Volunteering for everyone standard

Volunteering guidance note

Ensuring a safe and inclusive environment for everyone to volunteer

When volunteering, we should all expect to be treated with respect, dignity and kindness by other volunteers and Walk Wheel Cycle Trust employees. This is a value which we expect everyone to support.

Volunteering is and should be for everyone. It should be a space where we feel safe and able to give time to a cause we care about in our local community and wider society.

This standard supports everyone to have a greater understanding of:

- The part we can all play in ensuring everyone feels safe, welcome and included when volunteering with Walk Wheel Cycle Trust.
- The values and behaviours we wish to uphold across Walk Wheel Cycle Trust volunteering – how to recognise when behaviour is unacceptable and needs addressing.

Everyone involved in volunteering is expected to be an active supporter of this standard and apply it when needed. This way, we can all play our part in preventing and addressing unacceptable behaviour that can have, or is having, a negative and serious impact on people.

By being a supporter of this standard, you are also actively helping to make it easier for everyone to walk, wheel and cycle. You are enabling greater equity and inclusion within our society and your local community.

Our values

We are bringing our values to life by defining minimum standards and behaviours that we should expect from each other:

Always learning

- **Be curious and listen actively** – ask questions, explore different ways of looking at things, challenge assumptions.
- **Learn from successes and setbacks** - continuously learn from actions and outcomes and share this with others
- **Explore, innovate and improve** - innovate, seek to continuously improve, try new approaches, test ideas and bring the outside world in, learning from others.
- **Build a growth mindset** - reflect, give and welcome constructive feedback and take responsibility for personal development.

Championing equity

- **Embed equity from the start** - learn what equity means for our work, advocate for it, and make it an integral part of who we are and what we do; challenge our own frames of reference.
- **Engage actively** - value diverse perspectives; empower and encourage a culture where everyone has a voice.
- **Treat everyone fairly and respectfully** - consider others' needs and aspirations when acting; create safe spaces for everyone to do their best.
- **Adopt inclusive ways of working** - consider others' needs and use simple, clear approaches when communicating and engaging.

Taking ownership

- **Know my role** - be clear on the part I play and take responsibility for delivering it; ensure actions and decisions align with our strategic goals.

- **Act with clarity, courage and care** - take initiative, balance risk and opportunity, be empowered.
- **Create a healthy working environment** - take pride in our work, recognise own and others' contributions and achievements, empower self and others to succeed.
- **Tackle things that get in the way** - embrace change, act to make things better.

Delivering together

- **Communicate to break down silos** - forge relationships, listen to others' roles and experiences and ask "who else needs to know?"
- **Build trust** - act with transparency and integrity, value others' perspectives.
- **Share what works** - share knowledge and expertise, identify barriers, collaborate to find solutions.
- **Celebrate collective success** - recognise and celebrate great work that is in line with our strategy.

Our expectations of each other

We expect everyone who takes part in volunteering activities to help develop and ensure, safe, welcoming and inclusive spaces for volunteering. This standard and our expectations of each other, will help to establish both the creation and ongoing nurturing of this culture. It will help to guide everyone, ensuring people are heard and respected, and feel safe and included.

We all come from different backgrounds and have different world views. This is what makes volunteering amazing. It can bring people from all walks of life together. However, this also makes it even more important to be aware of our own assumptions and mindsets when it comes to each other.

We are all personally responsible for our own behaviour, everyone can therefore expect that:

We are friendly, courteous and kind to each other.

We are open-minded and treat everyone with dignity and respect.

- By having an awareness of tone and body language when interacting with people.
- By respecting each other's expressed physical and emotional boundaries.
- By always getting explicit verbal consent before touching someone.
- By showing particular care when communicating personal views in a volunteering context. (This could be in meetings, on social media, or by email, text or any other communication method).

We don't make assumptions about each other.

Including, but not limited to:

- **How people identify** - If we're not sure of someone's pronouns (he, she, they) we are not afraid to ask. When we're unsure, we refer to the person by name or by the pronoun 'they'.
- **Individual needs** - Before starting a piece of work we ask what people's preferences or needs are. Alternatively, we prepare people for the volunteering day or task ahead by delivering a clear briefing.
- **Personal abilities** - Many people may not be comfortable with sharing if they have any hidden disabilities or conditions. So, we are sensitive and proactive to enable people to feel included, whether or not they decide to share personal information of this nature.

Recognising our impact on others

We care about the impact that a person's behaviour and words have on other people whilst volunteering. For this reason, our focus is on the impact of the

behaviour, which may be unwelcome or unwanted by the recipient. This is regardless of whether we were joking, acting intentionally or unintentionally.

If someone is offended by our behaviour or something we've said, the impact may be very upsetting for them. We need to respect and acknowledge this.

Apologising to the person who has felt the negative impact is the first expected response.

We do not accept abusive or discriminatory behaviours

We consider abusive and discriminatory behaviours to be a violation of the Volunteering for everyone standard and our expectations of each other.

Abusive and discriminatory behaviours include the behaviours detailed below.

Abusive behaviour includes any kind of bullying, harassment or threats.

Bullying is a behaviour that may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting to another person. It is an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate or injure the recipient. Bullying can be physical (e.g. hitting and pushing) and non-verbal (e.g. excluding and isolating).

Harassment is the systematic or continued, unwanted or annoying actions of one person or a group towards another person or group. It includes making threats and demands.

Discrimination is treating a person or a group of people differently. Typically, the person who is being discriminatory treats someone in a worse way than they would someone else in a comparable situation.

People may be treated differently because of who they are, how they look, or their background. This can include (but is not limited to) discrimination based on race, place of origin, ethnic origin, ancestry, nationality, citizenship, political affiliation, religious affiliation, belief, faith (or absence of), sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, partner status, family relationship, economic status,

identity, disability, medical condition(s), pregnancy, maternity, record of offences etc.

How to recognise unacceptable behaviour

We have some examples in our **Examples of unacceptable behaviour document.** Bullying, harassment, discrimination or threats may not necessarily happen face to face.

Unacceptable behaviour can take place via written communications, images, videos, emails, text messages, social media, or over the phone. It can be physical and non-verbal. It may be witnessed by others, rather than the person it has happened to.

Nobody should ever tolerate or accept discrimination, harassment, bullying, abuse or threats against themselves or anyone else whilst volunteering.

How to report unacceptable behaviour

Please read our Reporting a concern document and follow its instructions to let us know what you have experienced or witnessed. You can let us know anonymously or speak directly to your Volunteering Development Manager, the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust employee who is your main point of contact, or another Walk Wheel Cycle Trust employee.

Please also feel free to let us know about an incident or behaviour that has already been dealt with amongst yourselves.

If you have any questions about the Volunteering for everyone standard, please don't hesitate to contact the Volunteering Team at volunteers-uk@walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk

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