



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR VOLUNTEERS

Introduction

Our Code of Conduct is designed to assure you of our appreciation of your volunteering with us and indicates our commitment to do the best we can to make your volunteering experience a positive and rewarding one. Its aim is to provide a shared understanding of the way we should all work together. The Code is a tool we use to guide our language, decisions and working relationships on a day-to-day basis.

Our Working Principles are:

Be direct, responsive and supportive.

Tell our story simply and powerfully, without jargon. Listen carefully. Invite two-way conversations. Speak openly, but with respect. Make your point but seek the common ground when other people's views are different.

Be flexible, collaborative and think of the bigger picture.

We can't solve youth violence and gang related crime alone. Work together with all of those who have a stake in violence reduction. Trust and use everyone's expertise - we are part of a wider gang prevention programme.

Be resilient.

But not at the expense of your safety or the safety of others.

Be honest.

Don't be shy about being honest when we do not have all the answers. Don't be afraid to ask us or others for help.

Follow our Code of Conduct

We believe all our volunteers are highly responsible and committed but set out our expectations of the conduct expected and to ensure that your volunteering experience is a positive and rewarding one.

As a volunteer you are be an ambassador for Ask Me, you should behave in a professional, helpful and courteous way and treat other volunteers, colleagues and members of the public with dignity and respect and in keeping with the project's principles

Any communication you have with members of the public, supporters or external contacts should always promote and maintain confidence and trust in our work.

Act within the law of England and Wales.

Be aware of our policy on equal opportunities and avoid any form of discrimination or harassment whatsoever. You should apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, race, religious belief and sexual orientation. As a trained volunteer you should work within and represent our policies on key issues – which may from time-to-time differ from your own opinion.

You are responsible for exercising good judgment regarding appropriate use of Ask Me resources in accordance with Ask Me (or We Can Work It Out Ltd) policies, standards, and guidelines. Our resources may not be used for any unlawful or prohibited purpose.

Keep the Ask Me team informed of Ask Me-related activities undertaken and changes to personal details on a timely basis.

Handling data

You are responsible for the security of data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018. Keep passwords secure and do not share account or password information with anyone, including other Ambassadors, family, or friends. Providing access to another unauthorised person, is in breach of this policy.

Health and Safety and managing risk

Volunteers should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any other circumstances.

Ask Me Co-ordinators will undertake risk assessments and identify hazards, assess the risk and put control measures in place to reduce the level of risk for a volunteering activity to an acceptable level. Co-ordinators will consider:

- the environment – location, security, access
- the context – nature of the task, any special circumstances, the individuals concerned
- indicators of potential or actual risk history
- any previous incidents in similar situations or any other special circumstances

It is vital that you read any briefing notes you may be given (based on our risk assessments) prior to attending an event and that you are clear on your role. If you are not clear or have any safety concerns at all, please check with the event organiser or your Ask Me contact/ Lead.

If you encounter a problem during a volunteering session at a location, you should not put yourself at risk. If necessary, you should abandon the session and report the incident at the earliest opportunity to an Ask Me Co-ordinator. This may include being confronted by someone who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs or experiencing a mental health crisis. Do not engage with them yourself – if necessary, contact the Police or Ambulance service.

You should consider very carefully whether you should act as a lone volunteer – where possible, you should always try and operate in pairs or as a group. Where there is any reasonable doubt about your safety in each situation, serious consideration should be given to attending with a second volunteer, Co-ordinator or Director or making other arrangements to complete the volunteering session.

If you are acting alone in your volunteering role, you should

- inform an Ask Me Co-ordinator or other identified person, when you will be working alone, giving accurate details of your proposed location and following an agreed plan to inform that person when the session is completed;
- always use an effective personal safety device (for example, by visiting <https://peoplesafe.co.uk/lone-worker-app> , a lone worker smartphone application). You should familiarise yourself with the application in advance.

Please immediately report all injuries and accidents occurring whilst volunteering.

Whilst attending an event or engaging in Ask Me Volunteering, please be mindful of health and safety – your own health and safety and that of others around you. You must comply with all health and safety instructions given to you by your Ask Me Lead, event organiser and by Waltham Forest Council.

You should not share your private telephone number, home or email address nor should you seek this information from members of the public

Safeguarding

Your designated safeguarding lead is Jonathan Green, Director at We Can Work It Out Ltd. He can be contacted at info@wecanworkitout.co.uk.

Remember that the welfare of any children you may meet as a volunteer, is paramount.

You should treat information you may receive about a child or their family in a discreet and confidential manner. You should be clear with people about when information can/must be shared and in what circumstances – for example, if you are really worried about what someone has told you and feel that a child (or someone you know) may be at immediate risk of harm or harming another. In those circumstances, you might need to tell someone else what you've been told to be able to help them. Only then, should details be passed to people who'll be able to get help. You should always tell the individual of your intention to do this.

You are responsible for your own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question your motivations and intentions.

You should not receive any gift from a young person or their family, unless the gift is part of an agreed reward system.

Always record important discussions and key actions taken with your justification for taking a course of action.

Deliberately invented or malicious allegations are fortunately very rare, but you should report and record any concerns even if you consider someone has or may raise an allegation against you.

You should not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or any substance, which may affect your ability to work with children.

Concerns about another volunteer's conduct or performance

Another volunteer or a member of the public may raise concerns about the work of a volunteer. Anonymous complaints are not considered.

These concerns may relate to:

- Legal compliance: a data protection violation
- Capability: a volunteer's ability to undertake the role
- Performance: how well a volunteer is performing the role
- Conduct: behaviour when taking part in volunteering.

If there are concerns about a volunteer's behaviour or performance:

The matter will be discussed informally by the Ask Me Co-ordinator who manages the volunteer in their role. This discussion is intended to establish facts so the Ask Me Co-ordinator can decide whether further action is necessary.

The Ask Me Co-ordinator will notify a Director (or Asst Director) at We Can Work It Out Ltd. If the evidence shows that the volunteer's behaviour or performance does not meet the standards expected, the Ask Me Co-ordinator and volunteer will agree steps to address this. These may include additional training or mentoring. Notes will be made of any discussion, and volunteers will be provided with copies of the notes. A date will be set within three to six months when the volunteer's performance will be reviewed.

If the performance has not reached the required standard by the date of the review meeting, the Co-ordinator will consider whether further training, support and supervision should be provided. Alternatively, the volunteer may be invited to explore other volunteering opportunities or be asked to stop volunteering.

If the volunteer is dissatisfied with this process:

He or she may use the appeals procedure.

Serious misconduct

If there is concern that a volunteer may have behaved in such a way that constitutes serious misconduct the Co-ordinator will immediately investigate the matter and will discuss this with the volunteer. The Co-ordinator will notify a Director who can offer advice.

Any decisions or actions will be documented, and a copy given to the volunteer.

It may be appropriate to ask the volunteer to stop volunteering until the investigation is complete and this decision will be made by the Co-ordinator with the Director. Any decision will be conveyed in writing within 14 days.

If it transpires that a volunteer has behaved in such a way that threatens the organisation's work or reputation; threatens people connected with the organisation or members of the public, or destroys the organisation's necessary relationship of trust with a volunteer then the volunteer will be asked to stop volunteering with immediate effect. A written report will be kept, and a copy will be passed to the volunteer.

If the volunteer is dissatisfied with this process, they may use the appeals procedure.

Volunteer appeals procedure

Volunteers may appeal against any decision to end their involvement with Ask Me.

A volunteer who wishes to appeal should notify Jonathan Green, Lead Director, in writing within 10 working days of the date of the letter informing them of the decision. The volunteer's appeal letter must specify the issues which the volunteer wishes to appeal or contest.

Jonathan Green will consider the appeal with an Associate Director and may consult further on the issue.

They may request a meeting or telephone call with the volunteer as soon as is reasonably practicable.

The volunteer will be given at least five working days' notice and may be accompanied by a fellow volunteer or a colleague during the meeting and will be provided with copies of the notes of the meeting or telephone call.

The decision will be sent in writing to the volunteer within 14 working days and this decision will be final.

REVIEW HISTORY
Name / Role/Position / Date approved
Jonathan Green, Director
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