HACRO

62-72 Victoria Street

St Albans

Herts, AL1 3XH

Tel. 01727 854727

office@hacro.org.uk

VOLUNTEERING POLICY

5-7 rev1

Introduction

**HACRO**

HACRO is a Hertfordshire based charity that’s been working since 1974 for the care and resettlement of offenders. We believe in second chances. We help people who’ve been on the wrong side of the law to get their lives back on track focussing on Supporting Families and Employment. Keeping family relationships going and having a job mean a lower likelihood of reoffending. Our work depends on our fantastic group of volunteers, partners, donors and supporters.

## Aims of the Volunteering Policy: -

* To set out the principles and working practices for voluntary involvement in HACRO and ensure that best practice is followed;
* To provide a reference document which covers all aspects of HACRO’s relationship with its volunteers for everyone who is concerned with recruiting, supporting, developing and managing volunteers and promoting voluntary activities; and
* To ensure that volunteer involvement in HACRO is understood and accepted by Trustees, staff and fellow volunteers and that there is clarity about why we involve volunteers in our work.

**Volunteering** is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of the community, and can take many forms. It is undertaken by choice, without concern for financial gain.

### Core principles

* Everyone has the right to volunteer without experiencing discrimination and HACRO has a responsibility to treat volunteers fairly. Having a criminal conviction will not necessarily prevent you from volunteering for HACRO;
* Volunteering is a matter of free choice for there can be no compulsion to becoming a volunteer;
* Volunteering is a valuable and integral part of society and volunteers deserve recognition and support; and
* Volunteers assist in effecting social change and improving quality of life, playing an essential role in alleviating the effects of poverty, ignorance, inequality and injustice.

HACRO recognises the unique and special contribution that volunteers make to society and in particular to the work of this organisation and HMP The Mount. Volunteers bring a variety of skills and a fresh perspective, adding value to all activities and supporting our sustainability.

They perform a unique role which is quite different from that of paid workers. They can offer time and passion to a particular project, cause or issue, and by involving volunteers HACRO is able to build stronger links with the community in which it works, HMP The Mount, Probation services and other organisations. Volunteers act as ambassadors, promoting the organisation’s activities and services.

**HACRO**

* does not introduce volunteers to directly replace paid staff;
* expects that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work; and
* recognises that volunteering is a two-way process, with volunteers giving their time to help, and in return receiving the gratitude of those they serve.

**HACRO’s involvement with volunteers covers 6 areas:**

1. **Planning for Volunteer involvement**

HACRO recognises the importance of planning. Volunteer involvement requires the investment of time and resources, particularly for new volunteers.

* Volunteer tasks are developed imaginatively with short term and ongoing opportunities. (for some roles this is done in cooperation with HMP The Mount)
* Role descriptions are produced and volunteer tasks are thought out thoroughly before advertising for help.
* When planning new projects, volunteer’s expenses are included in budgets so that volunteer activities can be appropriately supported.
* Policies which cover volunteer activities are regularly reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

1. **Recruitment and selection**

The recruitment of volunteers follows good practice guidelines.

* Volunteering is open to everyone (over the age of 18) and HACRO is committed to equal opportunities;
* Volunteers are recruited using a variety of advertising methods;
* Potential volunteers are contacted promptly by email or phone and recruitment processes are fair, efficient and consistent;
* Volunteers are required to complete a simple application form;
* All prospective volunteers are interviewed to find out what they would like to do, their skills, suitability and how best their potential might be realised;
* HACRO will endeavour to ensure that a volunteer is suitable for a particular role. Where there is a choice of volunteers for a role, HACRO will select the candidate based on merit. This might be their relevant experience or knowledge, or previous commitment to the organisation.
* If the volunteer, or HACRO, decides that the volunteer task is inappropriate / unsuitable for whatever reason, feedback and discussions include the opportunity to explore other options, wherever possible;
* Volunteers will be selected and screened for suitability through one or more of the following methods, depending on the intended role:
  + Interview with HACRO’s volunteer Co-ordinator;
  + Interview with Business and Community Engagement Manager for MHP The Mount;
  + References - all volunteers are required to give names of 2 people who can be approached for personal references. Acceptable referees do not include family members, and should have known the potential volunteer for at least 1 year
  + Trial period of 3 months, if a volunteer doesn’t not ‘work’ during this period (making an assessment of suitability possible) then a review should be held with a HACRO representative to consider either an extension (up to further 2 months) or to cease the volunteer agreement.
* DBS check / full prison vetting will be required (this is at no financial cost to a volunteer).

**3. Induction**

The initial welcome and induction that new volunteers receive is key to their retention:

* An information pack will be provided for new volunteers;
* All volunteers will receive an induction relative to their role so that they are prepared for the tasks allocated to them;
* All volunteers will be given a named person to contact;
* HACRO will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisation and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to our work and fulfil their potential; and
* Volunteers are bound by the same standards confidentiality as paid staff and are required to sign a confidentiality statement.

**4. Support, Safety and Expenses**

All volunteers will have a named person as their main point of contact. They will be provided with appropriate support, which will offer opportunities for feedback on progress, discussion of future developments and the chance to air any problems.

* Volunteers are covered by insurance and are included in health and safety policies;
* HACRO has a Health and Safety Policy and a separate policy to deal with Lone Working;

##### Out of pocket expenses are met wherever possible and practicalities of expense reimbursement are laid out in the HACRO Expenses Policy;

* Volunteers not wishing to claim their expenses may donate them back to the organisation under Gift Aid, if relevant. Expenses, other than for travel/phone etc. may be reimbursed, providing approval is sought in advance. All volunteers are required to itemise and submit expense claims, promptly, on a simple, standard form;
* In some circumstances, expenses will be paid in advance with the approval by the volunteer’s line manager or a member of the Board of Trustees.
* Rates of reimbursement (e.g. for mileage) will be set and reviewed regularly by the Board of Trustees in line with Government guidelines.
* HACRO will aim to identify and solve problems at the earliest possible stage. A procedure covers complaints and potential harassment.

**5. Training and personal development**

HACRO recognises that volunteers’ motivation for volunteering may change over time and the skills they develop in their volunteering may change what they want to do.

* Training relevant to a volunteer’s roles will be provided;
* Volunteers motivations are met with appropriate tasks and those with extra support needs provided wherever possible;
* HACRO recognises that volunteers require work satisfaction and personal development and will seek to help volunteers satisfy these needs; as well as providing the training for them to perform their tasks effectively
* Volunteer support/supervision sessions establish volunteers’ satisfaction with their current roles and identify training needs and suggested changes to the role.

**6. Involving, rewarding and recognising volunteers**

#### Volunteers contribute to decision making and are fully involved in the organisation’s activities;

#### Team meetings are held which include paid staff and volunteers;

* Newsletters/email updates keep volunteers up to date with the organisation’s activities
* Volunteers receive appropriate recognition for their efforts.

**We do not forget the value to our volunteers of a simple thank you!**

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| **Policy Review Record** | | |
| **Review Date** | **Reviewed By** | **Comment** |
| 25/06/2020 | Sean Bolton | New Policy |
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