



Volunteer Recruitment Policy

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Links or overlaps with other strategies/policies:			
Trainee Recruitment (DBS) policy			
Equality and Diversity policy			
Information Governance Policy			
Privacy Notice			
Code of Conduct			

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1. Introduction

The Breastfeeding Network (BfN) aims to be an independent source of support and information for breastfeeding families and others.

It aims:

- To inform, educate and support families in feeding and nurturing babies and young children;
- To enable communities to support breastfeeding through sharing information, training and volunteering;
- To contribute to evidence-based policymaking for government, healthcare providers and educators;
- To promote the mental and physical wellbeing of mothers and babies through supporting breastfeeding

At the heart of our organisation are our trained volunteers who give their time to support other families in their communities, over the helplines and on social media. We currently have volunteers across the UK of all ages and from all backgrounds. Some give a few hours every week, or each month - it is completely up to each volunteer. Some people volunteer to give something back as a thank you for the support they received, others do it to meet new people or gain experience that might help them find a job. Our volunteers make us who we are and enable us to support thousands of families each year.

Anyone who would like to volunteer their time to support other parents with breastfeeding will first need to complete our [Training](#). This helps us make sure that the support and information our volunteers offer is safe, up to date and consistent across the UK.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out our approach to the recruitment and selection of trainees to become registered BfN volunteers and our commitment to equality, diversity, fairness and the elimination of bias.

The BfN is committed to applying its [Equality and Diversity Policy](#) at all stages of recruitment and selection. Advertising, shortlisting, interviewing and selection will always be carried out fairly, consistently and without prejudice. Consideration will be made of how direct and indirect discrimination can be eliminated from each stage of the recruitment process on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

In order to engage with and extend breastfeeding support services to harder to reach or under-represented groups within society, the BfN may actively seek to attract trainees from these groups. Methods may include consulting with local communities on where to place advertisements, making the language used in application materials more accessible, advice on how to complete application forms, reviewing the role description and person specification and making adjustments to the interview process where applicable.

3. Responsibilities

The BfN Board

The Board of Directors has overall responsibility for volunteers within BfN and for ensuring the provision of adequate resources to support the volunteer programme.

BfNs Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

BfNs Board has delegated to the CEO the responsibility for developing policies and procedures for volunteering at BfN and for ensuring that these are implemented effectively. These policies enable us to comply with best practice and to meet our legal responsibilities.

BfN Staff

All BfN staff involved with recruiting, training and managing volunteers should follow this and other relevant policies and procedures. The Central Support team is the main point of contact for any queries relating to this policy or the recruitment process. The Central Support Manager has oversight of all operational processes relating to volunteer recruitment and training.

4. Volunteer Recruitment and Training

For our volunteer peer supporter roles, volunteers are required to complete one of our peer supporter training courses. We also accept applications from people who have trained to an equivalent level elsewhere and this is covered under our "Transferring in" process.

BfN is committed to ensuring that all stages of the volunteer recruitment process including writing the role description and person specification, advertising, attracting and managing applications, selecting trainees and volunteers, making the appointment and inducting the new volunteer are all conducted fairly and effectively.

Our procedure has been designed to ensure that:

- volunteers have the required experience, knowledge and skills or the ability to develop these for the volunteer roles they wish to undertake
- measures are in place to safeguard children and vulnerable adults via Enhanced DBS or PVG checks and appropriate mandatory training
- BfN's selection of volunteers is fair, equitable, based on merit and satisfactory checks
- recruitment and selection processes adhere to the Equality and Diversity Policy
- BfN can demonstrate our commitment to equality, diversity, and fairness.

4.1 Recruitment campaigns

BfN will apply the principles of our Equality and Diversity Policy when recruiting trainees.

Recruitment will include the following methods although this list is not exhaustive:

- contacts at public engagement events around the local area
- direct email to those who have consented to receive information about future courses
- via the local service commissioner's networks (NHS, Public Health etc.)
- advertising through a wide range of channels e.g. BfN website, BfN local and/or national social media pages, BfN newsletter, leaflets and information stands, word of mouth
- via local volunteer and community sector organisations and their networks.

We may also undertake recruitment campaigns around particular issues, for example where a particular service is being re-designed we may want to recruit people who have experience of that service. Where there is a need to address under-representation of particular groups of people within the BfN or there is a need for a service to reach specific sectors of a local community, targeted advertising in community settings or via organisations representing particular groups should be considered.

When a recruitment campaign is required, the local service coordinator or manager should contact Central Support and complete a Trainee Recruitment checklist giving details of the course and any unique requirements. This should also include the names of those on the selection panel who

should agree on the wording for the advert and confirm the role description if there are any deviations from the standard documents. The panel should consist of at least two people and any bias should be avoided by ensuring that there are no conflicts of interest e.g. no member of the panel should act as referee to any of the applicants and there should be no personal relationships between members of the panel and applicants.

Central Support will then advertise the opportunity as specified by the recruiting manager on the Trainee Recruitment checklist. The language used in the advertisement should be clear and accessible. A range of contact methods should be provided for applicants to get in touch. It should also be stated that applicants may request an application pack in electronic, paper, large print or colour print format.

The advertisement should contain a clear statement of the BfN's commitment to equality and diversity.

To ensure fairness, no applications will be accepted after the closing date.

4.2 Applying to become a BfN trainee

When an individual applies to train with BfN they are asked to complete a short electronic application form. If anyone requires assistance with completing the application, help will be provided and/or the form can be completed by a member of staff via the telephone. There is also information available on our [website](#) about how to complete an application form. Once completed the application form should be submitted electronically. All information given by trainees will be treated as confidential and stored and disposed of in line with the [BfN IG policy](#), [Records Retention Policy](#) and [Privacy Notice](#). Applicants should note that at this stage they are applying to train with us and they will be registered as a volunteer upon completion of training and other requirements. Although the majority of our training is provided free to trainees, it incurs a significant cost for BfN and in return we ask all trainees to ensure they are able to commit to volunteering with us on a regular basis before applying to train. Complimentary membership is also provided for two years, after which we ask all volunteers to maintain their membership payments as detailed on our [website](#).

4.3 Selection panel

After the closing date all anonymised applications will be reviewed by the panel against the role description, person specification and any other requirements detailed in the advert. The panel will also consider any potential conflicts of interest declared by the applicant and also the availability of applicants against the course schedule.

Notes should be taken by each member of the panel and forwarded to Central Support at the earliest opportunity.

4.4 Informal interview

Where applications exceed the number of places available on a training course, or if it is otherwise beneficial to do so, applicants may be asked to attend an informal interview, either by telephone or video-conferencing. The purpose of the interview is to:

- explain and discuss expectations of the training, the voluntary opportunities available at BfN and the commitment involved
- explore any relevant skills, interests and experiences which the potential volunteer may bring
- assess whether the potential volunteer will be able to carry out the role description and what support might be required in order to enable this

5. Application outcome

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of the application as far as possible within 3 working days of the panel discussion. Feedback for unsuccessful applicants is available on request.

6. References and background checks

In addition to having completed our training, before registering as a peer supporter volunteers need to have:

- a) two satisfactory references
- b) signed the Code of Conduct for volunteers
- c) an enhanced DBS (in England) or PVG (in Scotland) cleared to work with children and adults (for roles involving regulated activity specified on the role description) and/or an Identity check
- d) confirmation of eligibility to work in the UK
- e) membership fees paid up to date (this may be included for an initial period depending on the type of course undertaken)

We will begin to carry out these checks as soon as trainees have enrolled onto the course, so that volunteers can start volunteering as soon as possible upon achievement of their qualification, where relevant.

6.1 References

References will be requested for successful applicants. Referees may be someone who knows the applicant in either a work or social context, but not next of kin or family member.

If we do not receive a reference within 10 working days of the request being made we will make a second request to the referee. If after 10 more working days we still have not received the reference then the Central Support and Volunteer Administrator will contact the applicant and ask them to supply another referee.

6.2 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and PVG checks

For most volunteer roles within BfN, volunteers will be required to undergo an Enhanced DBS or PVG check covering child and adult workforce. This is important to ensure that we are compliant with our safeguarding procedures for children and vulnerable adults. In some instances we may be able to accept a DBS certificate obtained via another organisation. For full details see [BfN DBS recruitment policy](#).

7. Successful completion of the application process

Once applicants are accepted to start training with BfN:

- They will be asked to complete an enrolment form to gather any additional information necessary
- They will be advised by the course tutor of the start date and time of the course and timetable for future sessions
- Their data will be added to relevant training records, including the OCN database where relevant
- Their data will be added to our volunteer database
- They will be added to the online course on Moodle if relevant
- They will be asked by the course tutor to complete the relevant forms to enable a DBS or PVG check to be carried out

Upon completion of training, background checks and other requirements:

- the volunteer will be provided with the volunteer handbook
- induction training will be arranged for the next available training session, where required

- the volunteer will be allocated to a supervisor and Helpline Volunteer Coordinator (for Helpline Supporters and Supporters)
- face to face (online and in person) volunteers (Helpers and Supporters) will be issued with an ID badge
- the volunteer will be covered by BfN's insurance policy when supporting parents and families (included as part of our membership package)

8. Contact, concerns and complaints

Any general queries about this policy or the process should come to

centralsupport@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk

Any comments, concerns or complaints relating to application of this policy should be made in line with our [Complaints Policy](#) by email to 4cs@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk .