



OBS Volunteering Policy

Our vision for volunteering

Oxfordshire Breastfeeding Support recognises that volunteers make vital contributions towards supporting mothers and other lactating parents to breastfeed. We are committed to inspiring, developing and supporting our volunteers and recognising that the support they provide is essential to our work.

Our commitment to volunteering

We believe our organisation and service users benefit from involving volunteers who provide invaluable support, skills, experience and ideas. We believe volunteering can be a positive experience for all and of mutual benefit to both the organisation and the volunteer. To achieve this we will ensure that we meet good practice in volunteer management standards, offer worthwhile volunteering opportunities and the chance to gain new skills and experiences. We will endeavour to involve volunteers in all areas of our work, where appropriate and will continuously strive to improve the experience of our volunteers.

What is volunteering?

The primary role of OBS volunteers is to support and enable the organisation to achieve its mission and values.

We define volunteering as a formal relationship between the organisation and an individual who gives their time and skills unpaid to undertake a clearly defined volunteer role to deliver the remit of OBS.

A volunteer is someone who:

- gives their time and skills to deliver the work of the organisation at the request of and on behalf of OBS
- is unpaid
- freely chooses to give their time

All volunteer roles at OBS will have a defined role description and sometimes a volunteer might be involved in helping write the role description.

Recruitment

OBS is committed to ensuring our volunteering opportunities are open to all areas of the community and that our volunteer recruitment procedures are consistent, fair and transparent at all stages.

Volunteers will be asked to complete an application form. A volunteer interview will then be carried out to ensure the potential volunteer understands the role and to ensure they are suitable for it. Two references will be required along with a DBS criminal records check (known as a Disclosure and Barring Service check in England).

There is no upper age limit for volunteers; however, we currently have a minimum age restriction of 18 for volunteer roles.

All existing, new or potential volunteers will have access to details about our volunteer recruitment procedure, and anyone applying to volunteer will be provided with information relevant to the role they are applying for. This will include information on our selection process, interviews and reference procedures. These procedures are designed to ensure volunteers have the opportunity to learn about the volunteer role and make sure it's right for them before committing, as well as ensuring we select the right volunteers for the right roles.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility at OBS. We require all our volunteers to do Safeguarding Level 1 training with Oxfordshire Safeguarding Board (OSCB) every 3 years and to do our OBS Volunteer Safeguarding Induction.

We take the safeguarding of children and people very seriously and have a comprehensive safeguarding policy in place. We will support our volunteers with regards to safeguarding and are committed to providing them with advice and appropriate training about best practice in this area.

Volunteers should ensure that they are familiar with our safeguarding policy which is part of the OBS volunteer induction, and know who to contact if they have a safeguarding concern.

If you are concerned that someone who works or volunteers at OBS (or another healthcare professional) is perpetrating abuse, you can speak directly to the [Local Authority Designated Officer](#) (LADO) on 01865 815956 at [Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board](#), without speaking to anyone at OBS first.

Induction, learning and development

Our volunteer induction provides volunteers with a comprehensive welcome and orientation of OBS and is followed up with a chance to talk to their staff contact, so that they can ask any questions. The aim of the induction is to make sure volunteers feel welcomed, comfortable and supported.

We want to ensure that all volunteers are equipped with the knowledge and skills to perform their roles effectively.

Support and Supervision

OBS believes all volunteers should be supported throughout their time with the organisation and is committed to ensuring appropriate support structures are in place across the charity. We recognise volunteers give their time in different ways and have different support needs.

Therefore we provide a flexible model of volunteer support which is tailored to the individual volunteer and their role. All volunteers will have access to a staff contact to provide support and guidance.

We offer opportunities for online volunteer supervision approximately three times a year. The purpose of this is for volunteers to be able to share feedback on their experiences of volunteering at OBS and for OBS to communicate updates and policy changes, as well as to provide ongoing support and volunteer development.

Volunteer expenses

We recognise that volunteers should not be financially disadvantaged by volunteering for OBS. We pay for all reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred through carrying out volunteering, including travel costs and DBS checks.

Complaints

We are committed to ensuring all complaints are handled fairly. Please contact the Charity Director in confidence if you have a complaint.

Health and safety and insurance

OBS is committed to ensuring that volunteers have a safe environment in which to volunteer and are not exposed to unnecessary risks. The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for health and safety but all staff and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure that they act safely and do not expose themselves or others to any unnecessary risks.

Equal opportunities and diversity

OBS is committed to promoting equality and valuing diversity throughout all our work and organisational culture. We welcome a wide range of volunteers from diverse backgrounds and are working to actively encourage them to become volunteers. We are also working to ensure equal opportunities for all in line with our Equality and Diversity policy.

Confidentiality and data protection

Everyone involved with OBS has a right to confidentiality and we are committed to integrating the principles of confidentiality throughout the organisation. Some volunteers may have access to information of a confidential nature as part of their roles. Confidential information is held on trust and should not be discussed outside OBS or in general conversation and must not be used by OBS volunteers for their own purposes.

Personal details of staff, volunteers, supporters and service users should at all times be treated in the strictest of confidence and in line with Data Protection legislation as detailed in our Privacy Policy. Volunteers must be familiar with and adhere to it.

Rewarding, recognising and valuing volunteers

We could not deliver the work of OBS without volunteers and are committed to ensuring that volunteers and their contributions are rewarded, recognised and valued appropriately across the organisation.

Volunteers support service users in a wide variety of ways. We also understand that for many of our volunteers, who themselves are breastfeeding mothers or lactating parents, supporting and delivering the work of the charity as volunteers is second nature and they may not necessarily think of themselves as volunteers. With this in mind, OBS is committed to ensuring that rewarding and recognising volunteers is done in a sensitive and appropriate manner and recognises all contributions, no matter how big or small.

Moving on from a volunteer role

Most of our volunteers greatly enjoy their volunteering experience with us and some continue in their roles for a number of years. However, we recognise volunteers may wish to leave their roles for a wide variety of reasons. Equally, there may also be times when OBS will need to end a volunteer role because of changes in circumstance, funding or organisational structure.

We ask that volunteers, where possible, let their staff contact know when they would like to leave so that we can make any necessary adjustments. We greatly value the opportunity to learn from people who have volunteered with us so that we can continue to improve volunteer experience at OBS. Before volunteers leave they will be invited to complete a moving on form or questionnaire and will be given the opportunity to discuss any feedback they may have in confidence.

We also recognise that volunteers may need to take a break from volunteering at times due to certain circumstances, and we will support them to do so. Volunteers should let their staff contact know if they would like to take a break.

If OBS needs to end a volunteer role then the volunteer will be given as much notice as possible. They will have the opportunity to discuss how they feel about the situation with their staff contact and will be informed of any alternative volunteer roles available that they may wish to apply for.

Communications

Effective communication with volunteers is vital to the success of volunteer involvement. All communications with volunteers should encourage a culture of open dialogue and the sharing of information and ideas between volunteers, staff and service users. Volunteers will be kept up-to-date with any information relevant to their role by their staff contact. Important organisational developments and issues are communicated through a range of communication tools including email, our volunteer private Facebook group, session WhatsApp groups email, Mailchimp and our website.

OBS is committed to ensuring that all volunteers have the opportunity to feed in any ideas and suggestions in relation to their role or the work of the organisation, and to ensuring that volunteers receive feedback on ideas and suggestions submitted.

Reviewing this document

This policy will be reviewed every two years using the expertise of volunteers, staff and service users. The Charity Director will be responsible for leading the review and the Board of Trustees will have final sign-off. However, volunteers will be encouraged to inform the staff team of any feedback on their experience of using the policy on an on-going basis, so action can be taken where appropriate. If no immediate action is needed, comments will be kept and used at the annual policy review.

Supporting resources

The following supporting documents are available on our website

- [Volunteer role descriptions](#)
- [Volunteer equal opportunities form](#)
- [Volunteer application form](#)
- [Volunteer code of conduct](#)
- [Conflict of interest policy](#)
- [Equality and diversity policy](#)
- [Commercial activities policy](#)
- [Safeguarding policy](#)

Oxfordshire Breastfeeding Support

Date of Policy: May 2023

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