

Hands Together
LUDLOW



Volunteer Handbook

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Hands Together LUDLOW is a Registered Charity No. 1171979.

Welcome

Welcome to Hands Together Ludlow (HTL) and thank you for choosing to volunteer with us. By giving your time and skills you will help the charity to improve quality of life for people and groups within our community.

Our aim is to make sure that volunteers feel valued and supported and proud to be associated with the work we do.

This handbook will help to explain some of the things you need to know about us and the role of volunteers.

HTL is a practical response to the changes within our community working with volunteers to support people in need. We work closely with other agencies, organisations and businesses to promote wellbeing and encourage shared services to support people of all ages. Our aim is to encourage independence whilst supporting people through times of crisis.

We support the HTL objectives and undertake many activities within the confines of health and safety and our insurance.

Volunteers receive training as required to meet individual needs, respecting confidentiality at all times. Volunteering does not mean commitment to regular working hours, volunteers can do as much or as little as they are able to offer.

As a volunteer you will be asked to complete a confidentiality agreement and if required may be asked to complete a DBS check, or a driver's declaration form if appropriate. A Volunteer may also be asked to attend occasional meetings, ongoing training or other functions relating to the project.

Volunteer Guidelines

Please take a few minutes to read the following information, which is very important. When you have read the guidance, please sign the Volunteer Information Handbook form at the end of the booklet and return it to us. Thank you.

Making contact

It is very important to us that our volunteers enjoy their work with HTL. If as a volunteer, you have any problems or suggestions, please talk to one of the Assessors.

As a volunteer, you will not be expected to take on any task or commitments which you do not find acceptable. Nor does HTL want volunteers to be financially 'out of pocket'. HTL will reimburse appropriate expenses. To enable HTL to do that we would ask a volunteer to complete an expense claim form.

Commitment

We appreciate that a volunteer may well have to balance voluntary work for HTL with all sorts of other commitments and appreciate emergencies do happen. If, for any reason, a volunteer is unable to carry out an agreed task, please let the Assessor or Office know – with as much notice as possible – so that someone, can hopefully, be found to deputise, if appropriate.

Insurance

All our volunteers are covered by Public Liability Insurance.

Car Insurance

All volunteers who use their own motor vehicles in connection with the business of HTL are reminded that they should take care to have in force effective motor insurance policies. Most motor insurance policies state social domestic or pleasure purposes and this is normally enough. However, **volunteers must inform their motor insurance companies** of their intention to carry out voluntary work. It is very unlikely that the company will charge a volunteer an additional premium as a result, but it is important that they are notified to ensure that as a volunteer there are no problems if a claim arises.

Confidentiality

We ask a volunteer to treat in strictest confidence any information given in respect of your work for HTL. This handbook includes a copy of the Confidentiality Policy – **please read it**. It is essential that a volunteer respect the privacy of all those helped as part of the work for HTL. **Do not share your home telephone number with a service user**. If a volunteer telephones a service user they should dial the prefix 141 in front of the number. The number will then be withheld should the service user ring 1471. So that a volunteer's own privacy is protected do not share home telephone numbers or personal details with a service user.

Handling Money

It is possible that a volunteer may be asked to handle money by the service user. Please be very careful when doing this. It is very important that records are kept of any money handled on behalf of a service user. Accepting a small "token" gift (a box of chocolates, flowers etc.) once a year from a service user is fine but **never** accept money or a personal item owned by the service user– a piece of china, for

example. If a volunteer has any queries about money handling or gifts, the Assessor will be able to advise. There are formal ways people can express their gratitude e.g. by making a donation.

Travel Claims Policy

Fuel costs are a significant expense in many volunteer activities, particularly when providing transport for service users. Service users may wish to make a contribution towards fuel costs or to make a general donation to the work of HTL. This statement establishes the policy under which volunteers should operate:

1. Volunteers are entitled to claim mileage expenses from HTL at an agreed rate.
2. If the service user wishes to make a contribution towards fuel costs the volunteer is entitled to keep this, but any monies received must be for fuel only. However, we recommend that fuel money received from service users is passed to HTL via the office in Broad Street and then an expense claim form submitted at the approved rate.
3. Volunteers must not keep a contribution from the service user AND submit a mileage expense claim.
4. General donations must always be passed on to the HTL office.
5. Never ask the service user for a donation or fuel contribution.

Volunteer Safety

Volunteer personal safety must always be a priority. If anything about a visit makes a volunteer feel uncomfortable or nervous, do not go ahead with the visit, make a polite excuse and then make contact with the Assessor to discuss the situation.

Abuse

If at any time, a volunteer has any concerns that a person with whom there is contact is suffering physical, financial or mental abuse, the volunteer should speak with the Assessor, particularly if it concerns a vulnerable person.

Warning

Whilst a volunteer may be able to physically assist a service user it is very important that, **under no circumstances**, should a volunteer attempt to lift or move a service user. If someone has had a fall or is found in physical distress do not attempt to move or lift them but, **call an ambulance by dialling 999**. We also need to point out that volunteers are not allowed to give out medication of any kind. Volunteers are strongly advised not to accept or drink any alcohol whilst volunteering.

Remember we are here to help and support voluntary work; **please do not hesitate to contact us** if there is a problem or concern.

We hope that the volunteering work for HTL is both rewarding and worthwhile.

Dos and Don'ts Summary!

Do

- Do make appointments with your service user. Don't just drop in.
- Do let your service user know if you are unable to keep an appointment.
- Do contact the Assessor or office if you are unable to keep an important appointment as it may be possible for someone to visit in your place.
- Do encourage your service user to maintain their independence by encouraging them to help themselves as far as they are able and maintain social contacts.
- Do be a good listener, service users often find it helpful to share thoughts and worries.
- Do contact the Assessor regarding any concerns you have about your service user or your role as a volunteer.
- Do let the Assessor know if you feel that your service user needs additional help or if you have any worries about them.

Don't

- Don't forget to claim travel or other expenses that you incur during your work as a volunteer.
- Don't discuss any service user information with others, remember that such information is strictly confidential.
- Don't forget to complete and return your timesheet.
- Don't attempt to lift a service user who has fallen and can't get up, call an ambulance and wait with the service user until it arrives.
- Don't administer any form of medication (but medication can be collected).
- Don't undertake anything that you are uncomfortable about.
- Don't give service users your home telephone number or invite them home.
- Don't, please, use volunteering with HTL as an opportunity to press your own beliefs and opinions.

Do enjoy your volunteer work for HTL.

Data Protection Policy

Introduction

HTL is committed to meeting its obligations under the Data Protection Act of 1998.

HTL needs to keep certain information about its service users and volunteers to be able to provide support, monitor performance and ensure safety and security.

To comply with the law, information must be collected and used fairly, stored safely and not disclosed to any other person unlawfully. To ensure this happens HTL must comply with the Data Protection Principles set out in the Act which, in summary, state that personal data shall:

- be obtained for a specified and lawful purpose and shall not be processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose
- be adequate, relevant and not excessive for those purposes
- be accurate and kept up-to-date
- not be kept longer than is necessary for that purpose
- be processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- be kept safe from unauthorised access, accidental loss or destruction
- not be transferred to a country outside the European Economic area.

HTL volunteers must ensure that they follow these principles at all times. If as a volunteer you feel at all uncomfortable about any of this, please speak to a member of the Executive team.

Status of the Policy

It is a condition that all volunteers will abide by the rules and policies made by HTL including the Data Protection Policy. Any failure to follow the policy will be taken seriously. Any volunteer, who considers that the policy has not been followed in respect of personal data about themselves, should raise the matter with the HTL Executive.

Notification of Data Held and Processed

All service users and volunteers are entitled to:

- know what information is held and processed about them and why
- know how to gain access to it
- know what HTL is doing to comply with the obligations under the Act

Information will be provided to service users about the kind of data kept and processed concerning them, the reasons for this and how service users can access this data if required.

Responsibilities of Volunteers

All volunteers are responsible for:

- checking that any information they provide HTL in connection with their volunteering is accurate and up to date
- informing HTL of any changes to information which they have provided
- informing HTL of any errors or changes

Data Security

All volunteers are responsible for ensuring that:

- all personal data they hold concerning service users, volunteers is kept securely
- personal information is not disclosed orally, in writing, electronically or otherwise to any unauthorised person.

Right to Access Information

Service users and volunteers have a right to access personal data that is held about them either on file or on computer. Any person who wishes to exercise this right should do so by requesting this in writing to HTL Executive.

HTL aims to comply with requests for access as quickly as possible but will ensure that it is provided within 21 days unless there is a good reason for delay. In such cases, the reason for delay will be explained in writing to the person making the request.

Disclosure and Baring Service (DBS)

Volunteers may be brought in to unsupervised contact with vulnerable service users and their families. HTL has a duty to ensure that volunteers are suitable for the job and pose no threat to the security or wellbeing of service users and their families.

For this reason, as a condition of being accepted as a volunteer working in unsupervised contact with vulnerable adults and children will be required to apply to the DBS. All disclosure applications will be checked and returned to the volunteer.

The refusal of a certificate by DBS will exclude a volunteer from participating in HTL

Retention of Data

Data will be retained by the HTL according to the following schedule:

Person	Duration
Service User	As required under the current legal requirement.
Volunteers	As required under the current legal requirement.

Confidentiality Policy

HTL recognize that service users have a right to have information about them kept confidential and that this is essential for maintaining their trust in HTL and for running services. No information regarding a service user shall be given directly or indirectly to any third party without that service user's prior expressed consent to disclose such information.

It is imperative that all volunteers are aware of the need for confidentiality, and respect and maintain it, at all times.

Adhering to this policy is a condition of being a volunteer for HTL.

Information obtained other than through work with HTL

- Confidential information obtained about service users by volunteers in a capacity other than as a volunteer with (e.g. by gossip or through work in another agency or about one service user from another) should not enter HTL information system, unless non-disclosure would pose a serious risk to health and safety.
- Information gained by gossip, hearsay or by breach of confidentiality elsewhere should still be treated as confidential information.

Information obtained through the work of HTL

- Information obtained about a service user through the work HTL may be shared among volunteers on a need to know basis and will only be disclosed outside with the consent of the service user or for medical emergencies.

Information should only be transferred beyond HTL without the service user's explicit consent by the Assessor, who may discuss this with the Executive.

Recording transfer of information

(i) When information is transferred (with or without) consent this must be:

- recorded, and show (as appropriate):
- the extent of the disclosure
- to whom it was made and when
- the reasons for the disclosure
- who was consulted before the event
- whether, when and how the service user was informed

(ii) This information will appear on the consent form.

(iii) Copies must be kept of transferred information for the service user's file

DOS AND DON'TS

Do Not

- Mention service users' names or addresses in general conversation or in a public place where you might be overheard.
- Discuss with others any medical information that you may have learned about a service user.
- Discuss with others the private affairs of service users.
- Leave messages on an answer phone other than to tell the service user you will phone back later.

Do

Contact the Assessor if you have any concerns or feel you need to discuss any aspect of your visits or your service users' welfare. The Assessor can be contacted on 07584858056

All volunteers must sign two copies of The HTL "Declaration of Confidentiality" forms before they commence any kind of work for the project. The volunteer retains one copy and the other copy is stored in the person's file.

Lone Working Policy

WORKING ALONE AWAY FROM HOME

Tracing Lone Workers - Remember Volunteer Safety

Sometimes a volunteer may be required to work alone and the following guidelines will help promote safety. Someone knowing where you are will not help prevent a difficult situation arising but it may help to raise the alarm if you do not return, or make it a little easier to summon help if you need it. Volunteers should still ensure they do all they can to stay safe and never enter situations where they think their personal safety could be at risk.

At ALL TIMES Inform Others Where You Are

Therefore, when you are going on a lone visit to a service user it is important to remember that:

1. The initial assessment for new referrals will have already been carried out by the Assessor.
2. Before you go/commence any lone visits you must notify a **'buddy'** (e.g. wife/husband/partner, other relative or friend).
3. Please inform a member of HTL if you do not feel confident with any of your visits.
4. You must always ensure, that your next of kin or significant contact details held for you by HTL are always up to date.
5. If you are taking your service user out of their home to anywhere else, again inform the HTL Assessor before you go about where and when you will be going.

How long are you going to be?

If possible, try to leave information regarding the expected length of the visit or meeting. If you are going on somewhere else let your buddy know. And if your plans change during the visit, again pass this information on.

As a volunteer you must keep key information up to date in your Personal File in the office.

- **Contact telephone numbers**
- **Your Car Details**
- **Medical Information**

Checklist of Key Questions To Answer Before Any Visit

1. Have I left all the relevant information with a friend or relative?
2. Do I have a mobile phone that I can take with me, which has all emergency numbers programmed in and is charged and topped up?
3. Do I feel confident to go?

Unless you can answer **yes** to the questions then you should not go.

Working in other people's homes or premises

- Give some thought before you arrive to what exit strategies you could use if you felt uncomfortable or threatened. Thinking about these in advance will help you recall them quickly in a time of stress. For example, you could say 'I'm sorry I've left some paperwork I need in the car'. This could give you time to de-stress before returning, or could allow you to phone from the safety of your car.
- Be mindful of the fact that you are entering someone else's territory.
- Conduct your own 'Dynamic Risk Assessment' on the doorstep before you enter. If you feel at all uncomfortable, make an excuse and leave. Trust your instincts.
- Do not enter the premises, unless the person you expect to meet is there. If they are not, say you will return later or re-arrange the appointment for another day.
- If you are uncomfortable about any animals in the room with you, ask to have them removed.

Remember the earlier you spot a potential problem arising the more choices you have to avoid it.

Remember to:

- **PLAN**
- **PREPARE**
- **LOOK CONFIDENT, DRESS APPROPRIATELY**
- **AVOID RISK**
- **NEVER ASSUME IT WON'T HAPPEN TO YOU**

Equality and Diversity Policy

1. HTL is committed to the promotion of Equal Opportunities in all aspects of its services and believes that it should take positive steps to promote equality of opportunity in the delivery of services, the employment of staff (should the need arise) and the recruitment of volunteers.
2. We aim to reflect the diversity of the local community in all our activities by making our services inclusive and accessible to all.
3. Our commitment to equal opportunities is shared equally by volunteers. It is the responsibility of everyone to sustain and deliver this policy.
4. We believe that equal opportunity is about treating people fairly, openly and honestly and recognising that people have different needs, culture, experiences and expectations.
5. It is the policy of HTL to ensure that no person, volunteer, service user or third party unjustifiably receives less favourable treatment, because of his or her gender, family status, lifestyle, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, mental and physical disability, political affiliation or any other circumstance.

This policy seeks to ensure that, as an organization, we do not discriminate intentionally or unintentionally against any person.