

Gym Buddy

Code of Conduct & Volunteer Agreement

This document sets out the behaviour, role and boundaries expected of people volunteering as Gym Buddies with Community Strength Network (CSN). It is intended to support participants, volunteers and the participating gym by making those expectations clear from the outset.

Welcome

Thank you for volunteering to become a Gym Buddy.

Gym Buddy is built around a simple idea: sometimes the hardest part of becoming more active is taking the first step.

As a Gym Buddy, your role is to provide friendly, respectful peer support to someone who would like to become more confident attending the gym. You are there to exercise alongside them, help them become familiar with the gym environment and encourage them as their confidence grows.

You are not expected to be an expert. You are simply expected to be a good Gym Buddy.

As a Gym Buddy, I will...

Treat people with respect. I will be welcoming, patient and non-judgemental, and will respect each participant as an individual.

Encourage, never pressure. I will allow the participant to progress at a pace that feels comfortable for them and will never pressure them to undertake an activity they do not want to do.

Be reliable. I will make reasonable efforts to attend agreed sessions and will let CSN know as soon as reasonably possible if I cannot attend.

Respect privacy. I will treat information shared with me through Gym Buddy sensitively and will not unnecessarily discuss a participant or their circumstances with other people.

Maintain appropriate boundaries. I understand that I am volunteering as a Gym Buddy and will keep my relationship with participants appropriate to that role.

Stay within my role. I understand that a Gym Buddy is not acting as a personal trainer, healthcare professional, counsellor or other specialist. I will not provide medical advice, prescribe exercise programmes or present myself as professionally qualified through my role with Gym Buddy.

Put choice with the participant. I will remember that Gym Buddy is intended to help people develop confidence and independence. I am there to support rather than take control of their gym experience.

Follow the gym's rules. I will comply with the participating gym's rules, safety requirements and reasonable instructions from its staff.

Speak up if something concerns me. If something happens that concerns me, feels inappropriate, or appears to be outside my role as a Gym Buddy, I will raise it with CSN rather than feeling that I need to resolve it myself. In an emergency I will seek immediate assistance from gym staff and/or the emergency services as appropriate.

Respect the voluntary nature of Gym Buddy. I understand that either I or the participant can decide that a particular match, or Gym Buddy itself, is not right for us. I will respect that decision without judgement.

Clear boundaries

While volunteering as a Gym Buddy, I understand that I must not:

- engage in discriminatory, intimidating, sexual, exploitative or otherwise inappropriate behaviour towards a participant;
- use an active Gym Buddy relationship to pursue a romantic or sexual relationship with a participant;
- enter into financial arrangements or transactions with a participant;

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- attend a Gym Buddy session while under the influence of alcohol or recreational drugs;
- take or share photographs, video or other recordings of a participant, or post about their participation on social media, without appropriate agreement through CSN;
- knowingly act outside the boundaries of the Gym Buddy role or represent myself as acting on behalf of the participating gym.

Contact and personal information

During the pilot, initial contact and session arrangements will be mediated through CSN rather than requiring participants and Gym Buddies to exchange personal mobile numbers or other unnecessary personal contact information.

If contact arrangements change as the pilot develops, CSN will explain the agreed approach. Gym Buddies should not feel obliged to share personal information beyond what is reasonably necessary for the volunteering arrangement.

If I am unsure

I am not expected to solve every situation myself. If I am unsure whether something is appropriate, if a participant asks for support outside the Gym Buddy role, or if I have any concern about a session or match, I will contact CSN for guidance.

My agreement

I have read and understood the Gym Buddy Code of Conduct and Volunteer Agreement. I understand the purpose of Gym Buddy, the boundaries of my role and what is expected of me as a volunteer.

I agree to follow this Code while volunteering with Community Strength Network and understand that CSN may ask me to stop volunteering as a Gym Buddy if my behaviour is inconsistent with these expectations.

I also understand that I can choose to stop volunteering at any time and should contact CSN if I have concerns about my role, a participant or a particular match.

Name	
Signature	
Date	

Alternatively, you can confirm your agreement by emailing: hello@communitystrengthnetwork.org. Please include your name and state that you have read, understood and agree to follow this Code of Conduct in order to take part in Gym Buddy.

Working draft: this Code should be reviewed alongside the final pilot arrangements, partner-gym requirements and CSN's wider safety / escalation processes before volunteer onboarding begins.