

**VOLUNTEERS HANDBOOK**

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## INTRODUCTION

Thank you for offering to give some of your time and experience to assist us. We rely on volunteers to help achieve our objectives.

We provide equal opportunities and are committed to the principle of equality regardless of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, political opinion or affiliation, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age or disability. We will apply policies that are fair, equitable and consistent with skills and abilities. Volunteers can assist by supporting us in implementing these policies to ensure equality of opportunity.

Please study this handbook carefully. It contains some simple rules and helpful information.

## **GENERAL RULES AND PROCEDURES**

### **A) Changes in Personal Details**

We may need to contact you in an emergency so please notify us of any change of address, emergency contact etc.

### **B) Statements to the media**

Volunteers must not make any statement to reporters from newspapers, radio, television etc. in respect of our organisation. Any enquiries should be directed to our Chairman.

### **C) Volunteers Property**

No liability is accepted for any loss of, or damage to, property brought onto our premises, or clients' premises. You are advised not to take any personal items of value to work or to leave any items at work overnight.

### **D) Standard of dress**

You may come into contact with customers and members of the public. It is important that you present an acceptable image in terms of appearance and standard of dress. You should wear clothes appropriate to your tasks, and they should be kept clean and tidy at all times.

### **E) Time Commitment**

IF you are unable to attend at any of the times when you have arranged to help us, due to ill health or other commitments, please let your line manager know as soon as possible as we may need to make arrangements for cover.

### **F) State Benefits**

Voluntary work may affect your eligibility for state benefits. We advise you check this with the appropriate agencies.

### **G) Insurance**

During your time with us you are covered under our civil Liability/Personal Accident Insurance policy against any injury you may suffer from. A Volunteers Contract must be signed for the insurance Cover to be valid.

### **H) Housekeeping**

Work areas must be kept clean and tidy at all times.

### **I) Buying or selling of goods**

You are not allowed to buy or sell goods on your own behalf on our premises or during your working hours.

**J) Collections**

Collection on our premises are only allowed with our permission. If you wish to obtain sponsorship, conduct raffles, request donations etc. for a good cause, please discuss this with your line manager.

**K) Training**

We only provide the training necessary for the tasks you have volunteered for and any further volunteering activities it is agree you can undertake.

**L) Problems**

Should you have any problems related to your treatment by us, our employees, other volunteers or the people we serve, please raise these with your line manager who will attempt to resolve the issue. If you are unhappy with the outcome you may raise the issue with the Chairman.

## SECURITY

### CONFIDENTIALITY

1. All Information that; -

- a) Is or has been acquired by you during, or in the course of your engagement, or has otherwise been acquired by you in confidence.
- b) Relates particularly to our business or that of other persons or bodies with whom we have dealings of any sort, and
- c) Has not been made public by, or with our authority.

Shall be confidential, and (save in the course of our business or as required by law) you shall not at any time, whether before or after the termination of your engagement, disclose such information to any person without our prior written consent.

2. You are to exercise reasonable care to keep safe all documentary or other material containing confidential information, and shall at the time of termination of your engagement with us, or at any other time upon demand, return to us any such material in your possession.

## **HEALTH, SAFETY, WELFARE AND HYGIENE**

### **A) SAFETY**

1. Our staff will advise you of the health and safety requirements and any hazards associated with your responsibilities.
2. You must not take any action that could threaten the health and safety of yourself, other volunteers, workers, employees, customers or members of the public.
3. You should report all accidents and injuries at work, no matter how minor, in the accident book. Your line manager will advise where this is kept.

### **B) SMOKING POLICY**

Our policy of not smoking in service users' premises or other than in designated areas on our sites must be observed at all times.

### **C) ALCOHOL & DRUGS POLICY**

1. We have a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety and welfare at work of volunteers, employees, workers and, similarly, you have a responsibility to yourself and your colleagues. The use of alcohol and drugs may impair the safe and efficient running of the business and/or health and safety of our volunteers, workers, employees and other parties.
2. If during volunteering with us, your performance or behaviour are affected as a result of alcohol or drugs, or we believe you have been involved in any drug related action/offence, you may be subject to further action and, dependent on the circumstances, this may lead to termination of your relationship with us.

### **D) LOST PROPERTY**

Articles of lost property should be handed to the line manager who will retain them whilst attempts are made to discover the owner.

### **E) HYGIENE**

1. Any exposed cut or burn must be covered with a first aid dressing.
2. If you are suffering from an infectious or contagious disease or illness such as rubella or hepatitis you must not report for work without clearance from your own doctor.
3. Contact with any person suffering from an infectious or contagious disease must be reported before commencing work.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

### **A) STATEMENT OF POLICY**

1. We recognise that discrimination is unacceptable and equality of opportunity is a feature of our practice and procedures. Breaches of this policy will lead to investigation and, if appropriate further action.
2. The aim of the policy is to ensure that volunteers are not discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, political opinion or affiliation, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age or disability.
3. We will ensure that the policy is circulated to any agencies responsible for our recruitment and a copy of the policy will be made available for all volunteers.
4. We will Maintain a neutral working environment in which no volunteer feels under threat or intimidated.

### **B) SELECTION**

1. We will endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that employees making selection and recruitment decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions.
2. We will adopt a consistent, non-discriminatory approach to the advertising of voluntary opportunities.
3. We will not confine our recruitment to areas or media sources which provide only, or mainly, applicants of a particular group.
4. All those who ask to volunteer for us will receive fair treatment and will be considered solely on the contribution they can make.
5. All those involved in the recruitment process will periodically review their selection criteria to ensure that they are related to volunteering requirements and do not unlawfully discriminate.
6. Interview questions will be related to the requirements of the volunteering activity and will not be of a discriminatory nature.
7. We will not disqualify any volunteer because he/she is unable to complete an application form unassisted unless personal completion of the form is a valid test of the standard of English required for the safe and effective performance of the volunteering activity.

## **DISCRIMINATORY/HARASSMENT COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **A) INTRODUCTION**

1. We recognize that personal harassment, which may or may not be associated with discrimination can occur.
2. Personal harassment takes many forms and people may not always realize that their behaviour constitutes harassment. Personal harassment is unwanted behaviour towards an individual by another person or persons. Examples of harassment include:
  - a. Insensitive jokes
  - b. Lewd or abusive comments about appearance
  - c. Deliberate exclusion from conversations
  - d. Displaying abusive or offensive writing or material
  - e. Unwelcome touching
  - f. Abusive, threatening or insulting words or behaviour.

These examples are not exhaustive and formal action, at the appropriate level, will be taken against volunteers, workers or our own employees committing any form or personal harassment.

### **B) POLICY**

We deplore all forms of unlawful discrimination and personal harassment and seek to ensure that the working environment is sympathetic to the workers we use.

### **C) COMPLAINING ABOUT DISCRIMINATION OR HARASSMENT**

#### **1. Informal complaint**

We recognize that complaints or discrimination, personal harassment and particularly of sexual harassment can sometimes be of a sensitive or intimate nature and that it may not be appropriate for you to raise the issue through your support officer. In these circumstances you are encouraged to raise such issues with a senior line manager or trustee, whether or not that person has responsibility for you.

If you are the victim of minor discrimination or harassment you should make it clear to the discriminator/harasser, on an informal basis, that their behaviour is unwelcome and ask them to stop. If you feel unable to do this verbally then you should hand a written request to the discriminator/harasser, and a senior line manager or trustee of our company.

## 2. Formal complaint

Where the informal approach fails or if the discrimination /harassment is more serious, you should bring the matter to the attention of a senior manager or trustee of our company as a formal written complaint and again the person noted above can assist you in this. If possible, you should keep notes of the harassment so that the written complaint can include: -

- a) The name of the alleged discriminator/harasser
- b) The nature of the alleged discrimination/harassment
- c) The dates and times when the alleged discrimination/harassment occurred.
- d) The name of any witnesses
- e) Any action already taken by you to stop the alleged discrimination/harassment

On receipt of a formal complaint we will take action to separate you from the alleged discriminator/harasser to enable an uninterrupted investigation to take place. This may involve a temporary transfer of the alleged harasser to another area until the matter has been resolved.

The person dealing with the complaint will carry out a thorough investigation in accordance with our procedures. Those involved in the investigation will be expected to act in confidence.

When the investigation has been concluded, a draft report of the findings and of the investigator's recommended course of action will be sent, in writing, to you and to the alleged discriminator/harasser. If you or the alleged discriminator/harasser are dissatisfied with the draft report this should be raised with the investigator within five working days of receiving the draft. Any points of concern will be considered.

The investigator will decide whether or not the issue should be handled via our disciplinary procedure if an employee is involved.

Once the process has been completed, whether it takes report form only or requires a disciplinary sanction, a final report in writing will be sent to you and the alleged discriminator/harasser.

**D) GENERAL NOTES**

1. If the report concludes that the allegation is well founded, the discriminator/harasser will (if an employee) be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with our disciplinary procedures. Should the discriminator/harasser be a volunteer, similarly fair procedures will be adopted before any decision about continuation of their engagement, or any other measures such as a reprimand, is taken.
2. If you bring a complaint of harassment you will not be victimized for having brought the complaint. However if the report concludes that the complaint is untrue and has been brought with malicious intent we will, subject to a fair procedure as above, no longer accept any further voluntary assistance from you.