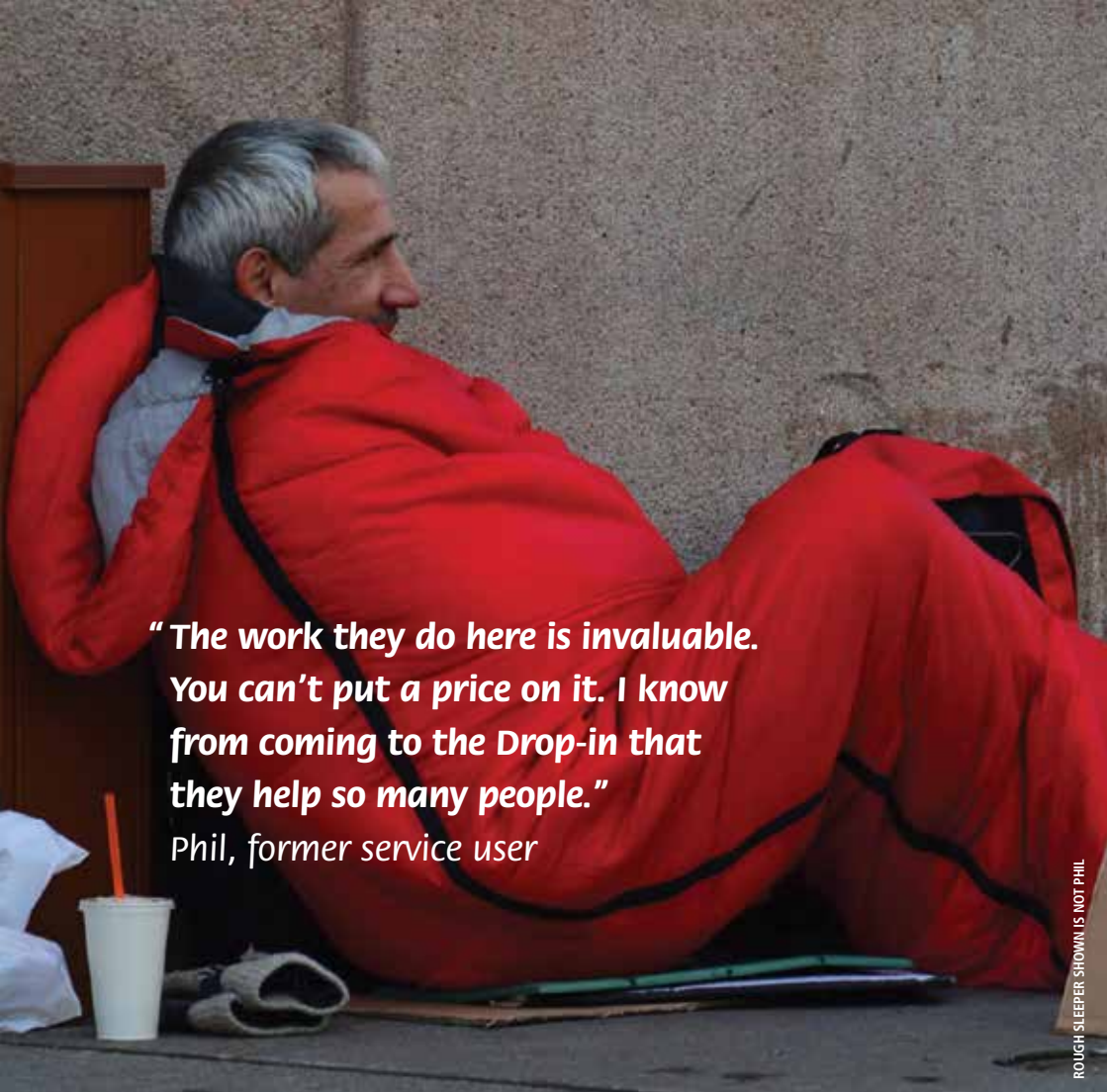




FAITH IN ACTION
helping with homelessness

Volunteer Handbook





“The work they do here is invaluable. You can’t put a price on it. I know from coming to the Drop-in that they help so many people.”
Phil, former service user

ROUGH SLEEPER SHOWN IS NOT PHIL



THANK YOU for being one of our wonderful and highly-valued team of volunteers, helping and supporting homeless and vulnerably-housed people in and around Merton.

Whether you’re new to the Faith in Action Merton Homelessness Project (FIA) or have been volunteering with us for a number of years, this handbook is for you. It’s your guide to our charity, the work of the Drop-in, our policies and other key information that you need to know as a volunteer.

We hope that it will answer any questions you may have, but if not, then please let us know. You can email me at grenvillewilliams@gmail.com or if you’d prefer, the Drop-in management team at team@mertonfaithinaction.org.

FIA would not be all that it is without the incredible enthusiasm, skills and dedication of all our volunteers. There are many rewards to be gained from volunteering, and we want to maximise the benefits for each and every volunteer. In particular, FIA is committed to providing a supportive environment and the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge as a volunteer.

This handbook contains copies of all relevant FiA policies. Please, in particular, note that all volunteers are covered by the FiA insurance policy, which includes personal accident and liability insurance.

Do ensure that you understand and adhere to our policies, which are designed to protect you, our service users (many of whom can be quite vulnerable), and the integrity and reputation of the charity itself. If you’re unsure about any aspect, please raise it with one of the management team, who will always be ready to help.

Thank you again for your hard work and commitment to helping everyone who needs and benefits from our work at the Drop-in.

Grenville Williams, Chair

Merton Faith in Action c/o Wimbledon Guild, 30-32 Worples Road, SW19 4EF
 07843 280419 team@mertonfaithinaction.org
mertonfaithinaction.org [facebook.com/mertondropin](https://www.facebook.com/mertondropin) twitter.com/mertondropin
 Registered Charity No. 1101165 Company No. 04352872

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Our Vision

To help change the lives of local people in the London Borough of Merton and surrounding boroughs, who are disadvantaged and/or excluded from the local community, as a result of homelessness, precarious housing (eg sofa surfers and those in temporary accommodation), addiction, mental illness or loneliness.

Our Purpose

To provide support, information and assistance for 'hard to reach' individuals, including those with addictive behaviours, who are homeless or precariously housed and for whom there are gaps in service provision. The aim is to help them to be safer, more secure and with an improved sense of well-being, in an environment which meets their needs.

We do this by:

- operating a twice-a-week Drop-in for rough sleepers, the precariously housed, and other vulnerable people in and around Merton
- creating an environment at the Drop-in which motivates and guides service users to move back into mainstream society through the process of inclusion
- assisting service users with paperwork including benefit claims or housing applications, and with drink/drug rehabilitation
- developing links between service users and other local services best placed to help them with specific problems or needs (including social services, local health services, mental health teams, housing officials, outreach teams' education services, and other voluntary groups).



Our Values. We believe:

- in the worth and dignity of every individual human being
- that, as a priority, our individual faiths and beliefs call us to show love in practical ways for fellow human beings within our community who may be poor, isolated or marginalised
- in being non-judgemental, honest, open and just
- in welcoming, encouraging and celebrating diversity, and in promoting equality of opportunity
- in striving for excellence in all that we do
- in working in partnership with faiths and organisations that share similar values in order to maximise resources and influence.



Where you see this icon more information on the topic is available on our website

mertonfaithinaction.org/volunteerhandbook

2 OUR ORGANISATION

Faith in Action Merton Homelessness Project is a charitable company limited by guarantee. Registered Company number 04352872 Registered charity number 1101165.

2.1 Office address and contact details

c/o Wimbledon Guild, 30-32 Worple Road, Wimbledon SW19 4EF Mobile 07843 280 419 email team@mertonfaithinaction.org

2.2 Drop-in address

Salvation Army Wimbledon
109 Kingston Road, Wimbledon SW19 1LT

2.3 Staff

The Project Manager and Senior Project Workers are responsible for the day-to-day running of the Drop-in, recruiting, supporting and supervising the volunteers. They liaise with other agencies and work with the trustees to raise awareness of FiA and our work. They report directly to the trustees. The Project Workers support the Project Manager and volunteers during Drop-in hours and report directly to the Project Manager.

2.4 Trustees

Trustees, who are also company directors and volunteers, have legal responsibility for the charity and play an active role in the work of the Project. Trustees meet regularly as the Management Committee to coordinate the general management of the Project, including supervision of the Project Manager.

Trustees also volunteer at the Drop-in. They speak at schools, churches and other local organisations, informing them about our work, and they encourage people to make financial donations to support our work or to join us as a volunteer.



Help with online applications and developing digital skills

Overview of our current services

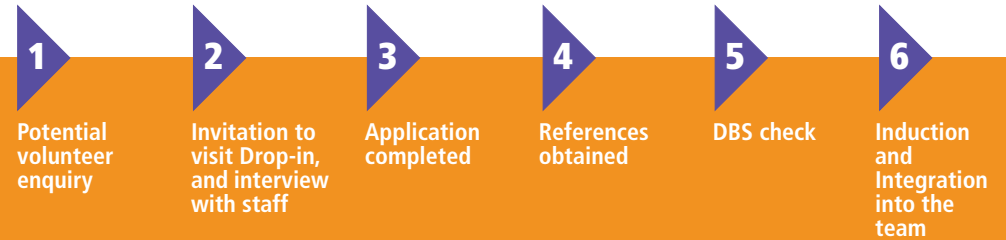
- Open-access Drop-in every Wednesday and Friday from 10am to 3pm at The Salvation Army Hall, 109 Kingston Road SW19 1LT
- Free breakfast and freshly-cooked hot lunch provided; tea, coffee and refreshments available all day
- A warm, welcoming environment
- Shower and laundry facilities for rough sleepers
- Clothing and food parcels for rough sleepers
- Support given with job searches, writing of CVs, online and other forms, benefit claims and appointments
- Access/referrals to relevant outside agencies such as Street Link, SPEAR, Merton Drug and Alcohol team, St Mungo's, Crisis
- Access to mobile services such as hairdressing, health screening, sexual health services and flu inoculation
- Leisure activities available including bingo, quizzes, board games, and table tennis
- Access to the internet

3 VOLUNTEER POLICY

3.1 Selection and training procedures

In accordance with our Equal Opportunities policy, we encourage people from all backgrounds to volunteer at FiA whatever their race, nationality, ethnic origin, age, ability, disability, gender, marital status or sexual orientation.

All trustees, staff members and volunteers who work directly with service users are required to undergo DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service, formerly CRB) checks. FiA will help you with this.



Induction and training

The induction will include completion of the Induction Sheet obtainable from the Project Manager, and the opportunity to discuss matters raised by the Volunteer Handbook. All volunteers will attend a training session as soon as possible after beginning as a volunteer. FiA believes that training is important, and all volunteers are strongly encouraged to attend sessions.

Training opportunities include:

- introduction to homelessness, boundaries and FiA policies
- drugs and alcohol awareness
- mental health awareness
- food hygiene.

Support and supervision

The Project team supports volunteers informally during each shift, and during the briefing and debriefing meetings at either end of the day. One-to-one supervision sessions will be arranged if required by either the Project Manager or the volunteer. A volunteer support group is held twice-yearly, facilitated by a trustee with special responsibility for volunteers.

3.2 Volunteer rights and responsibilities

Awareness of your rights and responsibilities will clarify the expectations you can have of FiA, and what FiA can expect of you.

RIGHTS	RESPONSIBILITIES
Choice of volunteering role whenever possible	To be reliable in your commitment
To say 'no' to activities you do not wish to do	To inform the Project Manager as early as possible if you are unable to continue
A suitable induction	To keep within guidelines of the task you have been asked to do
Defined tasks which complement those of staff	To uphold aims, objectives and values, and adhere to FiA policies
Access to support and supervision and the opportunity to review progress	To act in a non-discriminatory way towards volunteers, trustees, service users and paid staff
Appropriate training	To attend training and any support meetings
Information about changes in policies or procedures affecting your role as a volunteer	To attend either the briefing and/or the de-briefing session
Not to be discriminated against by staff, trustees, service users or other volunteers	To maintain the good atmosphere of the Drop-in by seeking a way of resolving problems or disagreements
To have your confidentiality respected and not to have your personal details discussed in an inappropriate manner	To inform FiA if you have any problems FiA with your voluntary work
Appropriate insurance cover	Not to share personal details with service users, nor to arrange to meet outside the Drop-in
A safe working environment	
Opportunity to express concerns and grievances	
Opportunities for feeding your ideas into the planning and decision-making process	
A reference when moving on to paid work or volunteering with another agency	

3.3 We depend on our volunteers:

- to run the variety of services that the Drop-in offer
- to enable us to involve all sections of society
- to bring wider experience, knowledge and skills
- enabling the community to have a stake in what we do
- as a resource to provide additional services
- to give a more personal touch to service users
- to extend the services we can provide
- to assist with outreach and fundraising
- to respond to a request for a specific service
- to bring different points of view.

3.4 Benefits of volunteering at FiA

Our aim is to make sure that the time you spend volunteering at the Drop-in is as positive an experience as possible. Each volunteer makes a unique contribution, bringing their own set of skills and life experiences. FiA could not deliver all we offer to service users without our volunteers. You will have your own reasons for choosing to volunteer, some of which you may recognise below. FiA will acknowledge these and try to make the most of what you have to offer, increasing the benefit for both you and the Drop-in.

- To offer and develop new skills and interests, and to sharpen up old skills
- To gain experience
- To increase self-confidence
- To relieve loneliness or boredom
- To have an opportunity for personal development
- To be an active part of the local community
- To exercise beliefs and values insofar as these complement the FiA vision, purpose and values
- To get an up-to-date reference and experience for future work
- To increase awareness of others' lifestyles and difficulties
- To be involved in interesting work which can also be enjoyable
- To meet new people and broaden your



Hot meals prepared by the kitchen teams

social circle

- To feel of value
- To have the chance to take some responsibility
- To offer time, skills and experience

3.5 How would you like to help?

There are various ways of helping to deliver services and provide support to our service users, such as:

- befriending and listening
- preparing meals
- serving meals to our service users
- serving tea and coffee
- clearing up and washing up
- laundry and shower service
- administrative support (on an occasional basis)
- accompanying service users to external appointments
- finance and fundraising
- computer/IT skills
- games
- adult literacy
- providing opportunities to do art and craft activities.

3.6 Boundary-keeping for volunteers

Boundaries are the concern of staff, volunteers, service users, and anyone else involved in any way with the work of the Drop-in. Boundary-keeping means being aware of another person's space/territory, so respecting their rights and/or needs. The boundary is the dividing line which should not be crossed. Rules made for and by FiA should at all times be adhered to and respected. This enables everyone to maintain his or her own space and self-respect.

What we mean by 'boundaries' when communicating with a service user.

- Relationships remain friendly but not personal, because this could lead to misuse and abuse.
- Self-discipline: do not become emotionally involved or take problems home. Be able to stand back from a situation and empathise but remain non-judgmental.
- You need to be able to switch off and to keep volunteering separate from home.
- Respect confidentiality, but appreciate that if you cannot deal with a matter you should consult a member of staff.
- Do what you believe is right in a situation, but if in doubt speak to the Project Manager.
- Say NO when behaviour is unacceptable. If possible let the service user know why it is not acceptable, and make sure you inform a member of staff.
- Appreciate that a service user may want company without wishing to communicate, respecting their need for peace or privacy.
- Do not impose your views or personal beliefs on a service user; respect their point of view.
- Support and uphold the aims and mission of the Project.

These are the boundaries we seek to maintain. Volunteers and staff need to present a consistent approach, so please give the staff team feedback if you feel confused or unsure about what someone says or does in relation to boundaries.

These are our boundaries.
Please maintain them at all times when volunteering in the Drop-in.

DO NOT EXCHANGE

addresses or phone numbers with any service users.

DO NOT MAKE HOME VISITS

or form out-of-Drop-in relationships with service users.

AVOID

unwelcome physical contact with our service users. Do not exchange hugs or kisses with those using the Drop-in unless you are in absolutely no doubt that this will be acceptable to the individual.

DO NOT ENGAGE

in sexual innuendo or allow sexually explicit conversations.

DO NOT GIVE

money/cigarettes to service users.

KEEP PRIVATE

the affairs of those who use and volunteer/work at the Drop-in, both in and outside the Drop-in.

TREAT ALL SERVICE USERS

with the respect and acceptance they deserve, and in line with the FiA Equal Opportunities policy.

DO NOT DISCUSS

personal facts about one service user with another.

ALWAYS

talk to the Project Manager about any concerns or issues you may have whilst volunteering at the Drop-in.

3.7 Being with our service users

Despite large numbers of service users, the atmosphere in the Drop-in is generally calm and friendly. This is due largely to the attitude of our volunteers.

Below are suggestions you may find helpful.

- If you want to know who might enjoy talking with you, ask a member of staff.
- Sit with service users rather than standing over them.
- In conversation, use open-ended questions such as 'What did you think of today's lunch?' Avoid closed questions such as 'Did you enjoy lunch?'
- Avoid direct personal questions; do not delve into someone's past or present situation.
- Avoid discussing your own life – provide company rather than personal chat.
- Accept our clients as they are. Avoid comments, suggestions and solutions to their situations. Inform and support them in their take-up of our services and those of other agencies.
- Respect silence. Don't always try to fill it up.
- Be sensitive to clues that the person has finished speaking. When it's time to go, have an excuse ready.
- Accept their thanks for your company and help.
- Be careful not to get bogged down in someone's problems. Consult a member of staff and don't take a burden away.
- Do not agree to confidences which might prove difficult for you to keep.
- Do not agree to criticisms of other people at our Drop-in.
- Try not to become upset if the service user does.
- Do not return an aggressive/angry comment.
- Always remember that the staff are here to support and advise you. Never hesitate to ask for advice or help if you have any doubts or concerns.



A warm welcome for service users

3.8 Volunteer problem-solving procedure

We recognise that circumstances may arise where the actions or attitudes of a volunteer working for the organisation may infringe upon the rights of others, may cause offence, may breach the policies, aims and objectives of FiA, or may otherwise bring the organisation into disrepute.

The aim of the problem-solving procedure is to ensure that, if a member of staff has any concerns regarding the conduct of a volunteer, the volunteer will be treated in a fair and consistent manner, and both parties will know what to do if such an instance arises.

It is hoped that most problems will be rectified satisfactorily through informal discussion. If this is not possible, our procedure ensures that volunteers have their cases heard.



3.9 Volunteer expenses policy

FiA are always grateful when volunteers are able to fund their own transport. However, we do not want anyone to be out of pocket because of volunteering with us. Please agree with the Project Manager how we can reimburse any expenses you incur; you will be given an expenses claim form to complete and asked, where possible, to provide tickets or receipts for expenses incurred. All expenses must be claimed within one month.

4 SAFETY REQUIREMENTS POLICY FOR OPERATION OF THE DROP-IN

For safe operation of the Drop-in, the maximum number of people in the hall at any one time is 62.

The Drop-in will open only if one of the following is present to take charge of the Drop-in session:

The Project Manager or Senior Project Worker. If that is not possible, then a project worker plus a named volunteer and named trustees designated by the Management Committee because their experience qualifies them for this task.

Staff/volunteer/trustee numbers required front-of-house to maintain safe operation:

A minimum of three staff/named volunteers/designated trustees, two of whom must be a member of staff/designated trustee – plus sufficient volunteers at the discretion of the person in charge on the day.

The numbers attending the Drop-in vary from week to week, season to season. At times there can be large numbers of people including staff and volunteers wanting access to the Drop-in. On these occasions, the Project Manager, project workers or the named trustees (as above) must bear in mind that there are only 62 seats in the Drop-in and act accordingly to manage the numbers. Whilst not ideal, and only when necessary, two sittings for lunch will be served and some service users will be asked to wait outside until there is room.

“ A friendly face can make so much difference.”

5 SERVICE USER ADMISSIONS POLICY

Open access policy

FiA operates an open access policy to all service users from the London Borough of Merton and, where numbers permit, its neighbouring boroughs. However, all service users are required to sign in for compliance with fire regulations.

The door will be open, but service users will be asked to leave the Drop-in if their behaviour is unacceptable or they cause an incident. Our Exclusion Policy explains when and how this may happen. Volunteers will be advised during the briefing session of any service users who are excluded and this will be recorded in the briefing book.

It is the responsibility of any volunteers who enter the Drop-in after the briefing session to refer to the briefing book. These policies are important in creating a welcoming, accepting and safe environment that rebuilds people's confidence and encourages them to seek the help they need.

Welcoming new Drop-in service users

Often, new service users may not feel confident to approach the Project Manager or volunteers for help. It is important to welcome new Drop-in users, and ensure that they have had an induction to the services and boundaries of the Drop-in.

Personal details

Service users are asked for personal details and history using an introduction form and an individual risk assessment is undertaken when they request support from FiA.

This helps us develop plans that meet service user needs and provide continuity. It allows us to share information with other agencies that may be working with an individual. This information is kept in the service user files, which are only accessed by staff or volunteers and are kept in a locked office.



All our volunteers work collaboratively

6 GUIDELINES FOR SERVICE USER PRIORITY

In the interests of giving help and support to where it is needed most, there is a general order of priority over some of our services.

Rough sleepers are given priority in the following services:

- showers
- clothing
- laundry
- food parcels

Warm clothing, underwear, socks, hats and gloves are reserved for rough sleepers only. There is a jumble box for those service users not assessed to be in priority need. Showers and laundry facilities are open to all; however rough sleepers will be given priority. The Project Manager will consider individual exceptions; if in doubt please speak to a member of staff.

7 DISCLOSURE AND BARRING POLICY

Why do we do DBS checks?

Faith in Action works with some very vulnerable people. Some roles involve close contact with our service users, offering advocacy and access to sensitive information. DBS checks form part of a wider safeguarding process which includes: meeting with volunteers before they begin; asking volunteers for two references and undergoing a six week trial period.

DBS checks are required by law for volunteers who have regular contact with vulnerable people, advocate for them, or deal with sensitive information. Up to date information on the legislation regarding DBS is available at www.gov.uk/dbs

Disclosing criminal convictions

FiA request that on the volunteer application form, potential volunteers disclose any criminal convictions. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar an applicant from volunteering with us. However, FiA are unable to accept volunteers who have convictions for drug-dealing, violence, firearms, or sexual offences without the express consent of the Management Committee. The relevance of the criminal conviction will be considered along with how recent it was. This will all be discussed explicitly with the candidate. Staff at the Drop-in will be informed on a strictly need-to-know basis.

All DBS checks are carried out for FiA by the Wimbledon Guild, and there is no charge to the volunteer for undertaking this check. There is a new update system that volunteers can join which allows the DBS check to be transferable. Details of this service and the procedure for obtaining the DBS form are available from FiA staff.

8 EQUALITY POLICY

Purpose and scope

The purpose of this policy is to communicate our commitment to equality of opportunity in employment, with the aims of ensuring that all employees, volunteers and service users are treated fairly and equally, and supporting FiA's objective that the Drop in should be free from all forms of discrimination.

Policy statement

FiA is fully committed to providing equality in the workplace. All opportunities for, and during employment, will be afforded to individuals fairly and irrespective of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race including colour, ethnic or national origins and nationality, religion or belief or sexual orientation ("the protected characteristics").

We aim to create an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment in any form, in which all staff, volunteers, service users and visitors are treated with dignity and respect.

FiA will not unlawfully discriminate in the arrangements we make for recruitment and selection or in the opportunities afforded for employment, training or any other benefit. All decisions will be made fairly and objectively. We aim, as far as reasonably practicable, to ensure that all our working practices are applied fairly and consistently and, where necessary, we will take reasonable steps to avoid or overcome any particular disadvantage these may cause and to promote equality.



Raising a complaint of discrimination

If you believe you have been discriminated against, you should raise the matter in accordance with our grievance policy, a copy of which can be found on the FiA website. If you believe that you may have been subject to harassment you

are encouraged to raise the matter under our harassment policy.

Any employee or volunteer who is found to have committed an act of discrimination, or breached this policy in any other way, will be subject to action under the disciplinary procedure. For employees this may include dismissal. Volunteers will be subject to appropriate action, which may include terminating the volunteering arrangements.

9 SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR VULNERABLE ADULTS

We recognise that our work supports those with a range of needs, which can include homelessness, unemployment, problems with mental and physical health, addiction and substance abuse, domestic and sexual abuse. These are frequently the most vulnerable members of society. We believe that it is never acceptable for vulnerable adults to experience abuse of any kind, and we recognise our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of those individuals we work with.

Purpose and scope

- To provide protection for vulnerable adults attending our Drop-in sessions, outreach sessions, classes, events or other activities.
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt if they suspect a vulnerable adult may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

We define safeguarding as the action we take to promote the welfare of vulnerable adults and protect them from harm, including protecting them from abuse or maltreatment, preventing harm to health or development, ensuring safe and effective care and acting to enable people to have the best outcomes.

This policy applies to all staff, including trustees, paid staff, volunteers, students or anyone working on our behalf.



Hot drinks and a smile available all day

We will seek to safeguard vulnerable adults by:

- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- following agreed safeguarding procedures
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- sharing information about good practice with staff and volunteers
- ensuring all suspicions and allegations of abuse are taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

Procedures

It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers working at the Drop-in to record and report vulnerable adult protection concerns, ie where they believe a vulnerable adult has been or is at risk of abuse, or significant harm.



10 CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Information within the staff and volunteer team

Staff, volunteers and service users have the right to expect confidentiality. However, our service users will be informed by the staff that certain information cannot stay confidential to any one individual and will be fed back to the team.

Information to other agencies

Relevant information about service users will be shared with external teams working at the Drop-in or other organisations, where written consent has been obtained from the service user.

In situations where information directly relates to that service user causing harm to themselves or others, it may be shared without their consent.

Information to the police

Where the Project Manager knows of the use or supply of drugs on the premises or any other illegal activity, they may disclose information to the police. Where the police are requesting information with regard to a serious offence, the Project Manager may disclose such information.

Information to a service user's family/friends

If contacted by a service user's family or friends seeking information, FiA will not confirm whether the person is in or uses the Drop-in unless the service user has given permission.

Service user's rights of access to information

Service users are entitled to see information in their files by prior arrangement. However, information from third parties, considered harmful or insensitive, may be withheld unless that party agrees to its disclosure. If a service user requests to see such information, two staff members must be present, including the Project Manager.



Local organisations occasionally provide lunch

11 SERVICE USER COMPLAINTS POLICY

No one will be treated less favourably as a result of using the complaints policy. Assistance will be provided to people to enable them to use the complaints policy and procedure.

Purpose

To ensure that the FiA Drop-in:

- has a simple and robust means for service users to make their views known
- takes oral complaints as seriously as written ones
- speedily resolve complaints in an effective and productive manner
- takes account of complaints and improves practices accordingly.

Who can use the complaints procedure?

Any person who is or has been a service user or a person acting on their behalf.

What can they complain about?

- any part of the service
- a decision that affects them
- the actions or behaviour of a staff member, volunteer, trustee or another service user.

Complaints procedure

This covers complaints about a volunteer, trustee, another service user, project staff, or the service. Complainants should be encouraged to speak to the Project Manager who will attempt to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of all involved. If not satisfied, they may refer to the Chair of the Trustees.

Complaints about the Project Manager

Complainants are requested to contact the Chair of Trustees, whose contact details will be provided. The complaint will be investigated by the designated trustees, who will have face-to-face interviews with those involved in an attempt to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of all involved.

12 VOLUNTEER GRIEVANCE POLICY

The aim of this grievance policy is to protect the interests of staff and volunteers and to have a procedure which can be used to resolve all issues as quickly as possible.

No volunteer will be treated less favourably as a result of using the grievance policy.

Purpose

The purpose is to give a volunteer the opportunity to raise a grievance either informally and/or formally and to discuss this with the Project Manager with a view to having it resolved.

Who can use the grievance procedure?

Any person who is a volunteer with FiA.

What might be the subject of a grievance?

- a decision that affects them personally
- the actions or behaviour of a staff member, another volunteer, trustee or service user
- working environment or new working practices
- health & safety
- equal opportunities.

Grievance procedure

This covers grievances raised about a volunteer, trustee, service user, FiA staff, or the service. Volunteers who wish to raise a grievance should be encouraged to speak to the Project Manager who will attempt to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of all involved. If they are not satisfied with the outcome, they may refer to the Chair of Trustees.

Grievances about the Project Manager

Volunteers raising a grievance of this nature are requested to contact the Chair of Trustees, whose contact details will be provided. The issue will be

investigated by the Chair or a designated trustee, who will have face-to-face interviews with those involved in an attempt to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of all involved.

13 HARASSMENT POLICY

Everyone using the Drop-in should be able to do so free of any form of harassment or the fear of harassment. This applies equally to service users, visitors, volunteers and members of staff.

Harassment can be seen as actions that are unwelcome or offensive.

Examples of harassment are:

- unnecessary touching or physical contact
- derogatory comments about an individual or a group
- intimidating or confrontational behaviour
- inappropriate actions or behaviour
- insensitive jokes and pranks
- comments about an individual's private life or sexual activities
- threatened or actual violence
- malicious accusations of improper conduct.

Harassment may occur on any number of grounds and may take many forms. It will often breach our Equality Policy and may lead to direct or indirect discrimination.

FiA is committed to preventing all forms of harassment and to challenging any behaviour that in any way constitutes harassment. The Project Manager will actively respond to any such behaviour by taking appropriate action against the perpetrator and by supporting the victim. Appropriate actions include excluding individuals who harass others.

14 HEALTH & SAFETY AND WELFARE POLICY

Health & Safety Policy Document

In conjunction with the Salvation Army, the Trustees of FiA give notice of their acceptance of their responsibilities under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and all other attendant safety legislation, and that they pursue a policy which ensures the health, safety and welfare of all its employees and others who may be affected by the project's activities. The Trustees also declare their intention to satisfy all the provisions and obligations as required by the Act, and all existing and future Health & Safety legislation.



Accidents

All accidents involving staff, volunteers, visitors or service users should be brought to the attention of the Project Manager. Accidents involving volunteers, service users, staff or visitors are to be recorded in an accident book and reported as required by regulations.

Fire safety procedures

FiA works within the policy and procedure of The Salvation Army – Wimbledon Corps.

Please familiarise yourself with the plan of the building located in the entrance lobby.

If you discover a fire, or smell significant levels of gas, report it immediately to the manager in charge who will organise a controlled exit of the building. The manager will call the fire brigade. In the event of gas, do not switch on any lights, and try to avoid activity that may cause sparks.

Leave the building in an orderly manner when told to do so by the manager in charge.

Exit the building by the nearest available fire exit, or by the exit that the manager or other member of staff directs you to.

Continue along the escape route to the front of the building and assemble in Palmerston Road, behind Gooseberry Bush café. Remain at the assembly point until a roll call has been taken.

Under no circumstances re-enter the building until the manager in charge advises that it is safe to do so.

Violent incidents

Volunteers and visitors should not seek to intervene in violent incidents and should remove themselves from the area. The Project Manager, or delegate, will call the police if extra help is required.

Service users who are violent towards staff, volunteers, visitors or other service users will be banned from the Drop-in as outlined in the Exclusion Policy. All violent incidents, whether involving injury or not, are recorded in the briefing book.

Infectious diseases

Our approach follows advice given by the health authority, which advises that any risk is minimal.

For tuberculosis, those under the age of 40 who have never been vaccinated against TB should have this done through their GP. For those over 40, no action is suggested by the health authority – this is because of acquired immunity.

As a matter of course, volunteers and staff should keep their tetanus protection updated.

Vaccination against hepatitis B is also recommended.

Equipment such as disposable gloves, sharps box, separate mops for lavatories, cleaning fluids, and so on, are available at all times.

Kitchen hygiene

Guidelines are displayed in the kitchen regarding the maintenance of separate washing up and food preparation areas, use of chopping boards, cloths, and so on. These must be adhered to at all times to ensure adequate hygiene. Food must be stored correctly in the fridges to avoid cross-contamination. Please ask the Project Manager for guidance on this and any other hygiene matters.



The Drop-in benefits from local charities and individuals who donate fruit and vegetables

15 RISK ASSESSMENT POLICY

FiA is committed to the careful examination of what, in its work, could cause harm to people. This involves assessing hazards and those who might be at risk, evaluating the risks, and regularly reviewing precautions or steps taken to minimise these risks.

It is the responsibility of the Project Manager to undertake risk assessments in accordance with this policy, and to maintain and update the risk assessment folder. It is the responsibility of the Management Committee, through a designated member responsible for risk assessment (usually the Project Manager), to ensure that risk assessments are carried out and recorded, and to review the folder and procedures annually, reporting back to the Management Committee.



16 OFFENSIVE WEAPONS POLICY

This policy is based on advice from officers at Wimbledon Police Station.

Offensive weapons such as knives or guns are not tolerated in FiA. It is a criminal offence to possess an offensive weapon. If staff or volunteers become aware that a service user is in possession of an offensive weapon, they should immediately inform the Project Manager, who will inform the police.

It must be stressed that such incidents are very rare, but we need to be prepared for every eventuality.



17 SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY

This policy ensures that FiA provides a safe environment for everyone using its services. It is also necessary to protect staff from prosecution in the event that there is drug dealing or use on the premises. It has been developed in consultation with the police and is regularly reviewed.

The following are strictly forbidden at the Drop-in:

- possession of illegal drugs
- use of illegal drugs
- supply of illegal drugs or prescription drugs
- selling, buying, swapping, or sharing illegal drugs or prescription drugs
- sniffing or inhaling of solvents, glue or any similar product
- possession of alcohol
- drinking alcohol.

This applies to all Salvation Army premises including the hall, the toilets, the car park, or within the 'boundary' (along Kingston Road between South Wimbledon Tube Station and Merton Park Tram Stop)

Possession and use

Anyone found possessing or using illegal drugs on Salvation Army premises will be seen by the Project Manager and, if appropriate, banned.

Dealing

Anyone caught dealing in illegal or prescription drugs on Salvation Army premises will be asked to leave immediately. They will be banned from using the Drop-in for a period and risk the police being informed. If staff suspect that dealing is taking place in the Drop-in or around the area, the police may be informed, giving descriptions of the individual(s) involved.

Suspicion

Anyone suspected of using illegal drugs, or dealing in illegal or prescription drugs on the premises, will be warned once. They will be told that they will be reported to the police if there is reason to believe that they are dealing drugs on the premises.

Showers and toilets

These have been identified as particular areas where substance misuse or dealing is likely to take place. The following precautions are in force:

- regular inspection of toilets by staff/volunteers
- showers checked and cleaned after each use
- 15-minute time limit for service users using showers.

Communicating policy to service users

- Posters displayed on Drop-in walls
- Summarised in the 'Welcome Leaflet' given to new service users and circulated to all service users regularly as a reminder
- Visual posters for service users not reading English

Recording of incidents

All incidents involving suspected or actual use of drugs, solvents or alcohol, or dealing in drugs/prescription drugs, must be noted in the log book. Where an incident results in exclusion, an exclusion record sheet should be completed and filed in the service user's file.

FiA confidentiality policy states that disclosure of information to the police to prevent the use or supply of drugs on the premises is to be expected.



Clean clothes for rough sleepers

18 EXCLUSION POLICY

FiA is committed to an inclusive policy and sees exclusion as a last resort. This exclusion policy is intended to provide a safe environment for service users, staff, volunteers and visitors. It is based on an assessment of the level of risk posed by the service user's behaviour. It also respects each service user's individual circumstances, and will take these into account when considering responses to unacceptable behaviour. However, ensuring a safe environment for everybody at the Drop-in is the overriding consideration.

How to exclude

The Project Manager can take the decision to exclude a service user. For safety reasons, they must alert at least one other person before excluding. Two members of the project team must be present, including the Project Manager. The service user will be informed of the length of the exclusion, which is at the Project Manager's discretion. Volunteers and visitors should never be involved in decisions regarding exclusions, apart from alerting staff to a service user whose behaviour gives cause for concern.

The priority is speed and reducing risk. The individual concerned should always be excluded as soon as possible after the behaviour is observed.

Staff and volunteers should not engage with excluded service users outside the Drop-in, especially when they are on their own and away from the Drop-in.

Serious incidents

Depending on the severity of the incident, it is at the discretion of the Project Manager to decide whether to close the Drop-in for the rest of the day to allow for group supervision and support of staff and volunteers.

Obtaining police assistance

In situations where the service user is displaying extremely threatening or aggressive behaviour, dial 999 and stress the urgency of the situation, such as assault on staff. It will not be viewed as high priority if we simply inform police that we need assistance in removing an excluded client from the premises. If assistance does not arrive quickly, ring 999 again.

Levels of incidents

Incidents requiring exclusion are categorised into three levels relating to the level of risk presented by the service user's behaviour. The level of classification is the decision of the Project Manager.



APPENDIX 1

Car Insurance at the Drop-in

Since the Drop-in opened, there have been just two incidents when a volunteer's car parked on the Salvation Army driveway was damaged by a service user. Consequently, the Trustees have secured limited insurance cover, with FiA paying an additional premium to secure this for staff and volunteers.

Motor insurance is a legal requirement and any such claims have to be made under the claimant's own motor policy. FiA's insurers can cover a claimant's uninsured losses – cover is limited to

the following year's no claims discount loss or reduction up to a total of £250, and/or the excess contribution up to £150, or the sum of these amounts ie a maximum claim of £400. Claimants are required to produce evidence of their losses from their own insurers for FiA's insurers.

As this cover is limited, in practice FiA cannot take responsibility for volunteers' cars parked at the Drop-in. Consequently, we ask volunteers to consider whether they want to take the risk of bringing a car onto the driveway, or instead make other arrangements.



“ I love to see the transformation from someone arriving tired and hungry and leaving in a much better state of mind.”
Faith in Action Volunteer



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