

Paperworks volunteering policy

Introduction

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in Paperworks. It is of relevance to all within the organisation, including volunteers, staff, trainees and board members.

This policy is endorsed by the board of Paperworks and will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of Paperworks and its' volunteers. It is next due to be reviewed in January 2021.

Commitment

Paperworks recognises the right that people have to participate in the life of their communities through volunteering. It also acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways; that their contribution is unique and that volunteering can benefit users of services, staff, local communities and the volunteer's themselves. Paperworks values the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to supporting volunteers in their role.

Paperworks recognises it's responsibility to arrange its volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

Definition

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship as well as an important component of democracy. Volunteers are people who, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit their community.

Statement of values and Principles

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by Paperworks and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment. The role of volunteers complements but does not replace the role of paid staff. Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

Volunteers will not be used during times of industrial action to do the work of paid staff.

The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation (contractual or otherwise) can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise the organisation cannot be compelled to provide either regular work or payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged - both of what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the organisation.

Volunteer Co-Ordination

All volunteers will have a nominated member of staff or volunteer to offer guidance and advice to help the volunteer carry out tasks effectively. Volunteers will be informed of who to contact to receive support and supervision.

'Volunteer Co-Ordination' will be explicitly referred to in all relevant job descriptions within the organisation.

The nominated post holders with overall responsibility for the development of voluntary activities within the organisation at each site are:

- Harrogate - Cara Edwards, Trainer and Harrogate Manager
- Leeds – Rachel Wilkinson, Trainer

They are responsible for the management and welfare of the organisation's volunteers.

Recruitment & selection

Paperworks is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability, religion and political beliefs. The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit; the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out agreed tasks. Information about the volunteer not relevant to the performance of the volunteering tasks concerned will be disregarded by the organisation in terms of recruitment and selection.

Volunteering Opportunities will be widely promoted in ways that makes them accessible to all members of the community.

Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task will either be offered alternative voluntary involvement with the organisation or referred to the nearest Volunteer Centre.

Volunteers will be asked to produce two references and will be required to undertake a Disclosure and Baring Service (DBS) check. The DBS checks will be renewed as required. We undertake these checks as trainees at Paperworks may be considered vulnerable adults as defined under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act.

They will also be invited to attend an informal interview. Volunteers will have a clear and concise task description which will be subsequently briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform with confidence.

Training & Development

All volunteers will be made aware of and have access to all the organisation's relevant policies, including those relating to volunteering, health & safety, safeguarding and equal opportunities.

The development of training and support for volunteers is a priority for the organisation in order to equip them with the necessary information and skills to carry out their tasks. It will be the responsibility of the designated person referred to above to see that this training is provided. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to attend relevant training.

Training in the management of volunteers will be provided for those staff with direct responsibility of volunteers.

Support, Supervision and Recognition

Volunteers will have a named person to whom they can take their volunteering concerns and seek guidance and support.

Volunteers will have access to regular support and supervision. This will enable both the volunteer and the supervisor to identify, monitor and evaluate the volunteer's involvement, recognise achievement's and identify individual training needs, including that relevant to their particular volunteering role and to their wider personal development. The frequency, duration and format of these sessions will be negotiated between the volunteer and the designated officer referred to above.

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with the organisation's wider staff.

Expenses

Paperworks recognises that the reimbursement of expenses incurred in travelling to and from the place of volunteering or in the course of volunteering is important from an equal opportunities point of view. This is necessary to ensure that all individuals have access to voluntary opportunities.

The organisation's volunteers are able to claim reasonable out of pocket expenses, subject to the production of receipts as evidence of the expenditure. What can be reclaimed from the organisation and the calculation of expenses will be explained to the volunteer before they start any activity likely to give rise to expenses.

The organisation has a consistent approach to the reimbursement of expenses which are the same for volunteers and staff, and are as approved by the Inland Revenue.

It is the responsibility of the designated Volunteer Co-ordinator at each site to make volunteers aware of the procedure for the reimbursement of expenses.

Insurance

The organisation's liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them. The organisation does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage

Confidentiality

The organisation will advise the volunteer on its confidentiality policy and procedures, where relevant. This would include those relating to personal information held by the organisation relating to the volunteer.

Settling Differences

The organisation aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. The organisation seeks to ensure that volunteer's views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly and aim for a positive and amicable solution based on the organisation's guidelines for settling differences.

The designated Volunteer Co-ordinator at each site is responsible for handling problems regarding volunteer complaints or conduct and these should be referred to them. In the event of a problem, all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible. Support will be provided by the organisation to the volunteer while it endeavours to resolve the problem in an informal manner. If an informal resolution proves impossible, the organisation's grievance policies and procedures (which include volunteers) will be referred to.

Rights and Responsibility

The organisation recognises the rights of volunteers to:

1. Know what is and what is not expected of them
2. Have adequate support in their volunteering
3. Receive appreciation
4. Have safe working conditions
5. Be insured
6. Know their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong
7. Receive relevant out-of-pocket expenses
8. Receive appropriate training
9. Be free from discrimination
10. Be offered the opportunity for personal development

The organisation expects volunteers to:

1. Be reliable
2. Be honest
3. Respect confidentiality

4. Make the most of training and support opportunities
5. Carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of the organisation
6. Work within agreed guidelines
7. Respect the work of the organisation and not bring it into disrepute
8. Comply with the organisation's policies