



quo vadis trust

# Volunteer Handbook

“No one is more cherished in this world than someone who lightens the burden of another. Thank you for sharing your priceless time with our organisation.”

Document	<b>Volunteer Handbook</b>		
Document Number	<b>HRVB01</b>		
Author	<b>HR Manager, Aline Duraid, Sarah Hannell, Ingrid Tennessee</b>		
Version	<b>2.3</b>		
Review date	<b>March 2020</b>	Next Review	<b>March 2021</b>
Related Documents	<b>Staff Handbook</b>		
Note	<b>All QVT Policies &amp; Procedure are reviewed annually, more frequently, or as necessary</b>		

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## Introduction

Thank you for offering to give some of your time and experience to assist us. We rely on volunteers to help us achieve our objectives and we intend to support you in achieving your objectives as well.

QVT is committed to providing the highest possible standard of support and housing for its client group. In order to achieve this and maintain standards it is imperative that staff and volunteers are fully committed and engaged with our ideals and aspirations, and have the skills to carry out their designated roles.

We provide equal opportunities and are committed to the principle of equality regardless of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, political opinion or affiliation, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, or disability. We will apply policies that are fair, equitable and consistent with people's skills and abilities. Volunteers can assist by supporting us in implementing such policies.

Please study this handbook carefully. It contains some simple guidelines and helpful information, and if you have any questions please feel free to speak to your Supervisor.

## General Rules and Procedures

### Changes in Personal Details

We may need to contact you in an emergency situation so please notify us of any change of address, emergency contact etc.

### Statements to the Media

Volunteers must not make any statements to reporters from newspapers, radio, television etc. in respect of our organisation. Any enquiries should be directed to your Supervisor.

### Protective Clothing

Where appropriate you may be loaned protective clothing. This must be returned to us after use.

### Volunteers' Property

No liability is accepted for any loss of, or damage to, property brought onto our premises, or our clients' premises. You are advised not to take any personal items of value to work or to leave any items at work overnight.

### Standards of dress

You may come into contact with clients and members of the public, so it is important that you present yourself in an acceptable manner in terms of appearance and standards of dress. You should wear clothes appropriate to your tasks, and they should be kept clean and tidy at all times. No flip-flops or open-toe sandals, tank tops or mini-skirts will be allowed in the workplace.

### Time commitment

If you are unable to attend any of the times you have been scheduled to help us, due to ill health or other commitments, please let your Supervisor know as soon as possible as we may need to make arrangements to cover this.

## Expenses

You are entitled to claim the following expenses incurred whilst volunteering with us:

- Travel costs: if you drive you can claim mileage allowance of up to 45p per mile for every work trip. You can claim up to £8 for travel per day.
- Meal costs to a maximum of £5 per day provided your volunteering duties are at least four hours per day around meal times.

Expenses must be claimed on an expense claim form and be supported by receipts, ticket stubs or other evidence wherever practical. We only reimburse actual expenses incurred. Expense templates are available from your supervisor.

## State benefits

Voluntary work may affect your eligibility for state benefits. Your Supervisor and QVT Benefits Officer will support you to liaise with the DWP regarding your benefits.

## Volunteering benefits

As part of volunteering with us, you will be granted a food voucher that will provide a discount on food you may need for lunches.

## Record checks

Because this position involves the care of vulnerable adults, employment is also dependent on the following:

1. Your written consent to obtaining an enhanced disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or an approved umbrella body.
2. Such disclosure being acceptable to us.
3. Proof of identity - Birth certificate, passport or a new style driving licence and one further proof of address such as bank statement or utility bill.
4. Satisfactory written references.
5. Signed application form, completed medical questionnaire, next of kin details and acceptance of volunteer handbook

## Insurance

During your time with us you are covered under our insurance policies against any injury you suffer or cause while volunteering.

## Housekeeping

Both from the point of view of safety and of appearance, work areas must be kept clean and tidy at all times.

## Telephone calls

Incoming personal telephone calls at the place of volunteering are allowed only in the case of emergency. Outgoing calls can be made with the permission of your Supervisor. Personal mobile phones should be switched off during your shift, and kept in a safe place. The company will not be responsible for any damage to or loss of any personal property no matter what the cause.

## Buying or selling of goods

You are not allowed to buy or sell goods on your own behalf on our premises or during your working hours.

## Collections

Collections on our premises are only allowed with our permission. If you wish to obtain sponsorship, conduct raffles, request donations etc. for a good cause then please discuss this with your Supervisor.

## Training

We only provide the training necessary for the tasks you have volunteered for and any further volunteering activities it is agreed you can undertake.

## Problems

Should you have any problems related to your treatment by us, our employees, other volunteers or the people we serve, please raise these with your Supervisor who will attempt to resolve any issue. If you are unhappy with the outcome you may raise the issue with your Supervisor's superior.

## Supervisions and support

Supervisions will be arranged and conducted on a regular basis with your allocated Supervisors as agreed. You will also have regular meetings with them to discuss any problems or performance issues.

## Standards

Volunteers are expected to behave responsibly whilst working with us. Normally we would bring any difficulties to your attention informally, however, the behaviour listed below would result in our refusal of any further voluntary assistance from you (please note that this is not an extensive list):

- grossly indecent or immoral behaviour, deliberate acts of unlawful discrimination or serious acts of harassment;
- dangerous behaviour, fighting or physical assault;
- incapacity at work or poor performance caused by intoxicants or drugs;
- possession, supply or use of illicit drugs;
- taking part in activities which result in adverse publicity to ourselves;
- theft or unauthorised possession of money or property, whether belonging to us, another employee, or a third party;
- destruction/sabotage of our property, or any property on the premises;
- serious breaches of the health and safety rules which endanger life;
- maltreatment of service users;
- failure to report an incident of abuse, or suspected abuse of a service user by an employee, other volunteer or a member of the public;
- convictions for any offence which might affect your suitability for the volunteering duties you are involved in.

## Security

### Rights of search

- We have the right to carry out searches of volunteers and their property (including vehicles) whilst they are on our premises. These searches are random and do not imply suspicion in relation to any individual concerned.
- If you should be required to submit to a search, you will, if practicable, be entitled to be accompanied by a third party to be selected from someone who is on the premises at the time. This right also applies if any further questioning takes place.
- You may be asked to remove the contents of your pockets, bags, vehicles, etc.

- Whilst you have the right to refuse to be searched, refusal by you to agree to being searched could result in our refusal to accept any further voluntary assistance from you.
- We reserve the right to call the police at any stage.

### Use of computer equipment.

For GDPR purposes, and in order to control the use of the organisation's computer equipment and reduce the risk of contamination, the following will apply:

1. The introduction of new software must be checked and authorised. You cannot introduce new software of any kind without approval from your Supervisor.
2. Only authorised individuals will have access to our computer equipment.
3. Only authorised software may be used on the organisation's computer equipment.
4. Only software that is used for business applications may be used.
5. You may not bring software onto or remove it from our premises without prior authorisation from your Supervisor.
6. Unauthorised access to the computer facility may result in termination of your relationship with us.
7. Unauthorised copying and/or removal of computer equipment/software will result in our refusal to accept any further assistance from you.

### Virus protection procedures

In order to prevent the introduction of virus contamination into the software system the following must be observed:

1. Unauthorised software including public domain software, magazine cover disks/CDs or Internet downloads must not be used.
2. All software must be virus checked using standard testing procedures before being used.

### Email and Internet Policy

#### Internet

Where appropriate, duly authorised volunteers may make use of the internet as part of their work and matters concerned directly with the job being done. You may only release information via the internet with the prior agreement of your Supervisor. QVT will not tolerate the use of the internet system for unofficial or inappropriate purposes, including personal emails and social media of any form (e.g. Facebook).

The use of the internet to access and/or distribute any kind of material which is offensive or unrelated to your tasks will result in termination of your contract with us.

#### E-Mail

You may only use the e-mail system with the prior approval of your Supervisor. Any unauthorised use may result in termination of your contract with us.

Volunteers using the e-mail system should observe the following points:

1. E-mail messages must comply with our communication standards (your Supervisor will advise you of these).
2. E-mail messages and copies should only be sent to those for whom they are particularly relevant.
3. E-mail should not be used as a substitute for face to face communication or telephone contact.

4. Flame mails (i.e. e-mails that are abusive) must not be sent. Hasty messages sent without proper consideration can cause upset, concern or misunderstanding.
5. If an e-mail is confidential then the sender must ensure that the necessary steps are taken to protect confidentiality. The organisation will be liable for infringing copyright regulations or any defamatory information that is circulated within the company or externally.
6. Offers or contracts transmitted by e-mail are as legally binding for the organisation as those sent on paper.

We will not tolerate the use of the e-mail system for unofficial or inappropriate purposes, including:

1. any messages that could constitute bullying, harassment or other detriment;
2. personal use (e.g. social invitations, personal messages, jokes, cartoons, chain letters or other private matters);
3. on-line gambling;
4. accessing or transmitting pornography;
5. transmitting copyright information and/or any software to the user;
6. posting confidential information about other volunteers, workers, employees, the company or its customers or suppliers.

### Health, safety, welfare and hygiene

#### Safety

Your Supervisor will advise you during your induction of the health and safety requirements and any hazards associated with your responsibilities.

You must not take any action that could threaten the health or safety of yourself, other volunteers, workers, employees, customers or members of the public.

You should report all accidents and injuries at work, no matter how minor, in the accident book onsite where you are volunteering. Your Supervisor will advise where this is kept.

You must ensure that you are aware of our fire and evacuation procedures and the action you should take in the event of such an emergency.

#### Refreshment making facilities

We do provide refreshment making facilities. Please ensure that these are kept clean and tidy.

#### Smoking policy

The organisation has a No Smoking policy which must be observed at all times. You can only smoke on your authorised break times and away from the charity premises.

The above also applies with regards to E-cigarettes.

#### Alcohol & drugs policy

We have a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety and welfare at work of volunteers, employees, workers and, similarly, you have a responsibility to yourself and your colleagues. The use of alcohol and drugs may impair the safe and efficient running of the business and/or the health and safety of our volunteers, workers, employees and other parties.

If, during volunteering with us, your performance or behaviour are affected as a result of alcohol or drugs, or we believe you have been involved in any drug related action/offence,

you may be subject to further action and, dependent on the circumstances, this may lead to termination of your Volunteer Agreement with us.

### Lost property

Articles of lost property should be handed to your Supervisor who will retain them whilst attempts are made to discover the owner.

### Parking

Please park only in the designated parking areas. No liability is accepted for damage to private vehicles, no matter the cause.

### Hygiene

1. Any exposed cut or burn must be covered with a first-aid dressing.
2. If you are suffering from an infectious or contagious disease or illness such as rubella or hepatitis you must not report for work without clearance from your own doctor.
3. Contact with any person suffering from an infectious or contagious disease must be reported before commencing work.
4. Hand Sanitiser must be used when entering each new space or each scheme.

### Hygiene for food handlers

You must wash your hands immediately before commencing work and regularly, including palms and backs of hands, especially at the following times:

1. before preparing food;
2. between handling raw and cooked food;
3. after using the toilet;
4. after eating, drinking and smoking breaks; and
5. after handling refuse and waste materials.

Any cut or burn on the hand or arm must be covered with 'approved' special highly visible blue coloured plasters.

Head coverings and overalls/uniforms, where provided, must be worn at all times.

No jewellery should be worn especially dangling pieces other than simple plain wedding rings, without the permission of your Supervisor. If you are in any doubt whether any aspect of your appearance or attire is appropriate for your volunteer role you should speak to your Supervisor.

You should not wear excessive amounts of make-up or strong perfume.

If you are suffering from an infectious or contagious disease or illness, or have a bowel disorder, boils, skin or mouth infection, you must not report for work without clearance from your own doctor.

You must report to your Supervisor before returning to volunteering.

### Equal opportunities policy

#### Statement of policy

We recognise that discrimination is unacceptable and equality of opportunity is a feature of our practices and procedures. Breaches of this policy will lead to investigation and, if appropriate, further action.

The aim of the policy is to ensure that volunteers are not discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, political opinion or affiliation, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age or disability.

We will ensure that the policy is circulated to any agencies responsible for our recruitment and a copy of the policy will be made available for all volunteers.

We will maintain a neutral working environment in which no volunteer feels under threat or intimidated.

### Selection

We will endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that employees making selection and recruitment decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions.

We will adopt a consistent, non-discriminatory approach to the advertising of voluntary opportunities.

We will not confine our recruitment to areas or media sources which provide only, or mainly, applicants of a particular group.

All those who ask to volunteer for us will receive fair treatment and will be considered solely on the contribution they can make.

All those involved in the recruitment process will periodically review their selection criteria to ensure that they are related to volunteering requirements and do not unlawfully discriminate.

Interview questions will be related to the requirements of the volunteering activity and will not be of a discriminatory nature.

We will not disqualify any volunteer because he/she is unable to complete an application form unassisted, unless personal completion of the form is a valid test of the standard of English required for the safe and effective performance of the volunteering activity.

### Discriminatory/harassment complaints policy and procedure

#### Introduction

We recognise that personal harassment, which may or may not be associated with discrimination, can occur.

Personal harassment takes many forms and people may not always realise that their behaviour constitutes harassment. Personal harassment is unwanted behaviour towards an individual by another person or persons. Examples of harassment include:

1. Insensitive jokes and pranks.
2. Lewd or abusive comments regarding somebody's appearance.
3. Deliberate exclusion from conversations.
4. Displaying abusive or offensive writing/material.
5. Unwelcome touching.
6. Abusive, threatening or insulting words/behaviour.

These examples are not exhaustive and formal action, at the appropriate level, will be taken against volunteers, workers or our own employees committing any form of personal harassment.

## Policy

We deplore all forms of unlawful discrimination and personal harassment and seek to ensure that the working environment is sympathetic to all individuals that work for our organisation.

## Complaining about discrimination or harassment

### Informal complaint

We recognise that complaints of discrimination, personal harassment and particularly of sexual harassment can sometimes be of a sensitive or intimate nature, and that it may not be appropriate for you to raise the issue with your Supervisor. In these circumstances you are encouraged to raise such issues with a senior employee of our organisation, whether or not that person has responsibility for you.

If you are the victim of minor discrimination or harassment you should make it clear to the discriminator/harasser, on an informal basis, that their behaviour is unwelcome and ask them to stop. If you feel unable to do this verbally then you should hand a written request to both the discriminator/perpetrator and a senior employee of the company.

### Formal complaint

If the informal approach fails or if the discrimination/harassment is more serious, you should bring the matter to the attention of a senior employee as a formal written complaint. Where possible, you should retain details of the harassment to be included in this, such as:

- a. the name of the alleged discriminator/perpetrator;
- b. the nature of the alleged discrimination/harassment;
- c. the dates and times when the alleged discrimination/harassment occurred;
- d. the names of any witnesses; and
- e. any action already taken by you to stop the alleged discrimination/harassment.

On receipt of a formal complaint we will take action to separate you from the alleged discriminator/perpetrator to enable an uninterrupted investigation to take place. This may involve a temporary transfer of the alleged perpetrator to another area until the matter has been resolved.

The person dealing with the complaint will carry out a thorough investigation in accordance with our procedures. Those involved in the investigation will be expected to act in confidence.

When the investigation has been concluded, a draft report of the findings and of the investigator's recommended course of action will be sent, in writing, to you and to the alleged discriminator/perpetrator. If you or the alleged discriminator/perpetrator are dissatisfied with the draft report this should be raised with the investigator within five working days of receiving the draft. Any points of concern will be considered.

The investigator will decide whether or not the issue should be handled via our disciplinary procedures if an employee is involved.

Once the process has been completed, whether it takes report form only or requires a disciplinary sanction, a final report in writing will be sent to you and the alleged discriminator.

## Confidentiality

During the course of your volunteering you will have access to and knowledge of Organisation confidential information.

Disclosure of any client or organisation confidential information must not be discussed with any external persons or organisations and you should make your Supervisor aware of any information that has been disclosed to you.

For GDPR purposes, all information that:

- a. is or has been acquired by you during, or in the course of your engagement, or has otherwise been acquired by you in confidence;
- b. relates particularly to our business, or that of other persons or bodies with whom we have dealings of any sort; and
- c. has not been made public by, or with our authority;

shall be confidential, and (save in the course of our business or as required by law) you shall not at any time, whether before or after the termination of your engagement, disclose such information to any person without our prior written consent.

You are to exercise reasonable care to keep all documentary or other material containing confidential information safe, and shall at the time of termination of your engagement with us, or at any other time upon demand, return to us any such material in your possession.

Under the terms of the confidentiality agreement, you agree to not disclose any confidential information about the organisation either during employment or post - employment.

You are aware of the Organisations policies in relation to compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation and undertake to act in accordance with these at all times. Any breach of these policies will be dealt with under the Organisation's disciplinary procedure and action taken can include dismissal without notice.

Confidential information, for the purposes of this policy, includes:

- systems, techniques or know how of the Organisations suppliers or customers as they exist from time to time
- designs and other computer technology, software specifications, documentation, product lists, customer lists, research and development, formulae or formulations, costings, profit margins, discounts, rebates and other financial information
- current Organisation business activities, including past, present and future plans relating to all or any development, production or sales including the timing or all or any such matters.

- Company pricing, credit policies, credit procedures, payment policies, payment procedures and systems for the same, whether of the Organisation, details of the Organisation's clients and customers or prospective clients and customers
- any other information which is notified to you during the course of your volunteering as being confidential, or is received or obtained by you in confidential circumstances.

The restrictions under the terms of this confidentiality agreement shall not apply to:

- any disclosure or use of information organisation has expressly authorised or as required in the ordinary and proper course of your employment or as required by a court or tribunal of competent jurisdiction or as required by a relevant regulatory authority; or
- information already in the public domain not as a result of a breach of this clause or breach of an equivalent provision or other unlawful act (whether done by you personally or by an agent, whether on your own account or for or in association with any other person or by any other volunteer of the organisation).

#### **Documentation generated during your volunteering**

All documentation generated during your volunteering including notes, memoranda, records and writings that relate to the business of the Company or any Associated Company shall remain the property of 'Quo Vadis Trust'.

On termination of your volunteering or any reason you shall immediately return to the organisation all books, documents, original papers, copy papers, materials and other property of or relating to the business of the organisation currently in your possession or which are or were last under your possession, custody, power or control.

#### **General notes**

If the report concludes that the allegation is well founded, the discriminator will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with our disciplinary procedures. Should they be a volunteer, similarly fair procedures will be adopted before any decision about continuation of their engagement, or any other measure (e.g. a reprimand), is taken.

If you bring a complaint of harassment you will not be victimised for having brought the complaint. However, if the report concludes that the complaint is untrue and has been brought with malicious intent we will, subject to a fair procedure as above, no longer accept any voluntary assistance from you.