Challenges in supporting volunteers - scenarios

Volunteer A has teaching experience in higher education in another country. Their previous experience is of large groups in different educational context focusing on rote learning. They are struggling to transition to a supportive learning environment with an individual learner.

Volunteer B has exchanged contact details with a small group of adult ESOL learners. Volunteer policies and support system in place prohibits tutors and learners from exchanging phone numbers, for the protection of both the volunteer and learner.

Volunteer C is an experienced teacher who rarely changes their teaching methods. The learner has stopped attending regularly and you think this might be related.

Volunteer D is interested in the rights of refugees and asylum seekers. They are eager to understand learners' lives and experiences; however, this leads them to ask personal questions. You've observed this makes some learners feel uncomfortable.

Volunteer E was CELTA trained in 2016 and wanted to gain more experience before moving to teach English abroad. They receive great feedback from their learner but have low confidence in their own teaching abilities. They request individual support regularly and have said they frequently get overwhelmed when planning lessons.

Volunteer F tells you that they have helping a learner they support to complete their universal credit application online. As far as you know, this volunteer has no expertise in this area.

Volunteer G has told you about learners in their group refusing to work together, which they believe is racially motivated.

Volunteer H You notice that a volunteer tutor spends most of the lesson talking, not giving the learners much time to practise speaking.

Challenges in supporting volunteers - scenarios

Scenario	Possible Actions	Policies and procedures that support co-ordinators
A	Emphasis on learner- centred methods in all situations Peer observation OR observation Tutor is supported to create teaching goals for themselves Spend one-to-one time with tutor Explicitly address gaps in training	Volunteer application process Induction training Volunteer Handbook Resources and training on different teaching methods – online videos
B	Talk to volunteer as soon as possible All numbers should be deleted Use manager support Manager reminds all volunteers of this policy	Induction training Volunteer Handbook Volunteer Policy Volunteer Agreement GDPR Policy
C	Speak to tutor about what they think the groups needs are Positive relationship between volunteer and development work Option to change of group/individual – is this tutor placed suitably? Teaching goals – create a culture of CPD for all Ongoing inspiring volunteer training – include different teaching methods Introduction to new resources Peer observation Self-evaluation Try to discuss the situation with the learner	Induction training Volunteer Handbook Volunteer Agreement Create or source video for training Establish a google page for resources
D	Induction training Coordinator appropriately shares their experience about working with refugees and asylum seekers Speak to tutor (reminding of our policy) 'I have noticed that your learners seem to have some support needs' Ensure volunteers know they can come to you Development worker should support learner and let volunteer know that they can do this (no details passed on)	Induction training – boundaries exercise Volunteer Handbook Code of Conduct Ground rules Q&A resources or case studies Sources of information – organisations, articles

Challenges in supporting volunteers - scenarios

	Offer group training on specific subjects Names of organisations that can help and signpost Use manager support to help Support volunteer if they are experiencing vicarious trauma (and use manager's support) Work on the whole organisation being 'trauma-informed'	
E	Coordinator supports by recognise progress and highlight strengths (to build confidence) Offer to observe peer observation Peer mentoring – team delivery Teaching goals Encourage tutor to ask learners what they want and build lessons/programme from that Option to change group/ individual/role Positive exit procedure and signposting to other volunteering opportunity, if necessary	Induction & ongoing training Volunteer handbook CPD Policy Level descriptors Resource library/database ESOL Nexus; Excellence Gateway; Skills Workshop; ESOL Activities book Scotland's SQA ESOL support materials
F	Speak to tutor regarding this and assure them that development worker will find appropriate support DW to support learner by appropriate referral Lists of organisations that can help	Induction training - boundaries
G	Support from development worker – talk it through Volunteer refers to class rules and makes them a focus of a lesson (negotiate together) Focus on common issues and similarities in the group Find resources that support anti-racism and show inclusiveness Workshop for class on cultural differences Team building activities e.g. outings, sharing of talent (music etc) Coordinator talks individually with learner	Learner handbook Induction training Ground rules for the group/project Can someone from a similar background give a talk
H	Training TTT teacher talking time Support volunteer to set teaching goals 'reduce my TTT' Peer observation	CPD Policy (to develop) Ongoing training Online video