

INVESTING IN VOLUNTEERS FINAL REPORT



ORGANISATION:	Child Dynamix
liV HOST ORGANISATION:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NCVO <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Development Scotland <input type="checkbox"/> WCVA <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Development Agency (N Ireland)
ASSESSOR:	Dane Gould
NAME OF LEAD ASSESSOR:	Janet Lewis - Jones
ASSESSMENT DATE(S):	12 & 13 March 2018
1ST ASSESSMENT/RENEWAL:	1st Renewal
ASSESSMENT OUTCOME:	Met
CONDITIONS IF ANY:	
DATE CONDITIONS MET:	
FINAL ASSESSMENT DECISION:	

ORGANISATION SUMMARY:

Child Dynamix is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee, delivering services for children, young people and families across the city of Hull. Child Dynamix developed from a group of projects themed around childcare, play, alternative and complementary education, and family services, which were part of a 10-year regeneration scheme in the Preston Road area of East Hull, an area of high deprivation. Child Dynamix was formed in 2005 to create a sustainable organisation able to carry forward the provision of services for children and young people beyond the original 10-year plan. Child Dynamix core purpose is to create environments and deliver activities, which enable children and young people to identify and realise both their aspirations and their potential. Services include integrated childcare and education - play services, learning and development services for young people and adults, family support and health services, employment and advice services, and youth services. Child Dynamix also has a trading arm, running a charity shop and a social enterprise.

The organisation is governed by a Board of Trustees who are responsible for making sure that the organisation is acting appropriately, delivering the services it is contracted to provide, and working in the interests of the communities and individuals it represents. The CEO who is responsible to the Board of Trustees for the operation and development of the organisation heads the organisation's management structure. Child Dynamix has a staff team of ninety-three who work from a purpose built Children's Centre, which is run by Child Dynamix in partnership with local families. In addition services are provided across the community, in other children's centres and community settings including community centres, church halls, and youth and sports facilities.

The overall responsibility for volunteer development and the volunteering programme lies with the Head of Finance and Human Resources who was the liV lead, this position is line managed by the CEO. Senior staff in each area of activity have responsibility for volunteers in their own areas of work. Volunteers are engaged in nine volunteer roles: Parent Peer Mentors who work with families who have children aged over 5 years,

Parent Peer Mentors who work with families who have children aged 5 years and under, Administration/Customer Services, Charity Shop, Charity Shop Driver, Play Work, Childcare, Youth and Sport, and Events volunteers (provide support for the planning and delivery of a range of events and activities within the community on behalf of Child Dynamix).

Since the last assessment, the charity has restructured the senior leadership team to incorporate a Head of Operations role. Since 2014 they have developed Parent Peer Mentoring services from a pilot scheme to having a 5-year contract with the local authority and a 3-year project funded by the Henry Smith Charitable Trust - both of which are reliant on volunteers to be successful.

Child Dynamix continuously strives to ensure opportunities are available to everyone who wants to volunteer with the organisation. To support this, they have decentralised the recruitment processes so that line managers and lead workers have more responsibility for and ability to manage volunteers more efficiently and effectively. They have developed a Volunteer pack with a checklist for Manager's with all documents accessible electronically via the charity's shared drive. The Volunteer policy has been reviewed and the Volunteer Handbook has been updated to include policies that are appropriate for volunteers.

The volunteer development framework is now linked to the organisation's strategic and operational plans. In partnership with a volunteer, all existing volunteer task descriptions have been reviewed and updated. Additional volunteer task descriptions have also been created to increase volunteer opportunity and to meet the needs of charity's project delivery, including Parent Peer Mentoring work and supporting with events and fundraising. Child Dynamix have linked in and worked with Hull City of Culture to promote volunteering.

The organisation has introduced a pre-DBS process so that volunteers can begin volunteering quicker. Volunteers must be assigned to a staff member and supervised at all times until their DBS is received. Volunteers were very involved in designing this new process. Child Dynamix have previously been registered as an Open College Centre (NOCN), and are currently applying to become CERTA registered to build on previous learning and development opportunities, for example, accredit training delivered to Parent Peer Mentors.

SAMPLING RATIONALE

The rationale was to interview a sample of volunteers, which would cover each of the nine volunteer roles and volunteers were sampled from all the volunteer roles. Those interviewed represented a range of ages and lengths of service;, ranging from a new volunteer who had been with the organisation for 2 weeks, to long-serving volunteers (up to eight years), and included both genders and different ethnicities The liV assessor gave the Head of Finance and Human Resources (the liV lead) clear guidance on the breadth of the sample of volunteers chosen for the assessment days. Interviewees were dependant on who could make themselves available. Sixteen volunteers, ten staff (including the CEO) and a Trustee from the board of trustees were interviewed. Interviews with volunteers were face-to-face with 6 by telephone. Face-to-face interviews with volunteers took place in three pairs with 4 interviewed individually. Face-to-face interviews with members of staff took place with the Head of Finance and Human

Resources and the Head of Childcare services both interviewed individually. Members of staff involved in the delivery of both Parent Peer Mentor projects were interviewed in a group of three. The Monitoring and Evaluation Officer and the Finance and Personnel Officer, who have contact with volunteers but no supervisory responsibilities, were interviewed in a pair, as were the CEO and the Trustee. Telephone interviews took place with a Lead Play Worker and a Play Worker.

NUMBER OF SITES, BRANCHES, LOCATIONS:	1 main site, other sites that are managed centrally from this site
NUMBER INCLUDED IN INTERVIEW SAMPLE:	All sites

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS:	50
NUMBER INTERVIEWED:	16
NUMBER AS % OF TOTAL:	32%

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER ROLES:	9
NUMBER OF ROLES SAMPLED BY INTERVIEW:	9
NUMBER AS % OF TOTAL:	100%

NUMBER OF STAFF:	93
NUMBER INTERVIEWED:	10

WERE TRUSTEES INTERVIEWED? YES NO

WRITTEN EVIDENCE
 Submitted with Self-assessment were the Child Dynamix Strategy 2017 – 2022, Volunteer Handbook (includes the volunteer policy) and the Child Dynamix Volunteer Framework. At the assessment visit evidence seen included a range volunteer role descriptions, leaflets and publicity.

INDICATOR 1
There is an expressed commitment to the involvement of volunteers, and recognition throughout the organisation that volunteering is a two-way process which benefits volunteers and the organisation.

SUMMARY OF PRACTICE
 The commitment to volunteering, and recognition that volunteers are essential and integral to Child Dynamix is strongly communicated throughout the organisation. The volunteer policy sets out the organisation’s values, principles and its aims and objectives for volunteering, and includes its commitment to equal opportunities. Volunteers are included in all relevant organisational policies such as safeguarding, and the policies are referenced in the volunteer policy and in the volunteer handbook, for example, confidentiality, child protection, IT, use of mobile phones, health and safety and equality and diversity. The following is from the volunteer policy; ‘Volunteers offer a unique perspective enhancing the delivery of our activities across the charity. Child Dynamix is committed to ensuring that all volunteers receive the necessary support, resources and



development opportunities in order for them to undertake their roles effectively and in return will provide stimulating and rewarding experiences that will enable them to progress and achieve their aspirations.’ Many volunteers had been service users and their journey can be summed up by this comment from a volunteer, “I came through the family support with my children, then I helped out, then I became a volunteer. Staff really encouraged and supported me through this”. All staff interviewed were aware of the volunteer policy and emphasised the passion, enthusiasm and commitment volunteers demonstrate and the new perspectives, skills, knowledge and experience they bring to the organisation. They also emphasised the role and impact that volunteers have in the community and the importance of volunteering for personal development, increasing their confidence and employability. The Trustee, the CEO and members of staff interviewed positively expressed the many benefits involving volunteers has for the organisation.

Members of staff said, “We are always looking at volunteer’s journeys, from being a service-user to becoming a volunteer – we support them 100% on this journey”, “The benefits volunteers bring to the organisation and its beneficiaries are fantastic!” “Since the last liV assessment, volunteering is definitely embedded throughout the organisation”, “Because of the support we give to families, lots of people want to give something back and they do this through volunteering, it’s two-way – reciprocal”, “Volunteers are very important and helpful – many parts of the organisation wouldn’t be able to function without volunteers”, “Volunteers bring in new ideas, we learn new things from them and we are able to get more things done – they massively increase our capacity and are so passionate”, “Volunteers are hugely beneficial, the shop couldn’t run without volunteers and it enables the charity to deliver services it wouldn’t be able to deliver without volunteers such as the parent peer mentoring programmes” and “I think that volunteering is a lovely process. It’s empowerment and self-worth that matter and because of many people’s life experiences, they can turn negatives into positives – it’s life changing”.

The trustee said, “We have a lot of isolation in our communities, lots of single parents who don’t take up free childcare as their child is their only company. We help massively with this, through volunteering and offering childcare” and the CEO said, “It’s really important that we have consistency in the way volunteering works across the whole organisation and all our services. Volunteering is very embedded in the organisation and in our communities – it’s become a core of our organisation”.

Volunteers also spoke about their contribution to Child Dynamix, and all positively identified the benefits to them and the organisation. Comments from volunteers included, “Volunteering gives me a feel-good factor – I want to give something back. I do a lot of listening, a lot of people just need someone to listen to them”, “I like to be out and about. I’ve been an alcoholic, so want to give something back – I have that lived experience”, “Volunteering has given me great experience of retail, also as a van driver – real experience to get back to work, go for a job”, “Volunteering helped me to get the job I have now – helped to get the skills and experience for employability”, “It’s a two-way process, I have experience of being a parent and I’m a very focused and positive person, hopefully these things come through to the people I support”, “I’d been a stay at home mum for a while and volunteering got me out of the house. Now I’ve got into training as a teaching assistant, it’s helped my confidence, I’ve gained new skills and I feel listened to” and “Having disabilities, volunteering has given me a social network, has let me help others – what I’ve learnt feeds into my own family – it’s amazing!”

The volunteer policy was reviewed and updated during the liV development process, and is reviewed on a three-year cycle, or sooner if there are changes in legislation, as part of an overall review of all policies. In addition to the volunteer policy the organisation also has a 'Volunteer Charter' that sets out 10 principles of good practice that staff and departments are committed to. It also has a 'Volunteering Development Framework 2017 – 2020' and the overall vision for the framework is to: 'Create an environment within the charity that values and supports volunteering, recognises its contribution to personal and community development, encourages everyone to participate and share in the benefits, and enhances practice to ensure quality volunteering experiences, accessible to all.'

INDICATOR 2

The organisation commits appropriate resources to working with all volunteers, such as money, management, staff time and materials.

SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

The commitment to resourcing the volunteering programme at Child Dynamix is evident in its staffing structure, and responsibilities for volunteer management or supervision are set out in job descriptions. Child Dynamix ensures that staff members who support volunteers have the necessary knowledge and experience through the recruitment process, induction, appraisal and ongoing training (both external and internal) including volunteer management training. One-to-ones with staff members who supervise volunteers take place regularly to ensure the quality of work is maintained, current procedures are up to date and training needs are identified. The CEO said, "Managing volunteers is part of every conversation that we have – staff communicate all the time with each other about volunteering".

Staff members described attending a range of volunteer management courses and staff interviewed described recent training they had accessed and networks they belonged to. As volunteer involvement is integral to service delivery, volunteer issues are part of the agenda in a variety of meetings at Child Dynamix such as staff meetings, one-to-one supervisions with line managers and Board meetings. Staff members said, "The liV development process has highlighted that we need to look at the possibility of a new staff member in the role of Volunteer Coordinator, this is something that we are considering – it could be a role that links volunteers across the organisation" and "Staff all have supervision skills and we cascade these skills in-house too".

In partnership with the HR Officer, managers and lead workers of each service area undertake recruitment of volunteers. The Head of HR and Finance is responsible for overseeing the policies and procedures for all recruitment in line with the charity's aims and safeguarding procedures. Volunteer enquiries can enter the charity through a variety of channels. In the case of enquiries received centrally with a specific service area interest, the HR Officer forwards the enquiry to the relevant manager/lead worker to follow up. A volunteer flowchart describes the informal interview, which takes place to ensure volunteers are matched to the most appropriate service based on their interest, needs, skills and availability. Child Dynamix also carries out performance appraisal reviews with each member of staff annually, volunteering forms part of the discussions with key staff. All staff have a personal development plan.

The latest strategic plan for Child Dynamix, 2017-22, identifies volunteer's involvement in the charity as one of its key priorities. The CEO said, "Volunteering is the biggest part of

our current strategy. We have to evolve – listen to what volunteers want”. Members of staff said, “We do annual survey evaluations with volunteers, these go to the board and inform our strategies”, “We have lots of connections with other local charities – really important” and “As staff, we can influence things in the organisation – we input into the overall strategy”. The volunteer development framework has been developed to focus on increasing the volunteer engagement with the charity and increasing the amount of opportunities available at all levels. Targets set within the framework are reviewed on an annual basis.

The budgets for each area include volunteer expenses as standard with fluctuations in levels of resources based on historic and predicted trends in volunteering levels. Child Dynamix have at present a contract with Headstart Hull and a Henry Smith Charity grant, that focus heavily on the recruitment of volunteer parent peer mentors with targets aligned to both with significant resources assigned for their training and development. The reimbursement of costs is outlined in the volunteer handbook and the volunteer policy that volunteers are given at induction. Volunteers confirmed that they are encouraged to claim expenses on a regular basis and had the resources to carry out their roles, “Anything I need, they help me, they give it to me – great” and “We definitely have all we need, if we want more, we just ask”.

INDICATOR 3

The organisation is open to involving volunteers who reflect the diversity of the local community and actively seeks to do this in accordance with its stated aims.

SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

Child Dynamix shows a strong commitment to involving volunteers from all backgrounds and its volunteer team is reflective of the communities in which it works. This was also evident from the organisation’s volunteer base and from the range of volunteers who were interviewed. A volunteer explained, “There are so many different types of people at the organisation – it’s really diverse”.

The organisation promotes its volunteering opportunities through a range of media that includes their own website, ‘Do-it’ website, local volunteer development agencies, the press, workshops, information stalls, newsletters, local universities, community settings such as community centres, through City of Culture volunteer groups on social media, by word of mouth and through the Child Dynamix Charity shop. Volunteers interviewed confirmed they had learned about opportunities at Child Dynamix from a variety of sources, “I was doing my Maths and English GCSE and a member of staff from Child Dynamix came to the session to talk about volunteering – I’ve not looked back since then” explained a volunteer.

The Volunteer Policy sets out the organisation’s values with regard to equality of opportunity and highlights the importance of diversity. This is also covered within staff induction and training, and diversity awareness for volunteers’ is highlighted during the recruitment process and at induction. The images used on the organisation’s website, banners and organisational literature are of real service users, children, young people and volunteers with written image consent. They also use purchased images for particular uses. All images are carefully considered to ensure they reflect the diversity of the community.

As part of the application process all potential volunteers are asked to complete an equal

opportunity monitoring form. This information is put on to a central database to monitor and analyse the diversity of reach within the volunteering team. This information helps to steer future direction and increase the diversity and representation from the local community and further afield, and members of staff confirmed this.

INDICATOR 4

The organisation develops appropriate roles for volunteers in line with its aims and objectives, which are of value to the volunteers.

SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

There are role descriptions for each volunteer role and each has its own task description and person specifications that set out the necessary skills; attitude, experience and availability needed to carry out the role and staff and volunteers interviewed confirmed this. A substantial piece of work was undertaken to review and update all existing volunteer task descriptions. The organisation might want to consider highlighting the key benefits to volunteers of each role and the skills they might learn, and consider mapping volunteer role and task descriptions to employability frameworks. This would benefit those volunteers seeking to improve their employment prospects.

Child Dynamix offers a variety of roles for volunteers and operates across various times and days giving volunteers the option to access opportunities at times to suit their needs, “We have got really good now at signposting volunteers to other volunteer roles in different parts of the organisation”, “Many volunteers volunteer across different roles” and “We are looking into developing admin volunteer roles that could work across the whole organisation” members of staff explained. Child Dynamix is proactive in developing and adapting volunteer roles to suit the needs, abilities and interests of individual volunteers, and actively encourages volunteers to develop in their own roles. Volunteers interviewed confirmed they were encouraged to make suggestions on how their role can be changed or developed, “It’s all very varied – we’re not stuck in the same role, we can develop them – they [staff] encourage us” and “We are looking to go into Hull prison to work with prisoners and their families”.

Members of staff commented, “We develop new roles when a need arises or when suggestions are made – new roles include events volunteers and volunteer drivers for the charity shop” and “Role descriptions are great to use as a starting point to ask volunteers what they might want to get out of that role”. The trustee said, “Role descriptions place an extra value on their volunteering role as staff and volunteers have inputted into their development”. Child Dynamix is mindful of additional adjustments volunteers need and this is outlined in the volunteer policy, a volunteer said, “Because of my health they have adapted everything massively for me - they are amazing!”

INDICATOR 5

The organisation is committed to ensuring that, as far as possible, volunteers are protected from physical, financial and emotional harm arising from volunteering.

SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

Child Dynamix has in place risk assessments for each activity, area of operation, premises and roles. A health and safety management information system (MIS) is in place that is completed and updated monthly. The MIS includes a register of all risk

assessments in place for each area. A full Health and Safety audit is carried out annually, each December, which includes questioning staff and volunteers at each setting on their understanding of the safety practices and processes in place. Volunteers explained, “I go into client’s homes but I always text when I arrive and leave – we are kept very safe”, “We know what to do in the shop if anything happens – any violence or theft, we don’t engage, members of staff take over”, “There’s always two people in the shop at any given time” and “We do all the health and safety, risk assessments, and we agree a contract with the client that they must not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol – it’s very thorough, gave me lots of confidence”. Volunteers are covered under the organisation’s insurance policies.

Out of pocket expenses are reimbursed, including travel costs and volunteers interviewed confirmed this, “We can claim expenses, it’s easy – buses and taxis”. All budgets account for volunteer expenses and where allowed, these are included in funding applications and tenders. Where a volunteer would require additional resources to undertake a volunteer role, every effort will be made to secure these resources, including applications to specific funds on their behalf.

Access to the Sage HR system for storing personnel details, including volunteer details, is restricted to the HR team only. Where paper records are kept they are stored securely and again only accessed through the HR team on request. Child Dynamix is registered under the Data Protection Act and will be working within the scope of the GDPR from 25th May 2018, “I will be completing NHS training on GDPR – working on this now” a member of staff said.

INDICATOR 6

The organisation is committed to using fair, efficient and consistent recruitment procedures for all potential volunteers.

SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

There is a framework in place at Child Dynamix for recruiting volunteers and this covers, for example, the roles available, an introduction to the work of the organisation, the recruitment process and the organisation’s expectations of volunteers. The application form asks, amongst other relevant questions, why the potential volunteer is interested in becoming a volunteer. Volunteer information packs include an outline of the range of opportunities, corporate information, an application form and an equal opportunities monitoring form. Individuals interested in volunteering can find details on the organisation’s website, through reception at their sites, media advertisements and the Do-it.org website. Help with completing the volunteer application form is offered. Parent Peer Mentor (PPM) staff explained that they have ‘planned recruitment drives’.

Prospective volunteers are invited for an initial one to one meeting where the process for becoming a volunteer is explained. Members of staff said, “Volunteer recruitment now happens through teams and projects, this works really well. HR is the central hub and we do all the DBS checks for all the roles” and “It’s part of my job to send off for references and do the DBS checks, I enjoy doing it – I want volunteers to succeed”. Volunteers who were interviewed described the recruitment process consistently and were very positive about it, “I found out through a leaflet, completed the application form, then interview, DBS – all good” and “I found out through Hull City of Culture, completed the application form, got references, DBS, was all very well done – a really accessible process”.

During the informal interview, information is gathered from the volunteer to identify what their skills, strengths and interests are and what they are hoping to gain as a volunteer. The interview also enables placement opportunities to be identified to fulfil and meet their needs, volunteers said, “We are definitely matched to roles and we get matched with clients” and “We talked a lot about what role might be best for me – it was great, no pressure to decide either, really flexible”. Members of staff explained, “It’s an informal chat, we always find out what they want to do - we match volunteers with roles,” and “At recruitment we look at matching volunteers to particular areas, many volunteers don’t want to work with families in their own community, and there’s a question on the application form that asks them what they would be comfortable with”. For potential volunteers who might be unsure of which area or role they would like to apply to, Child Dynamix encourages them to complete the recruitment process, then they would be offered taster sessions before they commit to a particular role.

All volunteers are required to supply two references. All roles involve contact with children; young people and/or vulnerable adults and all volunteers are required to provide an enhanced DBS check. This requirement is set out on task descriptions, the volunteer application form and explained at the informal meeting/interview. Child Dynamix recognises that the requirement to provide a disclosure has deterred potential volunteers in the past, and since the last assessment have improved their recruitment processes to ensure they communicate to everyone the need to carry out the DBS check, and what would and would not result in their application being withdrawn. Volunteers can now begin their volunteering role pre-DBS but will be fully supervised at all times until a satisfactory certificate is received in line with Safeguarding policies, “Pre-DBS has come into place over the past twelve months and works really well – have had very positive feedback from volunteers and staff” a member of staff reported.

Working in the communities that Child Dynamix do, where people are facing high levels of deprivation and high levels of crime are recorded, they know that they will face a larger proportion of applications from members of the community who do have criminal records. The organisation’s commitment is to ensure that unless there is a safeguarding issue, this does not prevent them from volunteering. Applicants are encouraged to be open and honest and in return the organisation will work with them ‘to achieve their goals’. If something comes up on the DBS check the organisation will hold a meeting with the person to explore the nature of the offence. In such cases, decisions about whether the person can be a volunteer are made on an individual basis – taking into consideration the conviction and the volunteering role they are applying for.

INDICATOR 7

Clear procedures are put into action for introducing new volunteers to their role, the organisation, its work, policies, practices and relevant personnel.

SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

All new volunteers are introduced to team members (staff and volunteers), to the member of staff responsible for supporting them, and other volunteers at a range of training and induction sessions and are provided with the necessary information, induction and training to carry out their role. They will have already met with and had discussions with the manager/lead worker of the service area, HR officer and members of the core team throughout the recruitment process.



Comments from volunteers included, “I’ve been on lots of training sessions and they are very informative. Really enjoyed it – it’s great!” “The induction was great, we went through all the policies and procedures - I’ve learnt so many things”, “We did two days basic psychology, sociology, safeguarding, parenting and budgeting, great training – loved it”, “People were very good, made me think, made me reflect, was excellent – didn’t feel like I was being patronised at all”, “The training and induction was very professional, tailor made for our group, it matched the needs of the group – really good” and “The training has been great, really opened your eyes, absolutely fascinating, learnt so much through different scenarios – the training has helped me with my every day life, I can’t wait to get started”. The trustee said, “At induction, we talk about employment pathways and higher education”. Members of staff commented, “Safeguarding is mandatory and we do in-house training that is geared towards the needs of the volunteers – really empowers the volunteers”, “Volunteers learn how to be non-judgemental” and “There’s lots of training for parent peer mentors – it’s important that volunteers have a great experience”.

Volunteers are offered regular training to assist in enhancing their skills and all volunteers are encouraged to undertake safeguarding, health and safety, manual handling and first aid. All volunteers explore what the role is and what Child Dynamix’s expectations of volunteers are, and the boundaries of the roles are covered at induction and training. Volunteers were clear on the boundaries of their roles, “We covered professional boundaries within the parent peer mentor training – excellent”, “We did safeguarding, we make sure that the kids don’t go out of the exit doors – it’s all very safe”, and “We help families give their children boundaries”.

The organisation’s volunteer policy informs volunteers of how to raise a complaint if needed, to voice concerns and also to suggest any possible solution or outcome. Also covered at induction are policies and procedures if volunteers behave inappropriately. Volunteer comments showed that they understood what they would do if they wished to complain about any aspect of their volunteer experience, for example, “If I had an issue with a client, I would talk to a member of the staff team – they are all very approachable” and “If we have any issues we talk to our supervisor – we don’t get involved”.

INDICATOR 8

The organisation takes account of the varying support and supervision needs of volunteers.

SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

Child Dynamix commitment to providing support for volunteers was evidenced throughout the interviews with staff and volunteers and, for example, in the volunteer policy. Support available to volunteers is outlined during induction and training and all volunteers have a named member of staff. Support and supervision is provided regularly on a one-to-one basis and group meetings also provide an opportunity for volunteers to discuss difficult situations and receive peer support. The level of supervision depends on the volunteer’s needs and the role undertaken. As part of the volunteer recruitment and matching process, the line manager will have the knowledge to make informed decisions on the level of support volunteers need. Volunteers rate volunteer support and supervision sessions highly and volunteers interviewed confirmed this, “I have a named member of staff that I can contact if I need support – but all staff are very supportive”, “I

have supervision every three weeks, they are quite informal sessions – works really well”, “At supervision I can ask the questions I need, it’s great, they have always provided me with everything I need – it’s fantastic”, “We are always asked how we are, how things are going – it’s great” and “We have so much support – the staff are fantastic!”

All staff members interviewed confirmed their commitment to supporting volunteers and emphasised ensuring the emotional wellbeing of volunteers, “Volunteers know who to talk to if there are any issues, they talk to staff – the role description is useful for this too”, “I think that volunteers get loads of support from staff – so important”, “I supervise volunteers, they can talk about any issues, do it every five weeks – quite informal. We agree and set action points through volunteering supervisions – whatever volunteers want to do, we want to help them”, “We do debriefs over the phone with volunteers when they have completed their session” and “Supervision is always available – it’s very, very important”.

Volunteers are made aware that they can refuse any unnecessary demands and can discuss these further with their named member of staff. Volunteers interviewed knew that they could refuse anything that was outside of their skills or capacity and this is covered in the induction process, a volunteer said, “If there’s something that I’m not sure about I contact a member of staff”, a member of staff explained, “I always encourage volunteers to come and talk to me – whatever the issue”.

Volunteers are regularly asked to provide feedback on their experiences including recommendations, complaints and compliments through, for example, feedback at the end of training sessions, the use of feedback forms, their comments in meetings, in their supervisions, and ‘We value your views’ ideas cards and boxes are situated at each site for volunteers, service users and staff to use. Child Dynamix also carries out an annual volunteer survey and the results are used to inform future policy, working arrangements and to evidence their commitment to volunteers. A member of staff said, “We have had fantastic feedback from volunteers”. Volunteers were confident about giving feedback to the organisation and being listened to, “We have feedback from staff about clients and we give feedback to staff too – definitely two-way”.

All volunteers interviewed confirmed that Child Dynamix keep them informed about what is happening in the wider organisation. They also identified various ways that they received information and updates, for example, through one-to-one sessions, other meetings, by email, team meetings, meeting minutes and through the organisation’s shared drive on their IT system, “They are really good at letting us know what is going on – communication is great”, a volunteer explained.

INDICATOR 9

The whole organisation is aware of the need to give volunteers recognition.

SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

Child Dynamix demonstrates that it understands the need to recognise volunteers, for example, in its volunteer policy, and volunteers are shown appreciation through various formal and informal mechanisms. Those that were identified included, the annual volunteer celebration event each summer, attendance at a range of meetings, through supervisions, access to training, being routinely thanked at the end of each volunteering

session, the support available from staff members, 'thank you' cards, certificates, evaluations and giving feedback. Volunteers interviewed felt very valued and all said they felt appreciated by both staff and the people they support, "The staff are lovely, very hands on – it's like family here", "Helps me feel part of the community and helps with my mental health", "I feel that my opinion is valued, lots of thank yous, lots of praise – they are always calling to check that I'm ok" and "Staff always tell us that 'we are the project' us volunteers, we are the resource".

There were many comments from members of staff who are equally as passionate about valuing volunteers such as, "We are looking at becoming a CERTA centre so we can develop our own accredited courses, for example, parent peer mentor training – this would be great for volunteers", "We have an annual celebration event in volunteers week and we are looking at a bigger event this year – we always thank volunteers, they are amazing", "It's about the quality and good value of volunteering, we are talking about quality of the volunteering experience being most important", "We recognise how valuable volunteers are, they are amazing – everyone is grateful" and "Child Dynamix can be a stepping stone to employment and HE for some volunteers – I am in awe of them". The CEO said, "Managers are great at helping volunteers reflect on the benefits of what they do and the difference they've made – that's really valuable". The trustee said, "We want volunteers to try different things, look at how volunteering positively impacts on kids and young people, they can see that there is something beyond those four walls".

Volunteers are asked for their input in a variety of ways, for example, attendance at team meetings, reviewing course materials, and ideas and comments are actively encouraged. The 2018 annual volunteer survey to gain feedback and the views of all volunteers, is the sixth year it has been conducted. Volunteers are also encouraged to express their views in one-to-one supervisions that are held regularly, and comments included, "I can talk to clients and staff about new ideas – staff are very pro-active", "Staff are always asking us if we can find better ways of doing things. She [member of staff] says 'You go for it girls!'" "I definitely brought new ideas and new skills to the organisation, and to my volunteer role", "I developed my own craft session for the kids – loved doing that", "I was involved in the design of the pre-DBS shadowing, I have written end of year reports, updated role descriptions and been very involved in liV" and "I helped to organise Volunteers Week, met loads of other volunteers too – was great!"

Volunteers' training needs are discussed in supervision, they have a personal development plan and regularly take up further training opportunities so that they can increase their skills and knowledge. All volunteers interviewed had taken advantage of a number of training opportunities and had learned a variety of new skills, comments from volunteers included, "I recently went on domestic abuse training which was quite intense but very, very good", "I've done lots of training – working with vulnerable adults was one I attended" and "I did my induction and training and then I accessed refresher training 12 months later".

Members of staff said, "We have put on training on FGM and domestic violence. What volunteers learn they take back into their own homes – amazing" and "We use our UPSHOT database to track the progress of volunteers, what training they've had, whether their confidence has improved – it works really well, very valuable to the volunteer". Volunteers interviewed were aware that the organisation could provide references for them and this process is outlined in the Volunteer Policy, a member of

staff said, “We give references – all the time”.

When volunteers leave the organisation they are asked to attend an informal exit interview or complete an exit form, and this feedback is reviewed regularly to look at areas where improvements can be made to the volunteer experience or volunteering practice. “It’s important that we try to find out why volunteers leave,” said a member of staff.

IF APPLICABLE:

SUMMARY OF SUGGESTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT (IF ANY)

4.1: A substantial piece of work was undertaken to review and update all existing volunteer task descriptions. The organisation might want to consider highlighting the key benefits to volunteers of each role and the skills they might learn, and consider mapping volunteer role and task descriptions to employability frameworks. This would benefit those volunteers seeking to improve their employment prospects.

SUMMARY OF HOW CONDITIONS WERE MET

OR

SUMMARY OF WHY ORGANISATION HAS NOT MET THE STANDARD