**Boundaries and Your Safety**

Relationships between volunteers and people using our services must remain professional at all times.  This document contains important information which will help you to be effective and safe whilst carrying out your volunteering duties.  It outlines what is and what is not acceptable behaviour and should give you confidence to know how to react in different situations. It is important that you read and understand this policy. We ask all volunteers to adhere to this policy and to speak to your staff supervisor or the Volunteering Team if you are unsure about anything.

As a Passage volunteer, you have agreed to support our vision where street homelessness no longer exists and everyone has a place to call home.  We do not expect volunteers to support our clients through their own individual means, rather we hope that you will perform your volunteering duties to the best of your ability and adhere to our policies.

**We take breaches of professional boundaries seriously and such an occurrence will result in us ending your volunteering with The Passage.**

**Language, body language and clothing:**

* You will be volunteering in an environment with people who are different from you. You will encounter people of a different age, race, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief or who have a disability. The Passage is an inclusive charity and there is a place for anyone who wishes to volunteer with us and is able to carry out a role.

* Language can both offend and exclude people either through its content or the way it is used. Always consider other individuals present. What is acceptable to you and your peers may not be acceptable to other volunteers, staff or people using our services.  **We have a zero-tolerance policy on language that causes offense based on age, race, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability and this will result in the termination of your volunteering.**

* We encourage our volunteers to speak and engage with staff, volunteers and people using our services in a friendly and polite manner; however please refrain from being overtly tactile and respect personal space. Physical expressions of support (touching, hugging etc) are not always appropriate or welcome; people differ in what they consider to be acceptable. Similarly, let a member of staff know if you feel a client is infringing on your personal space boundary.

* Please dress modestly in all settings.  If you are volunteering in the Resource Centre, Montfort House, Passage House or Newman Street please wear casual attire. If you are volunteering in the office, smart casual attire is suitable. Jeans without rips are fine for the office.

**Personal details:**

* Never exchange telephone numbers, email addresses or addresses with people using our services or contact them through social media. If a client asks you where you live, don’t give out your address.

 **Money, cigarettes and clothing:**

* Never give money to people using our services. Breakfast and lunch are provided for free and we also fund travel for people using our services who require it. Anyone asking for money should be directed to Assessment & Advice Reception in the Resource Centre.
* Do not give individuals items of clothing or other donations you may have brought in. This can be perceived as favouritism and can lead to feelings of resentment amongst other clients. All clothing donations should be handed to Assessment & Advice Reception so they can be distributed fairly via the clothing store.
* If you are a smoker, please do not smoke near people using our services outside and don’t offer or accept cigarettes or lighters.

**Interactions with clients outside of The Passage:**

* The professional boundary between you and people using our services exists whether you are physically in our building or the area surrounding the building i.e. the surrounding streets, tube station or train station.

* It is human nature to smile or say hello to someone you recognise on the street. However, with people using our services we ask that you take your take the lead from them. It’s perfectly fine to say hello or have a short conversation but please keep it short and remember that you must not give money or offer to buy food even if you are asked as this would still be a breach of this policy. In addition, we are not expecting you to support people using our services through your own means.

* Never agree to meet someone using our services outside the building or in any unofficial capacity, i.e. not part of your volunteering role. You will not be covered by our insurance in this instance, and we don’t want you to be put in a position where you don’t have the correct information to givetht person or have anyone to defer to.

* Notify a staff member if you feel you are being followed or waited for outside by a client when you finish your shift. If a client is following you, return to the building and speak to a member of staff, ask them to speak to the person and ask a member of staff to accompany you the station or bus stop etc.

**Safeguarding:**

* The people using our services are classed as adults at risk which means The Passage has a responsibility to safeguard them from abuse (physical or mental) or exploitation. If an individual tells you that someone is harming them or they are harming themselves, or you must inform a member of staff as soon as this happens. E.g.

* A person using our services tells you they have stopped taking medication they have been prescribed for a physical or mental health reason

* A person using our services tells you they are going to stay with a family member who hits them and demands their benefits in payment for their stay

* In the case of verbal disclosure, ***never promise not to tell anyone even if the client asks you not to tell anyone. Simply say that your volunteering role prevents you from keeping secrets.*** Listen, retain the information and report to a member of staff straight away. Do not wait until your next shift, it must be reported at the time. Do not offer advice or solutions. We ask volunteers to respect our commitment to help people using our services and to be assured that Passage staff have the appropriate knowledge to do this.

**Health and Safety:**

* Volunteers are respectfully requested to follow instructions issued by staff about matters of health & safety and issues around clients and boundaries that may occur during the daily running of Passage services.

* Violent incidents occur very occasionally. Most of these incidents are between people using our services. In such cases, volunteers are not expected to intervene. **We ask that you listen to staff and follow their instructions.**

* Ensure that you are shown where the panic buttons are in the area of the building.

**Volunteer Signature:**

**Volunteer PRINT NAME: Date:**