

## **Employees' Rights and Responsibilities**

### **Pay Arrangements**

Staff members are paid monthly. The payment shall be issued during the last week of each month.

### **Pension**

There is provision for an Occupational Pension Scheme relating to employment with Towards Understanding and Healing. The Administrator has full details of the Scheme.

### **Reimbursement**

Staff members might incur expenses during the course of their work. Such expenses could include, but may not be limited to: mileage or other travel expenses to and from meetings, conferences, speaking engagements, etc.; subsistence expenses incurred while working away from the office; or purchases made on behalf of the organisation for use by the organisation. Expenses must be claimed at the end of the month in which they were incurred. Expense Forms are available in the "Staff Files" section of the filing system. Expense Forms need to be signed by the Coordinator or Chair of the Management Committee before being given to the Administrator.

### **Mileage**

Reimbursable mileage is set at .40 pence per mile. This rate is available until 1000 miles have been claimed and reimbursed. After that limit has been reached, the rate drops to .30 pence per mile. To receive reimbursement for mileage, staff members must claim the miles on an Expense Form (see above) by the end of the month incurred. Staff members are requested to use a Mileage Record Form to keep a general record of mileage incurred. Mileage Record Forms are available in the "Staff Files" section of the filing system.

### **Probation (New Employees)**

All new employees will be on probation for a period of three months from the date of hire during which time their progress will be monitored. Provided a satisfactory standard is achieved and maintained, employment will be confirmed. In the event of unsatisfactory progress, employment will not be regarded as confirmed and will be terminated either during or at the end of probation in accordance with the provisions relating to notice set out below. If you decide you are not suited to the job during this period you will be required to give notice in accordance with the "Notice Entitlement/Requirements" (see below).

## **Hours of Work**

Employment hours shall be set at 37.5 hours per week and will generally be confined to weekdays; but there may be occasional work on weekends, subject to agreement. The daily hours of work are 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., with the exception of Friday when working hours are from 9.00 to 2.30 p.m. Exceptions to those working hours need to be confirmed by the Coordinator; or, in the case of the Coordinator's work, the Management Committee.

Staff members will receive a paid break of one hour each day for lunch.

Members of staff are required to fill out a time sheet on a weekly basis, recording all regular and overtime hours, as well as Time-Off-In-Lieu (TOIL) and holidays taken. Forms are available in the "Staff Files" section of the filing system. Completed and signed forms should be stored in this section, as well. The Coordinator will be responsible for supervising other staff members' time sheets and the Chair of the Management Committee will be responsible for supervising the Coordinator's time sheets.

## **Additional Hours**

Staff members may find the need to work overtime hours from time to time (i.e. to attend meetings, seminars, press launches, etc.), and it is a condition of employment that staff members will be required to work a reasonable amount of such overtime when called upon to do so. All overtime hours will be given equivalent time off in lieu to be taken in agreement with the Management Committee/Coordinator. Payment for overtime hours cannot be granted by Towards Understanding and Healing.

Hours worked in residential or conferences settings can be claimed back in TOIL in the following manner: 18 hours can be claimed for every weekend residential/conference. If the overnight residential/conference situation takes place during the week, hours spent in actual work outside of the normal working day can also be claimed. The Management Committee/Coordinator should be consulted if there is confusion around TOIL used for residential/conferences.

## **Annual Holidays**

All staff members on contract will be entitled to 25 days' annual holiday with pay. The holiday year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December.

Upon termination of employment with Towards Understanding and Healing, all employees will be entitled to annual holiday with pay— or pay in lieu thereof— based on the length of service in that holiday year,

less any holidays already taken. This compensation will be based on an accrual rate of 1/17 of the full contractual entitlement per week of service to the date of termination of employment. Where holidays have been taken in excess of accrued entitlement at the date of termination of employment, such excess shall be deducted from monies due the departing member of staff.

### **Annual Holiday Arrangements**

All staff members will receive the following customary holidays with pay:

New Year's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Easter Tuesday, May Day, Spring Bank Holiday, July 12 and 13, August Bank Holiday, Christmas Day, St. Stephen's Day and one other day over the Christmas period.

A list of these dates will be provided to each member of staff and/or posted in public office space.

### **Sickness/Absence**

Staff members' entitlement to sick leave and sick pay is in accordance with the following scheme:

<i>During 1<sup>st</sup> year</i>	1 month's full pay, and (after completing 4 months service), 2 month's half pay
<i>During 2<sup>nd</sup> year</i>	2 month's full pay and 2 month's half pay
<i>During 3<sup>rd</sup> year</i>	4 month's full pay and 4 month's half pay
<i>During 4<sup>th</sup> year</i>	5 month's full pay and 5 month's half pay

Notification of absence is required from all staff members that are away from work for an extended period of time (see "Absence Notification and Certification" Section at the end of this section).

### **Special Leave**

***The following guidelines for paid leave are minimum periods of time. Further paid leave can be granted at the discretion of the Management Committee.***

Death and/or funeral of immediate family	3 days
Funeral of a near relative	1 day
Serious family illness	2 days
Marriage	2 days
Moving House	1 day

## **Family Procedures**

The Family Procedures of this employer follow the Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002. Additional details about this Order and the way it affects family rights are provided on page 10.

## **Sick Leave**

If staff members are absent from work due to sickness or injury, Towards Understanding and Healing will continue to provide full pay (inclusive of any Statutory Sick Pay payable) for a maximum of 5 days during the short-term contract.

Beyond this arrangement you may qualify for statutory Sick Pay. Details are available from the Management Committee (See “Absence Notification and Certification Procedure” at the end of this section).

## **Requirement to Work Outside the UK**

Staff members are not required to work outside the UK for more than one month. They may, however, be required to work in the Republic of Ireland for periods of short duration.

## **Collective Agreements**

There are currently no collective agreements that have been made between Towards Understanding and Healing and any other organisation(s) which directly affect the terms and conditions of employment with Towards Understanding and Healing. If any such agreements are being considered by the Management Committee, staff members will be consulted prior to the finalising of any such agreement.

## **Notice Entitlements/Requirements**

The period of notice staff members are entitled to receive and required to give in the event of termination of employment is as follows:

<b><i>Period of Continuous Service</i></b>	<b><i>Notice Entitlement</i></b>
Less than 1 month	Nil
At least 1 month but less than 5 years	1 month
At least 5 years but less than 12 years	1 week for each year of service
12 years or more	12 weeks maximum

## **Grievance Procedure**

The object of this procedure is to provide a staff member who has a grievance with the opportunity to have it examined quickly and effectively, and where a grievance is deemed to exist, to have it resolved, if possible, at the earliest practical moment.

Should staff members have a concern about their working situation, they should approach the Coordinator with the issue. If the Coordinator does not handle the issue in a satisfactory manner, if the complaint is regarding the Coordinator, or if the query or complaint is regarding employment, the matter should be raised with the Management Committee. The grievance shall be heard within 5 working days and a decision given within 5 working days of the hearing. In the case of a complaint by the Coordinator, an outside mediator may be used by the Coordinator and Management Committee to resolve the concern. An outside mediator may also be consulted in the case of complaints by staff members that are not resolved by initial discussions with the Management Committee. In the case of mediation not yielding satisfactory results, arbitration may be used.

## **Equal Opportunities Policy**

Towards Understanding and Healing is an equal opportunities employer. The aim of our policy is to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, race, religious belief or political opinion, nor should they be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which are neither justified nor relevant to the job. Selection criteria and personnel procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are recruited, promoted and treated in all other ways purely on the basis of merit/ability to do the job for which they have applied.

## **Changes in Terms and Conditions**

From time to time your main terms and conditions of employment may be subject to change (i.e. by mutual consent). Should any change be agreed, this will be confirmed, within one month from the change taking effect, by individual written notification.

## **Induction**

All new staff members will be given an induction that will include a thorough examination of this document, as well as a tour of the building that will familiarise them with all health and safety aspects of the facilities (i.e. fire exits, safe operation of all equipment). Most importantly, new staff members will be introduced to the history, ethos, and guiding principles of the organisation, as well as to its structure and methodology.

## **Absence Notification and Certification Procedure**

### **Statutory Sick Pay**

1. For members of staff who qualify, Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) is payable for up to twenty-eight weeks of sickness absence.
2. For SSP purposes, Qualifying Days with Towards Understanding and Healing are Monday to Friday.
3. A member of staff, absent from work due to sickness or injury, shall be paid SSP provided the qualifying conditions for receipt of such are satisfied; and provided that the requirements, in respect of notification and supply evidence of incapacity as set out in paragraph 4, are complied with.

### **Notification**

- A If a member of staff is absent from work due to illness, or any other reason, they must ensure that the Management Committee/Coordinator is advised of the nature and expected duration of the absence.
- B If illness extends beyond seven calendar days members of staff must notify the employer on the eighth day of absence as at paragraph 4A.

### **Evidence of Incapacity**

- C If a member of staff is ill and their absence extends beyond three working days, a completed DHSS self certification form SC2 must be presented to the Management Committee/Coordinator. This form is available at doctors' surgeries and should arrive on the fourth, but no later than the eighth, day of absence.
- D If a staff member's absence extends beyond seven calendar days, a National Insurance Medical Certificate covering absence from the eighth day must be presented to the Management Committee/Coordinator. This certificate, which can be obtained from doctors' surgeries, should be forwarded to Towards Understanding and Healing as soon as possible after the eighth day of absence.
- E Continued absence must also be covered by further medical certificates on a regular basis.
- F On return to work after an absence of more than seven calendar days, the staff member must present a certificate from their doctor stating that they are fit to resume work.

Unacceptable delays in notifying Towards Understanding and Healing, or failure to provide evidence of incapacity, may result in the withholding of any SSP due.

4. Any person who knowingly makes a false statement on a DHSS Self-Certification Form shall be dealt with in accordance with Disciplinary Procedure.

## **Disciplinary Rules and Procedures**

### **Object**

The following procedure has been drawn up to make staff members aware of the policy of Towards Understanding and Healing in relation to disciplinary matters. The object of such a procedure is to give employees the opportunity to improve their behaviour/performance in cases of inappropriate behaviour.

### **General Principles**

No disciplinary action shall be taken until there has been a full investigation into any alleged incident.

After each stage of this procedure, the staff member shall have the right to a fair hearing with the opportunity to state their case to the Management Committee. At each hearing, the staff member can be accompanied by a fellow employee, trade union representative or friend, if desired.

Previous warnings shall lapse after a period of satisfactory conduct (three months for a verbal warning and six months for a written warning). Warnings are not generally transferable unless the number of warnings in respect of different types of misconduct justifies a final warning, irrespective of the offence.

### **Precautionary Suspension**

In certain situations, where major or gross misconduct is suspected, management may need time to carry out a full investigation. In such circumstances, Towards Understanding and Healing reserves the right to suspend an employee pending a decision. Such suspensions will be with pay.

### **Procedure**

In the event of a breach of these policies and procedures, the staff member will be interviewed at all stages by a representative(s) of the Management Committee and given the opportunity to state their case.

### **Minor Misconduct**

If the breach is in the minor misconduct category and management is satisfied that an offence has occurred, the procedure will be as follows:

- Stage 1      The staff member will be given a verbal warning. It will be recorded and retained on file for a period of 6 months (or the remainder of the period of employment, if shorter).
- Stage 2      If the same or similar offence is repeated within 6 months, the staff member will be given a First Written Warning. It will be recorded and retained on file for a period of 12 months.
- Stage 3      If the same or similar offence is repeated within 12 months, the staff member will be given a Final Written Warning. This will contain clear notice that a repeat offence within 12 months will result in dismissal.
- Stage 4      If the same or similar offence is repeated within 12 months, the staff member will be dismissed.

### **Major Misconduct**

If an offence which falls within the major misconduct category is committed, and management is satisfied that it has occurred, the disciplinary procedure will be invoked at Stage 3 (i.e. the staff member will receive a Final Written Warning which will contain clear notice that a repeat of the offence within 12 months will result in dismissal).

### **Gross Misconduct**

If a staff member has committed an offence which is regarded as gross misconduct, and management is satisfied that an offence has occurred, the staff member will be dismissed summarily (i.e. without notice and without wages in lieu of notice).

### **Disciplinary Rules**

The following are examples of the type of rules/offences which Towards Understanding and Healing has categorised for each level of misconduct. This is not an exhaustive list, and the management reserves the right to decide how any other misconduct shall be categorised.

*Minor Misconduct:*

- Absenteeism
- Lateness
- Failure to comply with Absence Notification and Certification Procedure
- Careless work and poor effort at work
- Performance of duties below an acceptable standard
- Ignoring safety/hygiene/security rules
- Extended tea and meal breaks
- Failure to maintain a tidy and safe working environment
- Misuse of telephone
- Excessive time away from job

*Major Misconduct:*

- Dangerous physical horseplay
- Neglect causing damage to or loss of Towards Understanding and Healing's, clients' or other employees' property/equipment/tools
- Serious neglect of safety/hygiene/security rules
- Smoking in prohibited areas
- Consuming intoxicants during working hours or bringing intoxicants into the premises without permission
- Entry into any unauthorised areas
- Willful or excessive wastage of material
- Unsatisfactory attitude to clients
- Use of foul language
- Gambling on premises
- Insubordination

*Gross Misconduct:*

- Theft
- Physically violent behaviour
- Leaving the premises or site without permission
- Refusal to carry out a reasonable work instruction
- Deliberately ignoring safety/hygiene/security rules and thereby endangering one's own or another's physical well-being or safety
- Obscene behaviour
- Intoxication induced by alcohol or drugs
- Fraud
- Disclosing confidential business information to a third party
- Using position in organisation, organisation's reputation or organisation's facilities to promote any party political agenda
- Willful damage to or gross negligence of Towards Understanding and Healing's, users' or other employees' property/equipment/tools
- Undertaking work in competition with own employer
- Falsification of records

## **Note – Discrimination**

Any allegation of discrimination, victimisation or harassment on grounds of sex, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, marital status, disability, religious beliefs, or political opinions will be thoroughly investigated and, where appropriate, will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure. The disciplinary response will depend on the nature and seriousness of the incident; and in extreme cases will result in summary dismissal.

## **Appeal**

If staff members wish to appeal against any disciplinary action, they should do so in writing within 5 working days. The appeal should be sent to the Secretary of the Management Committee who will arrange a hearing to take place with the Management Committee within 10 working days of such a request. A decision shall be given in writing within 5 working days.

Clarification on any point in this procedure may be obtained from the Chairperson or the Management Committee/Coordinator. An outside mediator may be brought in to monitor the appeal process. If mediation does not yield satisfactory results, arbitration may be used.

## **Family Rights—Entitlements and Procedures**

Towards Understanding and Healing is committed to maintaining family friendly policies for all staff members. All policies determining family rights—maternity/paternity leave, payment whilst on leave, etc.—are bound by the Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002. As this piece of legislation is comprehensive and thorough, no additional policies on family rights exist outside of the Order.

The **Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002** [S.I. 2002/2836 (N.I. 2)] introduces provisions designed to help employees balance their family and employment responsibilities, whilst taking account of the need for business to compete in an increasingly competitive market.

Specifically, the Employment Order provides, for the first time, rights for fathers and adoptive parents in Northern Ireland to paid time off. It simplifies existing provisions on maternity rights and introduces a new right for parents of young children to request flexible working arrangements.

The detail of the Order's provisions are implemented by Regulations which are outlined in several manuals which are kept in the "Staff Files" section of the filing system.

## **Good Relations Policy**

Towards Understanding and Healing is committed to providing services in a way that protects the dignity of all individuals and groups that work with the organisation. This commitment extends to all staff members, volunteers, user groups, management and project partners. Race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, political association, religious beliefs and cultural orientation are things to be celebrated and protected. Towards Understanding and Healing will not discriminate on the basis of any of the above factors, and will work to enable all individuals and groups that are associated with the organisation to feel safe and valued.

Any type of harassment or intimidation, but most particularly that associated with the above factors, will be dealt with immediately with appropriate procedures. Towards Understanding and Healing is an actively anti-discrimination and anti-sectarian organisation. All staff members, management committee members, user groups and project partners must agree to abide by this anti-discrimination policy when working with Towards Understanding and Healing in any capacity.

## **Health and Safety Policy**

Towards Understanding and Healing is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all staff members, volunteers, user groups and management. The following policies reflect this commitment. It is the responsibility of the employer to help new members of staff become familiar with all aspects of these policies. The employer is also responsible for ensuring that these policies are frequently reviewed and updated, as necessary. **It should be noted that all rules and regulations that apply to the operation of the Junction apply to Towards Understanding and Healing (see Appendix A).**

All operations of Towards Understanding and Healing should be conducted within the boundaries of the Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland's "Guide to Workplace Health and Safety" (copies of which are available in the "Staff Files" of the filing system). Staff members are responsible for being familiar with this manual, as well as with the following policies and with the procedures for safe operation of all equipment.

The working environment should be kept safe by:

- regular fire drills
- regular examination of fire extinguishers
- keeping all fire escapes/routes clear and in operational condition
- posting notices of fire escape routes
- keeping all heating units clear of interference
- keeping all machinery venting clear of interference
- turning off all electrical units after working hours
- annual first aid training for staff and volunteers
- annual first aid certification for at least one member of staff

In addition, a general risk assessment will be reviewed annually (copies of which are available in the "Staff Files" section of the filing system). A health and safety assessment will take place twice a year, and will be conducted by a member of staff and a member of the Management Committee.

In the case of an emergency (i.e. fire, natural disaster, human threat), staff members should take the lead in evacuating and/or ensuring the safety of any user groups being served at the time. Emergency services should be contacted and provided with appropriate information as soon as possible. A formal report of any incident should be made using the Incident Forms that are available in the "Staff Files" section of the filing system. Such forms should be provided to the Coordinator/Chair of Management Committee.

In the case of accident, emergency, or threat while staff members and/or user groups are off-site, staff members should take the lead in evacuating and/or ensuring the safety of any user groups. Emergency services should be contacted and provided with appropriate information as soon as possible. A formal report of any incident should be made using the Incident Forms that are available in the "Staff Files" section of the filing system. Such forms should be provided to the Coordinator/Chair of Management Committee.

In the case of threats made to staff members, the incident should be immediately reported to the Coordinator **and** Chair of the Management Committee. The authorities should be notified immediately, as well. The Coordinator, Chair and staff member(s) affected by the threat will decide whether other staff members need to be notified of the threat and, if so, how to inform them and address the safety needs of the entire staff.

Prior to any event or activity run by Towards Understanding and Healing, a Risk Assessment Form should be filled out. These forms can be found in the "Staff Files" section of the filing system. This form is designed to allow staff members to identify and act to minimise potential risks associated with events or activities organised by the organisation. If staff feel that they are unable to address a potential risk in a comprehensive way, they are responsible for consulting the Coordinator regarding that risk. If the Coordinator feels unsuitable for addressing the risk, she/he is responsible for consulting the Management Committee. The Coordinator will be responsible for signing and approving the Risk Assessment Form for every event organised by Towards Understanding and Healing.

A First Aid kit (along with a book on First Aid) is available in Towards Understanding and Healing's supply cabinet.

## **Child Protection Policy**

### **Statement of Policy**

It is the policy of Towards Understanding and Healing staff and Management Committee members to safeguard the welfare of all young people by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm. The focus of the work of the organisation is on adults rather than young people. However, in the event of working with young people on any level, the following policy applies. **The Child Protection Policy and procedures of the Junction also apply to the work of Towards Understanding and Healing (see Appendix B).**

### **Selection of Staff and Volunteers**

Every effort will be made to ensure that staff and volunteers are committed to this policy. All staff members and volunteers will go through vetting procedures before starting work with Towards Understanding and Healing—two references will be sought from former employers and a criminal records check (PECS check) will be done before all staff and voluntary workers are engaged.

Staff will be selected after an interview at which Members of the Management Committee and an independent observer should be present.

Volunteer staff will be screened and then informally interviewed by the Coordinator to check that they will be able and fit to undertake voluntary work with Towards Understanding and Healing.

### **Encouraging Self-Protection**

Participants in Towards Understanding and Healing will be encouraged to feel that their safety, as outlined by the policy statement, is of paramount importance. They will be encouraged to tell the Coordinator, another member of staff or a member of the Management Committee if they feel threatened in any way. They will also be encouraged to understand that any and all complaints will be taken seriously.

The management of Towards Understanding and Healing will create an open environment for the sharing of complaints/issues by identifying a “designated person” to whom young people can turn if they need to talk. The designated child protection officer is the Coordinator and in her/his absence, the designated officer is the Chairperson of the Management Committee.

All complaints, issues and concerns will be addressed immediately by the designated child protection officer and Management Committee. For full details on the procedure for addressing complaints, see the “Procedures for Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse” in Appendix B.

## **Conduct of Staff and Volunteers**

As a general rule staff and volunteers will not:

- a) Spend excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others.
- b) Take young people alone in a car on journeys, however short.
- c) Take young people to their home.

When the occasion arises in which the above scenarios are unavoidable, they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of the staff member's line manager or the young person's parents (but preferably with the permission and knowledge of both).

## **Interaction Between Staff/Volunteers and Young People**

Staff and volunteers should never:

- a) Engage in rough physical games, including horseplay, apart from structured sports activities.
- b) Engage in sexually provocative games or activities.
- c) Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- d) Allow young people to use inappropriately sexual or threatening language with staff or other young people.
- e) Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person, even in jest.
- f) Let allegations a young person makes about staff or other young people go unchallenged or unrecorded.
- g) Do things of a personal nature for young people, which they can do themselves.

## **Personal Care**

It may sometimes be necessary for staff and volunteers to do things of a personal nature for young people, particularly if they have disabilities. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents. In an emergency situation which requires this type of help, parents should be fully informed. In such situations, it is important that all staff and volunteers are sensitive to the young person and undertake personal care tasks with the utmost discretion.

## **Organisation of Meetings**

Young people will be informed of the day, date, venue, starting time and finishing time of all meetings. There will always be at least one adult member of staff present at meetings. It is their responsibility to ensure the safety of those attending the meeting. They are also responsible for seeing that young people attending a meeting have access to safe transportation home from the meeting or event. If there is a visiting tutor/speaker attending Towards Understanding and Healing meetings, members will be informed prior to the meeting.

## **Organisation of Meetings with Other Agencies**

Where the Towards Understanding and Healing is invited to attend meetings organised by other agencies, the Coordinator and/or Management Committee will make every effort to ensure the credibility of the organisation. If a participant in Towards Understanding and Healing programmes is invited to a meeting with an outside organisation, a staff member of Towards Understanding and Healing will accompany the participant. If this is not possible, but permission to attend the meeting is still granted from the participant's parents, a named contact will be sought to welcome the Towards Understanding and Healing participant and introduce him/her to others at the meeting. Whilst every effort is made to keep meetings out of school/college hours, where a meeting opportunity arises within such times and parental consent is given, it is the parent's responsibility to inform the school/college of the reason for absence.

## **Planned Journeys, Visits, Conferences and Residentials**

When a particular project involves long-distance travel or an overnight stay, written parental consent will be sought for Towards Understanding and Healing participants under the age of eighteen. A staff member will be present on these types of trips where young people are attending, and it will be their responsibility to ensure safe conditions for the young people. The member of staff should know where the young people are and what they are doing at all times.

Any potentially dangerous activity will have constant adult supervision. Dangerous behaviour by young people (e.g. acting against instructions given by leaders; drinking; drug-taking; or any action which endangers the physical, sexual or emotional well-being of themselves or others) will not be tolerated. All young people will sign a contract prior to residentials. If the contract is broken, the participants can be sent home and can be asked to withdraw from the Towards Understanding and Healing programme. Parents may be contacted to collect their children if the staff members feel it is necessary.

Parents will be given full information about a trip, including details of the programme of events and activities in which young people may be engaged before the trip commences.

## **Ratios for Journeys, Visits, Conferences and Residentials**

As a general rule, there should be one adult for every eight young people. At minimum, there should be at least two adults present—one male and one female. However, ratios may vary depending on:

- The number of participants in the group.
- The nature of the site/venue.
- The activities to be undertaken.
- The nature of any disabilities of the people involved.
- The needs of each young person.

Efforts will be made by the Coordinator to ensure that each adult facilitator knows the responsibilities he/she is expected to bear during the residential.

### **Non-Recommended Activities**

Occasionally information is forwarded about meetings, journeys, visits, conferences and residentials which are not sponsored by Towards Understanding and Healing. If the Coordinator feels that the opportunity is genuine, details may be forwarded to Towards Understanding and Healing participants. However, it will be made clear that the Coordinator and Management Committee of Towards Understanding and Healing will not be responsible for the activity and that any arrangements to participate in it will be between the participants, their parents and the organisers of the event/activity.

### **Review**

This policy will be regularly reviewed by the Towards Understanding and Healing Coordinator and Management Committee.

## **Media Policy**

This policy is designed to ensure that the representation of Towards Understanding and Healing in the media is as coordinated and accurate as possible. To this end, the Coordinator will serve as the key media contact for Towards Understanding and Healing. She/he will represent the organisation in all media contacts including: radio, television, newspapers and interviews for publications/academic research. The Chair of the Management Committee will liaise with the Coordinator to maintain the organisation's media strategy. If the Coordinator is not available, the Chair or another appointee of the Management Committee may replace him/her as the media representative. Likewise, another member of staff can represent the organisation in interactions with the media with the permission of the Coordinator/Chairperson.

## **Policy on Staff Involvement with External Groups**

It is the expectation that all members of the organisation will be involved in a variety of communities on many different levels. Group membership or involvement—including participation as a member or officer of a management committee—when seen to correspond to the work being undertaken as a part of Towards Understanding and Healing, can be considered to be a part of a staff member's job. In this instance, the work can be conducted during working hours. Membership of this kind needs to be approved by the Coordinator or Management Committee. Group membership or community involvement that does not complement the work of Towards Understanding and Healing cannot be undertaken during working hours and must remain separate from work involvement.

In order to be responsive to the special sensitivities of community relations work, Towards Understanding has created the following policies to guide staff members' participation in politics:

- Because the Coordinator may represent the organisation to the media and on a wider community level, she/he is the only staff member that is discouraged from holding a political post.
- All other employees can be involved in politics in a community, party, or representational level as long as their involvement does not interfere with work and is not associated with their political involvement. However, they should inform the Coordinator before taking or running for any official post.
- In that post/capacity, the staff member must maintain complete separation between the political party/office and the work of Towards Understanding and Healing.
- Towards Understanding and Healing must not be used to represent the party/organisation nor the party/organisation be used to represent Towards Understanding and Healing in any way shape or form.
- In the event that the political participation affects the staff member's ability to carry out the work of Towards Understanding and Healing, the organisation must always take precedence.
- Time used to participate in politics, at any level, must always be taken on the staff member's personal or holiday time and must not interfere with working hours.

## **Evaluation Policy**

Towards Understanding and Healing is committed to effective working practices. Evaluation can play a strong role in helping to determine what work is effective and what needs to be adjusted to better serve user groups. To this end, Towards Understanding and Healing will cooperate fully with any evaluation required by a funding body. Further, the organisation will commission outside evaluation that will take place beyond the requirements of funding bodies, as finances allow. Regular recording and evaluation will be conducted by user groups, facilitators and the Coordinator. The organisation's Evaluation Strategy (see Appendix C) will guide evaluation procedures.

## **Confidentiality Policy**

Due to the sensitive nature of the work undertaken by Towards Understanding and Healing, confidentiality is of utmost importance to the daily operations of the organisation. The following policies have been developed to ensure that the organisation is protecting the confidentiality of its programme participants in every way possible.

### **Personal Responsibility**

Maintaining confidentiality is the responsibility of all parties involved in any project, event, or activity. TUH has institutionalised good practice around confidentiality in every aspect of the operations of the organisation; however, TUH encourages personal integrity in maintaining confidentiality for all individuals involved in the work of the organisation. Specifically, all staff members, volunteers, management committee members, participants, facilitators, and partnering organisations sign contracts agreeing to personal responsibility in encouraging and maintaining confidentiality.

### **Recorded Information**

Recorded information that identifies individual participants in TUH programmes will be kept to an absolute minimum. In the case of identifying information that is recorded and stored by the organisation, this information will be kept as secure as possible. Specifically, any computer containing this type of information regarding TUH participants must be password protected. The password must be changed on a weekly basis by each staff member who uses a computer containing records with identifying information. Each staff member will be responsible for keeping her/his password confidential. Any hardcopy documents containing identifying information must be kept in one of the three locked filing cabinets containing TUH files. Staff members will be responsible for maintaining possession of their keys at any time. The only people with access to identifying information are staff members who use the information to conduct the work of the organisation. People not directly in need of such information, including other staff members and management committee members, cannot access the information without the express permission of individual participants.

In regards to evaluations of TUH, either external or internal, no identifying information about programme participants will be used. Non-identifying statistical information will be the only information used in this capacity.

No quotes associated with programme participants will be used in a public capacity without the express, written permission of individual participants. Photographs associated with programme participants will never be used in a public capacity. This policy applies to any publications put into general circulation by the organisation. Information about programme participants—past or current—will only be included in publications with their express, written permission.

## **Statutory Responsibility**

In accordance with the laws concerning reporting intended or realised criminality, TUH must report disclosed information that falls into certain categories. If an individual discloses intent to harm themselves or someone else, TUH is legally responsible for reporting that intention to the authorities. Likewise, if an individual discloses specific information regarding a crime for which they *have not* been prosecuted, TUH is legally responsible for reporting the details of that crime to the authorities.

In order to protect the rights of individual participants in TUH programmes, staff members and/or the facilitation team will explain this policy on disclosure and reporting in detail before the start of events or activities with which the individual may be participating. Further, the facilitation team will remind participants of this policy if individuals seem to be moving towards a personal disclosure of this nature during the course of storytelling or dialogue.

If something of a criminal nature is disclosed during a TUH event or activity, the member(s) of the facilitation team which have been party to the information are responsible for reporting it to the Coordinator. The Coordinator will then take responsibility for making sure that the information is reported to the proper authorities.

## **Facilitator Policy**

Facilitators are a valuable part of the work of Towards Understanding and Healing. Although many facilitators that participate in the work of the organisation are not official members of staff, the Good Relations, Health and Safety, Child Protection and Media Policies apply to facilitators during their work with Towards Understanding and Healing. Facilitators must go through a reference checking process which requires a minimum of two references from former employers, as well as displaying a curriculum vita (CV) and evidence of qualifications. In cases where facilitators will be working with young people the vetting procedures that are required of staff members and volunteers—namely the PECS check, as well as the two references from former employers—still apply. All facilitators will be provided with a contract listing rights and responsibilities (see Appendix D) that must be signed before beginning work with Towards Understanding and Healing.

In order to provide facilitators with the resources to best do their job with Towards Understanding and Healing, a system of Secondary Support is used. This system ensures that time to process their experiences facilitating for Towards Understanding and Healing programmes, as well as access to the appropriate professionals will be built into any facilitation experience. Further, if facilitators find that they need to process beyond what is provided by the organisation, they can make a request for support and Towards Understanding and Healing will ensure that they get access to the needed support.

Facilitators will be required to fill out Sessional Recording Sheets after participation in any Towards Understanding and Healing event. Sessional Recording Sheets are available in the “Staff File” section of the filing system. Instead of, or in addition to, these Sessional Recording Sheets, facilitators might be asked to participate in other forms of evaluation of programmes. In the event of additional evaluation, facilitators will be made aware of the requested procedures before agreeing to facilitate that particular programme or event.

## **Volunteer Policy**

### **Statement of Policy**

Towards Understanding and Healing recognises that the contribution of volunteers adds an essential element to its operation. This policy recognises that:

- Volunteers offer their time voluntarily.
- Volunteers can bring skills, expertise, an outside perspective and occasionally international experience to the work of the organisation.
- Volunteers have rights and responsibilities that apply to their work with Towards Understanding and Healing—sometimes those rights and responsibilities will be different to the full-time staff and some will be the same.

The policy is geared towards adult volunteers working in an organisational capacity with the development of the Towards Understanding and Healing project.

### **Types of Volunteers**

Due to the nature of the project and the wide variety of opportunities for volunteering that exist within the organisation, some volunteers will be full-time and others part-time. Some will work for prescribed periods of time and others for limited periods of time. A variety of organisations, both local and international, will be utilised in linking volunteers to the organisation. In addition to more standard volunteering, Towards Understanding and Healing is also willing to facilitate the work of interns, academics and researchers in its projects and programmes.

### **Screening/Selection of Volunteers**

Before a volunteer becomes officially involved with Towards Understanding and Healing, they should apply to the Coordinator who will discuss what kind of work they want to do and the way in which they might fit into work the organisation needs done at that time.

All adult volunteers must undergo PECS screening with a particular emphasis on child protection issues, if working with children.

The Coordinator will interview all volunteers.

### **Provision for Volunteers**

All provision for volunteers depends on the availability of suitable funding within the project's budget. Where this is restrictive, the extent of provision available will be made clear to volunteers at the earliest possible stage.

## **Induction**

All volunteers will be provided with an induction to Towards Understanding and Healing. This induction will be the same as that of full-time staff members; and reference will be made to all policies of Towards Understanding and Healing, with special attention to Child Protection and Good Relations Policies. Volunteers will be paired up with a member of staff that will be available to supervise the volunteer and answer all their questions. Before beginning work, all volunteers must sign a Volunteer Contract that will outline their specific rights and responsibilities (see Appendix E).

## **Training**

Towards Understanding and Healing will access suitable training opportunities and funding to compliment the work of volunteers. Where appropriate, volunteers will have access to training offered to full-time members of staff.

## **Recognition**

Towards Understanding and Healing will endeavour to acknowledge the work of volunteers wherever and whenever is appropriate. In as many cases as is possible, volunteers will be considered to be a part of the staff. Volunteers are responsible for working with the policies and procedures listed in this document in mind.

## **Type of Work**

Volunteers will be involved in a variety of work related to Towards Understanding and Healing. Work might include, but may not be limited to the following types of jobs (depending on need or availability):

### *Office work*

- receiving/making telephone calls
- word processing/IT
- faxing
- photocopying
- laminating
- binding documents
- filing
- maintaining the resource library

### *Working with young people (in line with young people's protection policy)*

- facilitating groups
- participating in meetings/trips/residentials

### *Project work*

- researching
- offering expertise
- co-facilitating

### *Working with consulting organisations*

- research
- offering expertise
- administration

## **Responsibility for Volunteers**

The Coordinator will carry the day-to-day responsibility for volunteers, however overall responsibility rests with the Management Committee.

## **Solving Problems**

Any difficulties should usually be brought to the attention of the Coordinator, either directly or through a third party. If this is problematic for any reason, the volunteer may access the complaints procedure, either directly or through a third party, by contacting the Chair of the Management Committee or any other member of the Management Committee known to them.

## **Exclusion**

The Management Committee reserves the right to exclude a volunteer at its discretion if it is felt that they are acting in a way that that is inappropriate to the overall aims of the Towards Understanding and Healing Project.

## User Policy

Towards Understanding and Healing is committed to the well-being of its user groups. Like every community relations organisation, Towards Understanding and Healing is designed specifically to benefit its users. However, in the sensitive and risky work of storytelling and dialogue, it is especially important to undertake to protect the rights of users every way possible. This policy and its accompanying User Contract (see Appendix F) seek to do just that.

The value and dignity of every individual will be recognised in the work undertaken by Towards Understanding and Healing. In this respect, participants have the right to:

- feel respected
- feel safe in every encounter related to the organisation
- decide when to share their story
- end their work with the organisation at their discretion
- absolute confidentiality regarding their participation
- have the space to question and to change opinions
- understand what the organisation is about before deciding to participate

Because user groups will often be from different political or cultural groups, and because opinions within those groups (and from individual perspectives) can differ greatly, it is important that group dialogue protects the right of the individual to speak and be heard. To that end, participants in the programmes and projects of Towards Understanding and Healing are asked to:

- treat others with respect
- give others the space to speak
- wait for a few moments after others have spoken to respond to what someone has said
- speak with honesty
- speak only for themselves and not for anyone else in the group
- avoid language that distances them from what they are saying
- ask questions that are honest and that do not seek to induce guilt or to condemn another perspective
- ask questions if you do not understand what has been said or if you are in doubt about what has been said
- maintain complete confidentiality about who has participated and what they have said

If participants have questions about the work or policies of Towards Understanding and Healing, they are encouraged to speak with the Coordinator or another staff member, especially if these questions relate to safety. Every endeavour will be made to create a safe environment for participation with the organisation.

## **Financial Policy**

See the Financial Procedures Manual (to be stored and distributed along with this document).

## Appendix A

## Appendix B

**Appendix B (cont.)**

**Appendix B (cont.)**

## Appendix C

### **Evaluation Strategy**

In order to create a “best practices” form of evaluation that extends beyond evaluation solely for funding purposes and incorporates evaluation for the purposes of best developing the work of the organisation, Towards Understanding and Healing has adopted the following strategy.

In designing and carrying out the following forms of evaluation, every effort will be made to consider the **requirements of the funding body** (currently the Community Relations Council) and the **preferences of the Management Committee**. Further, the **aims and exit plan** will be established for every event carried out by Towards Understanding and Healing, as well as for the organisation as a whole. Whenever possible, feedback will be solicited from participating groups at beginning of each Towards Understanding and Healing project/event regarding the **group’s needs, aims, and goals**, with the purpose of using the feedback in constructing evaluations at the end of each project/event.

#### Types of Evaluation

- Evaluations/recordings for each group session
- Evaluations for each residential, conference
- Evaluations for each project
- One overall project evaluation a year:
  - Feedback from participants
  - Feedback from facilitators
  - Feedback from Management Committee
  - Feedback from groups that referred participants to programme
- One end-of-project evaluation:
  - Bring in an outside evaluator to evaluate the organisation using feedback from the above groups

#### Methods of Evaluation

##### *Monitoring:*

- Basic stats: age, gender, employment status, religious status, ethnic group, education, etc.
- Self-declaration: victim status, level/existence of trauma, identity

##### *Diary:*

- Several participants can record their perception of events with the goal of it being helpful for both the organisation and for themselves
- Staff can record events (meetings, residentials, and conferences)

## **Appendix C (cont.)**

### *Focus Groups:*

- Comprised of more than 12 people
- Facilitated by two individuals

### *Facilitators' Feedback:*

- Diaries
- Timelines
- Reports
- All should show the improvements/developments that have taken place in the life of the group

### *Creative Processes:*

- Various art forms
- Photos
- Illustrated timelines

### *Quick Summaries:*

- One word
- One sentence
- Quote from another participant, facilitator, or speaker
- Story from another participant, facilitator, or speaker

### *Forms/Questionnaires*

- To be designed specifically for each project/event in which they are used

## Appendix D

### **Contract for Facilitators**

#### Towards Understanding and Healing

Facilitators are an essential part of the work of Towards Understanding and Healing. They play an invaluable role in helping to create a safe space for the individuals and groups that share their stories in a process that can sometimes feel risky for the participants. In acknowledgement of the challenging role of facilitators and in an effort to provide them with safety and support in their work, Towards Understanding and Healing commits to the following:

- **Secondary Support** will always be provided to facilitators as a part of each Towards Understanding and Healing event or session. This support will provide the facilitator with an opportunity to “debrief” and to process after having worked in a situation in which people are sharing their own experiences with trauma. This support can come in a variety of contexts, but will be aimed towards minimising secondary trauma.
- **Effective Training and/or Briefing** will be provided to facilitators before each Towards Understanding and Healing event or session.

In order to create and maintain a safe and stable environment for the participants in Towards Understanding and Healing, facilitators are asked to commit to the following:

- Cooperating with the vetting process that is required for participation with Towards Understanding and Healing.
- Abiding by the applicable parts of Towards Understanding and Healing’s Policy and Procedures Manual (Good Relations, Health and Safety, Child Protection and Media policies).
- Maintaining appropriate confidentiality regarding the transactions with participants and the content of the programme.
- Not using the stories told by participants for personal research.
- Completing Sessional Recording Sheets after each session and/or participating in evaluation exercises.
- Be responsible for reporting earnings to Inland Revenue.

I understand and agree to the requirements for participation with Towards Understanding and Healing programmes. In signing this contract, I agree to abide by those requirements in carrying out my work with the organisation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Appendix E**

### **Contract for Volunteers**

#### Towards Understanding and Healing

Volunteers play a valuable role in the work of Towards Understanding and Healing. Volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds and cultures, bringing a wealth of life experience to the programmes of Towards Understanding and Healing. In order to acknowledge of the work of volunteers and to equip them to effectively work within their roles at Towards Understanding and Healing, the organisation commits to the following:

- Volunteers will receive effective training and orientation before beginning work with the organisation.
- Volunteers will receive regular support and supervision during their term of work with the organisation.
- Volunteers will be involved and included in the life of the organisation, as much as is possible and appropriate.

Due to the sensitive nature of the work of Towards Understanding and Healing, volunteers are required to commit to the following:

- Volunteers will fully cooperate with the vetting process that is required for participation with the organisation.
- Volunteers will abide by the applicable portions of the organisation's Policies and Procedures Manual (every volunteer will be notified as to what the applicable portions are before starting work with the organisation).
- Volunteers will maintain confidentiality regarding the work of the organisation, particularly as it relates to the storytelling of participants.
- Volunteers will participate in evaluations of the work of the organisation.
- Volunteers will provide regular reports regarding their work with the organisation, upon request.

I understand and agree to the above requirements for voluntary participation in the work of Towards Understanding and Healing. In signing this contract, I agree to abide by those requirements in carrying out voluntary work with the organisation.

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Name

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Date

## Appendix F

### **Contract for Users**

#### Towards Understanding and Healing

Towards Understanding and Healing exists for the benefit of its user groups. The aim of the project is to create a safe space in which people can explore and express their experiences with the Troubles. To this end, every effort will be made to create an environment where people feel comfortable and safe in telling their stories and hearing the stories of others. With this in mind, Towards Understanding and Healing commits to the following:

- **Confidentiality** from staff, volunteers, facilitators and management
- **Safe, neutral locations** for all events
- **Proper vetting procedures** for all facilitators, staff and volunteers
- **Support** for programme participants during and after events
- **Providing information** about the organisation and its events to all programme participants.

In order to extend the safety to all programme participants, Towards Understanding and Healing requires participants to commit to the following:

- Maintain confidentiality regarding other participants' participation and the content of the dialogue or storytelling process
- Treat others with respect
- Give others the space to speak
- Wait for a few moments after others have spoken to respond to what someone has said
- Speak with honesty
- Speak only for yourself and not for anyone else in the group
- Avoid language that distances you from what you are saying
- Ask questions that are honest and that do not seek to induce guilt or to condemn another perspective
- Ask questions if you do not understand what has been said or if you are in doubt about what has been said

I understand and agree to the above requirements for participation with Towards Understanding and Healing programmes. In signing this contract, I agree to abide by those requirements when participating in programmes run by the organisation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

