).