



Code of Conduct for Volunteers and Individuals providing services

Policy Statement

New Beginnings Reading aims to provide outstanding services to our guests, as well as our donors and any partner agencies. This commitment should lie at the very centre of all our activities.

Our ability to continue our work and develop and improve facilities and services for our guests depends very much on maintaining a respected and positive profile. Any conduct which damages New Beginnings Reading reputation would therefore threaten the services we provide to guests. All must ensure that their words and actions do not bring New Beginnings Reading into disrepute either internally or externally.

Everyone associated with New Beginnings Reading is expected to be committed to New Beginnings Reading's aims and objectives. Any who attend external meetings or activities on behalf of New Beginnings Reading are expected to promote the work and policies of the organisation in a positive manner.

The Code of Conduct and other policies can never cover all circumstances that may arise. Emphasis therefore is placed on the standards of performance and behaviour which are expected rather than making a list of rules of possible breaches which is not exhaustive.

All are expected to respect the value of service user involvement which is at the heart of New Beginnings Reading values. Volunteers are responsible for ensuring that guest participation is always managed in a professional manner. All are expected to contribute in a professional, positive manner, supporting the delivery of related policies and activities to integrate positive guest participation into our working practices.

Purpose

The conduct of all at New Beginnings Reading must be of a high standard. The purpose of this Code of Conduct is therefore to ensure everyone has been provided with clear guidance on expected standards and responsibilities so that any elements of doubt can be avoided.

Scope

The Code of Conduct sets out the expectations of New Beginnings Reading on all those who work for it – Committee members, volunteers, students, service providers including all those who visit the service on an occasional basis such as visiting speakers - hereinafter referred to as "volunteers".

Objectives of New Beginnings Reading

Volunteers should always uphold and seek to achieve the objectives of New Beginnings Reading. The conduct of volunteers should reflect the values of New Beginnings Reading

and the high-quality standards New Beginnings Reading is striving for, in its work with guests, and in their dealings with all those who work for and with the organisation.

This encompasses an understanding of diversity and awareness in relation to race, religion, culture, gender, class, disability, sexual orientation, age and HIV status, and New Beginnings Reading is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all volunteers and guests.

Volunteers must follow the policies and procedures of New Beginnings Reading and must not allow personal, political or religious opinions to interfere with their ability to perform their duties or maintain impartiality.

New Beginnings Reading Values Rights and Responsibilities - Guest Rights

New Beginnings Reading expect all guests we work with to be treated with dignity and respect.

Volunteers shall not discriminate against any guest on the grounds of race, religion, culture, gender, class, disability, sexual orientation, age and HIV status.

Volunteers shall ensure guest rights are upheld. Guests should be supported to raise any concerns about a New Beginnings Reading service, volunteers, members or policy that they feel is not operating at an appropriate standard. When complaints are received volunteers should acknowledge them, listen carefully and advise the guest of the New Beginnings Reading Complaints Procedure.

Welfare of Guests

Volunteers shall ensure that in any activity as a member of a group or organisation, they will not directly endanger, or cause damage to the welfare and well-being of any guest.

Confidentiality

All information about current or ex-guests obtained by any individual associated with New Beginnings Reading is confidential to the organisation. Such information must not be disclosed to anyone outside the organisation without the consent of the guest concerned other than in exceptional circumstances, as identified in our Confidentiality Policy, and with the agreement of a member of New Beginnings Reading management.

However, information obtained about any guest cannot remain confidential to one individual but must be properly reported to the volunteers as a team or organiser of the project. In doing this, volunteers should be aware that personal information about guests should not be widely distributed throughout the organisation, especially to those who do not need to know the information.

There may be circumstances in which volunteers obtain information about New Beginnings Reading guests through their work for other organisations. Where this information is relevant to New Beginnings Reading work with that guest, the information should be shared with the agreement of the other project or team concerned.

Similarly, information obtained about guests whilst working at New Beginnings Reading should only be shared with other agencies in accordance with New Beginnings Reading procedures for the exchange of such information.

Some information about volunteers may end up in the public domain and could become known to guests. However, volunteers should strive to keep personal information to an

absolute minimum and have respect for the confidentiality of their colleagues, family and friends to protect their personal lives.

Professional Conduct and Integrity

Volunteers shall avoid any act which may bring New Beginnings Reading into disrepute or diminish the trust and confidence of public stakeholders or guests.

Volunteers should maintain appropriate professional relationships with colleagues. Where volunteers feel a colleague's behaviour, competence or integrity is brought into question, they should discuss this with one of the organisers. If the concern is with the organiser, then the matter should be referred to another organiser.

It is the responsibility of volunteers to ensure they maintain a professional relationship with guests and identify if and when that relationship no longer serves the aims and objectives of the organisation.

It is the responsibility of volunteers to be aware of the social, legal and professional consequences of any act requested by guests but which may be professionally, morally, legally or ethically questionable, or that conflict with New Beginnings Reading vision, mission and values.

New Beginnings Reading guests all have differing levels of vulnerability, and volunteers must be mindful that guests may be considered so up until at least 2 years from leaving the services of New Beginnings Reading

Unofficial contact or any form of personal relationship (including sexual) with guests known to volunteer is not permitted at all and may result in immediate suspension from duties whilst the matter is investigated. Chance encounters with guests known to volunteers in a social setting should be reported to the line manager at the first opportunity.

Volunteers who find they have formed a personal attachment, or when relationships develop (either knowingly or unknowingly) with an ex guest (considered so up until 2 years from leaving New Beginnings Reading services), must inform one of the organisers, who will discuss it with a senior manager. This will ensure that any potential conflict of interest is managed appropriately for all parties.

Volunteers may not lend or borrow money to/from guests known to them, make or receive gifts from/to them, ask them to carry out private work or services for them or purchase items from them. Cards or gifts of token or limited value, may be exchanged on birthdays or similar events with the knowledge of the organisers and volunteer's team. If you are unsure, please liaise with the organisers.

Volunteers are not permitted to take or use donated goods without permission from one of the organisers; all donations of goods should be notified to the organisers.

It is important that volunteers are reliable, punctual and always behave with integrity. Volunteers should ensure their appearance is professional and appropriate for the work environment and maintaining professional relationships.

The use of violence is unacceptable. If volunteers are faced with a violent situation only reasonable restraint may be used in order to protect self and/or others as appropriate.

Volunteers may not consume drugs or alcohol with guests known to them at any time nor may they carry out their duties whilst under the influence of alcohol, drugs or other substances.

Use of computers must be appropriate and in support of their job role/activity. Access to inappropriate, illegal or pornographic sites is not permitted under any circumstances.

Volunteers should inform one of the organisers about any personal difficulties that might affect their ability to volunteer competently and safely.

Volunteers should seek assistance from the organiser if they do not feel able or adequately prepared to carry out any aspect of their work, or they feel they do not have adequate resources, or are not sure how to proceed in a work matter.

Dress Code

All volunteers should be dressed appropriately when on duty. If they are not, volunteers may inadvertently promote negative behaviour in guests and detract from the professional relationship volunteers need to maintain with guests. This may put other volunteers at risk. Any member of volunteers who is unsure of what is appropriate should approach their line manager.

If necessary, the line manager will approach the worker to discuss the matter and may ask the member of volunteers not to wear the particular item(s) at work. Refusal to comply with this request may result in disciplinary action being taken.

New Beginnings Reading Public Profile

Volunteers are expected to be committed to and have respect for the mission, vision, values and objectives of New Beginnings Reading and promote the work and policies of the organisation in internal and external contacts

No volunteers should give information about New Beginnings Reading, its work or guests to the media or permit them onto New Beginnings Reading premises, without agreement from one of the organisers.

No volunteers shall share information about New Beginnings Reading on any social media platform including but not limited to Facebook or Twitter without the prior consent of the organisers.

No volunteer shall post information or photographs of guests on any social media platform in any circumstance. No volunteer shall create written or printed information concerning New Beginnings Reading or include any information on guests or photographs of guests.

It may be that on occasion, the organisers take photographs and make posts on the organisation's website or Facebook page, but this will be with the express permission of any guest involved. These posts should not be duplicated on any other website or social media platform without the express permission of the organisers

Finance

New Beginnings Reading is committed to maintaining the highest standard of financial probity. We have a duty to use our financial resources properly and effectively.

Volunteers must ensure that they undertake all their activities with transparency, honesty and integrity. Volunteers must not misuse New Beginnings Reading resources.

Examples of misuse of resources (this list is not exhaustive)

- Regularly failing to use cost effective methods of travel
- Excessive personal use of internet, telephone systems

- Failure to protect assets given to volunteers for them to do their work (e.g. office furniture and equipment, phones, computers)
- Wasteful expenditure of items/services

All financial transactions should be properly authorised and recorded; unnecessary or wasteful expenditure should be minimised. Wherever possible, external receipts for expenditure should be obtained.

All financial donations should be notified to the Organisers who will instruct you whether to bank the money or send it to them.

All fees, payments and gifts received from external sources by any individual working for New Beginnings Reading that are made as a result of that person's connection with the organisation, should be given to New Beginnings Reading unless otherwise authorised by the Chair.

New Beginnings Reading has a Whistleblowing Policy which enables anyone to raise a concern about alleged malpractice at an early stage and in the right way.

Personal Security

Volunteers should always be aware that they are exposed to potential violence/aggression from guests. All volunteers should ensure that they do not put themselves at risk unnecessarily. In potential difficult situations volunteers should ensure that a colleague is with them. Similarly, volunteers should be aware that the clothing they wear eg scarves, large earrings etc could be used to cause them injury in certain situations.

All keys must always be kept secure. Offices must be kept locked when no clients are in them. Volunteers are responsible for New Beginnings Reading equipment they may be using with clients and must look after it accordingly.

No member of staff or volunteer should use the telephone for personal calls, unless in an emergency.

Owner: Chairperson

Date of last review: October 2020

Date of next review: October 2021