



Brighton & Hove LGBT Switchboard Volunteer Code of Conduct

Purpose of This Charter

This Code of Conduct Charter sets out the standards of behaviour, boundaries, and responsibilities expected of all volunteers at Brighton & Hove LGBT Switchboard. It ensures that volunteering remains safe, inclusive, ethical, and aligned with our values of dignity, compassion, and community leadership.

This Charter applies to every volunteer, in every role, across all Switchboard services and activities.

1. Our Values in Practice

Volunteers are expected to uphold Switchboard's core values in all interactions and activities:

- **Inclusion & Respect** – treating all people with dignity, cultural humility, and kindness.
- **Trauma-Informed Practice** – prioritising emotional safety, choice, and empowerment.
- **Lived Experience Leadership** – recognising the value of personal insight while maintaining boundaries.
- **Confidentiality & Trust** – protecting privacy and handling information responsibly.
- **Collaboration** – working as part of a team and supporting one another.
- **Accountability** – acting ethically and seeking guidance when unsure.

2. Professional Conduct & Behaviour

Volunteers must:

- Act with kindness, empathy, and non-judgement.
- Use inclusive, identity-affirming language.
- Treat service users, volunteers, staff, and partners with respect.
- Maintain professionalism in person, online, and in community spaces.
- Represent Switchboard positively and uphold its reputation for safety and inclusion.
- Follow all organisational policies, including safeguarding, GDPR, boundaries, and health & safety.

Volunteers must not:

- Engage in discrimination, harassment, bullying, or oppressive behaviour.
- Use offensive, derogatory, or exclusionary language.
- Act in ways that could harm service users, colleagues, or the organisation.





3. Boundaries & Role Clarity

Volunteers must:

- Work within the scope of their agreed role description.
- Avoid giving advice, counselling, or support beyond their training.
- Maintain appropriate emotional and relational boundaries.
- Avoid dual relationships with service users, including friendships or romantic or sexual relationships.
- Refrain from sharing personal contact details with service users unless explicitly authorised.

Volunteers must not:

- Provide personal therapy, crisis intervention, or medical advice.
- Meet service users outside approved activities.
- Accept gifts, money, or favours from service users.

4. Safeguarding Responsibilities

Volunteers must:

- Follow Switchboard's safeguarding procedures at all times.
- Report concerns immediately using agreed escalation routes.
- Never promise secrecy when someone discloses risk or harm.
- Record safeguarding concerns accurately and promptly.
- Seek support after difficult interactions or disclosures.

5. Confidentiality & Data Protection

Volunteers must:

- Maintain strict confidentiality about service users, volunteers, and organisational matters.
- Follow GDPR and data protection training.
- Store and handle information securely.
- Only share information with authorised staff.
- Avoid discussing service users outside Switchboard spaces.

Confidentiality may only be broken for safeguarding reasons, following organisational procedures.





6. Communication & Teamworking

Volunteers are expected to:

- Communicate openly, honestly, and respectfully.
- Let their named contact know if they are struggling or unsure about anything.
- Attend supervision, reflective practice, and training as required.
- Contribute to a positive, supportive team culture.
- Notify Switchboard of changes to availability or personal circumstances.

7. Health, Wellbeing & Self-Care

Volunteers must:

- Prioritise their own wellbeing and emotional safety.
- Take breaks or pause volunteering when needed.
- Inform their named contact if they feel overwhelmed or unable to continue safely.
- Engage in wellbeing support, coaching, or supervision where appropriate.

8. Attendance, Reliability & Commitment

Volunteers are expected to:

- Attend agreed shifts, meetings, and training sessions.
- Give as much notice as possible if they cannot attend.
- Maintain regular communication with their named contact.
- Understand that repeated non-attendance may trigger a review of their volunteering.

9. Use of Switchboard Property & Resources

Volunteers must:

- Use Switchboard equipment responsibly and for approved purposes only.
- Follow guidance on digital systems, data storage, and communication tools.
- Return any equipment when requested or when volunteering ends.

10. Conflict of Interest

Volunteers must:

- Declare any personal, professional, or relational conflicts of interest.
- Avoid situations where personal interests could influence volunteer duties.
- Seek guidance if unsure whether a conflict exists.





11. Prohibited Conduct

The following behaviours are strictly prohibited:

- Discrimination, harassment, bullying, or hate speech.
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while volunteering.
- Sharing confidential information.
- Acting outside the volunteer role or training.
- Engaging in unsafe or unethical behaviour.
- Misuse of Switchboard systems, data, or resources.
- Any behaviour that risks harm to service users, volunteers, or the organisation.

12. Breaches of the Code of Conduct

If concerns arise about a volunteer's conduct, Switchboard will follow a fair, trauma-informed process:

1. Initial conversation
2. Review meeting
3. Action plan or adjustments
4. Pausing volunteering if risks remain
5. Ending the volunteer relationship where necessary

Serious breaches may result in immediate suspension pending review.

13. Agreement to the Charter

By volunteering with Brighton & Hove LGBT Switchboard, volunteers agree to uphold this Code of Conduct Charter and contribute to a culture of safety, dignity, and inclusion.

