

Battle Scars CIO Volunteer Policy

Policy information	
Organisation	Battle Scars
Scope of policy	Applies to all volunteer involvement in the organisation
Policy operational date (original)	25/01/19
Policy prepared by	Jenny Groves – CEO
Date approved by Board	15/01/24
Reviewed on Reviewed by	06/01/24 Jenny Groves - CEO
Amended	No
Policy review date	By 31/01/26 Every 2 years
Distributing	This policy will be available on the Battle Scars website. It will be a requirement for all trustees and staff to read the policy after appointment or after its review. A summary of all relevant policies will be included in the volunteer handbook with clear signposting to the full text. Volunteers will be kept up to date with any changes that might affect their role.
Introduction	
Purpose of policy	The purpose of this policy is to inform volunteers of their rights and responsibilities as a Battle Scars volunteer as well as what Battle Scars will provide for them to support them in their role.
Volunteer involvement	In line with this mission Battle Scars seeks to involve volunteers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure our services meet the needs of our service users • provide new skills and perspectives • increase our contact with the local communities we serve • increase the volunteers’ self-esteem and confidence • further the Battle Scars’ work according to the Battle Scars objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Holding survivor led support groups for persons affected by self-harm and anybody interested in understanding self-harm; ○ Advance the education of the general public in all areas relating to self-harm; ○ Provide training and practical advice to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Professionals, staff and volunteers of other organizations (public, voluntary and private sector) who deal with persons who self-harm; (b) Parents of school age children, young people and adults who self-harm; (c) Anyone wishing to attend the training or trying to understand self-harm; and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In any such ways as the trustees see fit in furtherance of said objects.
What we offer	<p>We offer purpose to those who lack it, friendship, encouragement, full support in each role and opportunities to develop skills and increase confidence.</p> <p>Battle Scars will provide the volunteer with a reference after a minimum of 3 months of working with us. If the volunteer has had very little involvement, Battle Scars reserve the right to refuse to provide a reference.</p>
Principles	<p>This Volunteering Policy is underpinned by the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Battle Scars will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to the Battle Scars' work. ● Battle Scars recognises that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training for them to do their work effectively. ● Battle Scars does not aim to introduce volunteers to replace paid staff. ● Battle Scars expects that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work
Practice guidelines	
Safer recruitment policy statement – recruiting staff and volunteers in roles working with children	<p><i>See Safeguarding Children Policy</i></p> <p>Battle Scars is committed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● safeguarding and protecting all children and young people by implementing robust safer recruitment practices ● identifying and rejecting applicants who are unsuitable to work with children and young people ● responding to concerns about the suitability of applicants during the recruitment process ● responding to concerns about the suitability of employees and volunteers once they have begun their role ● ensuring all new staff and volunteers participate in an induction which includes child protection
Recruitment	<p>We will use appropriate means to advertise for volunteers that take into account the principles of our Equality and Diversity policy.</p> <p>The applicants will have to complete an application form – help can be given with this if necessary. Considering the nature of this organisation, volunteers will be asked about their mental (as well as their physical) health to ensure appropriate work is assigned to them that will not have a negative effect on their health and to make sure they are not put in situations which could be damaging to them.</p> <p>For certain roles specific experience may be required or, at least, willingness to attend relevant training.</p> <p>Minimum criteria for applicants are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ability to show commitment to equal opportunities and a non-judgemental approach;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being enthusiastic about furthering the Battle Scars aims and objectives; • being reliable; • being friendly; • ability to work as part of a team and/or under own initiative (depending on role). <p>All prospective volunteers will be informally interviewed by the volunteer manager to find out what they would like to do, their skills, suitability, how best their potential might be realised and any particular needs they may have. If suitable, references asked for will be taken up. <i>See following section for information on references.</i></p> <p>A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be undertaken depending on the volunteer role (<i>see DBS Policy</i>).</p>
<p>References</p>	<p>At the application stage we will ask for 2 referees willing to provide a personal reference. These referees need to have known the applicant for 2 years or longer and must be other than family. In cases where the applicant cannot provide us with 2 such referees (for example, a refugee or fleeing domestic violence) they are asked to contact Battle Scars. Each case will be reviewed individually and we will consider accepting references from a referee who has known the applicant for less than 2 years or not requesting references at all. In these cases, the trial period will be extended and ID or documents must be presented at the induction.</p> <p>References may be followed up if there is a need for clarification or further information.</p> <p>If the volunteer is well known to the CEO or the volunteer manager and for longer than 2 years, they can provide one of the references. Exceptions can be made as in the above paragraph.</p> <p>All actions will be documented and kept in the volunteer file.</p> <p>It's optional for Facebook group admins/moderators to become registered volunteers. If they chose to do so, no references will be required.</p>
<p>Volunteer agreements & voluntary work outlines</p>	<p>Each volunteer will agree to a written outline of the specific work they will be undertaking or the range of work that will be offered them as part of a volunteer agreement (“volunteer role description”).</p> <p>In addition, this agreement will establish what Battle Scars undertakes to provide them.</p> <p>This document is <u>not</u> a contract; Battle Scars has no intention of creating a contract with any volunteer. There will be an option to revise the volunteer role description during supervision or earlier if required.</p> <p>Each volunteer will also receive a Volunteer Handbook.</p>
<p>Expenses</p>	<p>All volunteers will have their travel and other expenses reimbursed when acting on behalf of the organisation. Such expenses need to be agreed in principle in advance by the trustees and/or the CEO (or the volunteer manager) and authorised by the treasurer upon presentation of a fully completed expenses claim form with all relevant receipts.</p>

	<p>Volunteers will be provided with an expenses form either printed or by email (whichever they prefer) and will be reimbursed by direct bank payment (BACS), by cheque or in cases of small amounts, from petty cash upon presentation of receipt(s). Expenses can be claimed for up to 3 months after the event.</p>
Induction & training	<p>For certain roles and in certain cases there will be a trial period. This will be explained at the induction and clearly indicated in the volunteer role description.</p> <p>All volunteers will receive an induction into Battle Scars and their own area of work by the volunteer leader or the volunteer manager and their Volunteer Handbook. Training will be provided as appropriate. For certain roles training is mandatory (for example, for the group facilitator role the volunteer must complete group facilitator training). All volunteers working directly with adults and/or children and young people need to attend safeguarding training. Additional training will be provided if deemed beneficial for the volunteer and/or the organisation. Battle Scars will suggest role-relevant or skill-developing training to the volunteers and will encourage them to undertake such training but the final decision will rest with each volunteer.</p>
Supervision & support	<p><i>See Supervision Policy.</i></p> <p>All volunteers will have a named person as their main point of contact. This could be a volunteer leader, the volunteer manager, a trained member of the board of trustees or the CEO who oversees the volunteer development programme.</p> <p>They will be provided with regular supervision to feedback on progress, discuss future development and air any problems and concerns.</p> <p>Attending supervision is mandatory. Supervision will take place every 3 or 6 months depending on role – this will be clearly stated on the role description. Notes will be taken, agreed with the volunteer, who will be offered a copy, and filed. They will be archived if the volunteer no longer works for Battle Scars and destroyed 3 years after the volunteer has stopped working for us as per our Data Protection policy.</p> <p>Other team members will offer support to the volunteers.</p>
Exceptions	<p>A simplified application form will be in use for certain roles (e.g. when recruiting translators from abroad) where some fields will be omitted, e.g. emergency contact.</p> <p>In some cases (e.g. when recruiting volunteers who reside abroad) it will be impractical to obtain references. This part of the recruitment process will be omitted but the 3-month trial period will apply.</p> <p>We will not insist on applicants supplying emergency contact details if, for whatever reason, the applicant lacks such a person.</p> <p>In cases of successful applications from refugees who may be unable to provide us with referees who have known them for a minimum of 2 years we will recruit them without references and a trial period will apply irrelevant of role.</p> <p>If it's not possible to do a DBS check, these volunteers will be unable to take on roles where a DBS check is necessary.</p>
The volunteer's commitment	<p>Volunteers are expected to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • show commitment to the Battle Scars aims and ethos;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • follow the Battle Scars confidentiality rules; • act according to our policies; • be non-judgemental, respectful, honest, truthful, courteous and conduct themselves appropriately for the function they are carrying out; • keep themselves safe while on Battle Scars business involving others (i.e. events, presentations, groups); • ask for help if needed as early as possible while performing their tasks; • be presentable and maintain a high level of personal hygiene when carrying out non-home-based duties on behalf of Battle Scars.
The volunteer's voice	<p>Volunteers are encouraged to express their views about matters concerning Battle Scars and its work at any time, not just during supervision, which will be fed into the general meetings. They will also be encouraged to attend the Annual General Meetings to express their views.</p> <p>Volunteers can be members of the organisation if they choose to apply as well as hold the position of trustee by putting themselves forward for election at the AGM provided there are vacancies.</p>
Insurance	All volunteers are covered by the Battle Scars' public liability insurance policy whilst they are on the premises or engaged in any non-home-based work on Battle Scars' behalf.
Protecting vulnerable adults	<p>Battle Scars are committed to protecting vulnerable adults according to the Battle Scars <i>Protecting Vulnerable Adults policy</i> available on our website.</p> <p>DBS checks will be carried out according to our <i>DBS policy</i>.</p>
Safeguarding children	<p>Battle Scars are committed to act on any safeguarding children concerns according to the Battle Scars <i>Safeguarding Children policy</i> available on our website.</p> <p>DBS checks will be carried out according to our <i>DBS policy</i>.</p>
Health & safety	<p>Volunteers are covered by the Battle Scars <i>Health and Safety Policy</i> available on our website.</p> <p>Volunteers will be expected to take all necessary precautions to protect themselves. Risk assessments will be carried out before any activity and approved by a trustee, the CEO or the volunteer manager.</p>
Personal safety	<i>See Personal Safety & Boundaries Policy.</i>
Confidentiality	<p>All volunteers, trustees and staff must comply with the Battle Scars <i>Confidentiality policy</i> available on our website.</p> <p>Learning acquired (for example, from the support groups) can be shared without identifying the persons it came from.</p> <p>All data will be kept according to our <i>Data Protection policy</i> available on our website.</p>
Equality & Diversity	<p>Battle Scars operates an <i>Equality and Diversity policy</i> available on our website.</p> <p>Volunteers will be expected to have an understanding of and commitment to our <i>Equality and Diversity policy</i>.</p>
Problem solving	We aim to identify and solve problems at the earliest possible stage. It is important that Battle Scars is able to maintain its agreed standards of service to our service users and it is also

	<p>important that volunteers should enjoy making their contribution to this service. If the volunteer does not meet the Battle Scars standards or is having difficulty completing their agreed tasks it is imperative the volunteer and volunteer leader or manager meet to discuss the concerns. All possible support will be provided to the volunteer to assist them in their task or in raising their standards. If this is unachievable the volunteer may prefer to be assigned different tasks, and their role description will be amended by mutual agreement. Otherwise, the volunteer may quit or Battle Scars may have to stop using the volunteer's services. At all times the volunteer will be able to freely state their case and can have a friend accompany them.</p> <p>A procedure has been drawn up for dealing with complaints either by or about volunteers available on our website.</p>
Termination of volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A volunteer can stop volunteering at any time but we do ask they notify the volunteer manager and give as much notice as possible (especially when they have regular commitments). • Volunteering will be terminated if the volunteer repeatedly acted against Battle Scars policies. • Battle Scars may have to ask a volunteer to stop volunteering if they have tried to do the work assigned to them in a public place or at a group or similar while intoxicated, especially if there has been more than one incident. • Battle Scars will assume that a volunteer no longer wishes to continue volunteering if after numerous attempts to make contact using more than one contact method (email, text, phone, via Messenger etc.) over a period of at least 3 months the volunteer has not responded. These attempts must be recorded. In this case the volunteer will be considered to be "on hold" for up to a year in case they re-establish contact and wish to take on their volunteering duties again. After one year, if there has been no further contact, it will be assumed that the volunteer will not be returning. Their file will be destroyed 3 years after the volunteer went "on hold".
Policy review	
Responsibility	It is the responsibility of the CEO to review this policy unless the task has been delegated to an appropriate volunteer or employee before the policy review date.
Procedure	All volunteers and employees can have input in this policy's review via their supervision.
Timing	The review must be completed within a month of the review date.