
VOLUNTEER POLICY

Introduction

We recognise the valuable contribution that volunteers can make to Spark. They can bring a richness of skills and experience and can often provide a bridge to community involvement that it is difficult for paid staff to achieve. We recognise that volunteers are motivated because it is their choice to volunteer and give of their time freely; in return we want to provide volunteers with opportunities that will develop new skills and experiences.

This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers. The volunteer handbook gives further details about the support and procedures in place for volunteers.

Status of Volunteers

A volunteer is not an employee and will not have a contract of employment. We will discuss the role with the volunteer and there will be an expectation that the volunteer will meet the role's requirements.

We will discuss with volunteers the amount of time that they are willing to commit to volunteering, the frequency of their availability and how this will fit in with our needs.

Volunteers are encouraged to let us know as soon as possible if they are not available so that a substitute can be found or different arrangements can be made.

Volunteers wishing to withdraw from their voluntary role are asked to give their named contact as much notice as possible.

Principles

Our organisation:

- Recognises that voluntary work brings benefits to volunteers themselves, to service users and to paid staff.
- Will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to the volunteer centre's work.
- Will not introduce volunteers to replace paid staff.
- Expects that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work.
- Recognises that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training for them to do their work effectively.



- Will endeavour to identify and cover the costs of involving volunteers.
- Recognises that the management of volunteers requires designated responsibilities within specific posts.
- Will endeavour to involve volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities and ensure our volunteering opportunities are as accessible as possible

Recruitment

We will endeavour to recruit volunteers through a range of methods including, word of mouth, advertising, talking to other agencies and making contact with local volunteering organisations.

We will also endeavour to help any volunteer overcome barriers that may make it difficult for them to volunteer at Spark.

The Equal Opportunities Policy will be adhered to at all times in relation to the recruitment and support of volunteers.

All volunteers will be asked to sign a Volunteer Agreement, which requires them to abide by the policies and procedures of Spark. It sets out what the volunteer and what the project can expect from each other.

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks and references may be required for **some** volunteer roles, especially where regular contact with children is necessary. This requirement would be discussed with relevant volunteers. You will be informed if we intend to apply for DBS checks. DBS checks are not a reflection on the individual, but a legal requirement in certain circumstances.

Health and Safety

Spark has responsibility for the health and safety of volunteers. Volunteers should at all times follow the Health and Safety policies and procedures. Volunteers have a duty to take care of themselves and others who might be affected by their actions. Volunteers should not act outside their authorised area of work. Volunteers should report all accidents to the appropriate person and should be recorded in the accident book.

We will provide volunteers with appropriate guidance on any health and safety issues that arise.

Insurance

Spark will ensure that volunteers are covered for insurance purposes in respect of personal injury. We will also ensure that volunteers are provided with professional and public liability insurance. The insurance will not cover unauthorised actions or actions outside the volunteering agreement.

Induction and Training

All volunteers will receive an induction, to familiarise them with the work of Spark in general and their own particular area of work. Training will be offered where it helps to fulfil the role.



Support and Supervision

All volunteers will have a named person as their main contact. They will be given regular feedback and provided with an opportunity to discuss how things are going and air any problems.

Networking meetings between volunteers will be developed to encourage peer support and share experiences.

Expenses

Volunteers will be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses incurred on behalf of Spark as long as this has been approved in advance. Receipts will be required.

Grievance

The relationship between Spark and its volunteers is entirely voluntary and it does not imply any contract. However, it is important that Spark is able to maintain its agreed standards of service to those who visit the premises, and it is also important that volunteers should enjoy making their contribution to this service. If your role as a volunteer does not meet with our standards, your case will be dealt with in the same manner as paid staff.

If you have any concerns regarding our treatment of you and have fully discussed them with your contact, but are still not satisfied, you may take any complaint to the Manager or any other Trustee.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed from time to time to ensure that it is in accordance with best practice.

quite likely the volunteer will be doing work that no one else fully understands. In this case it can be difficult to manage and make sure the volunteer is working effectively!

Having a written, mutually agreed-upon description of the work that needs to be done will help make sure everyone is on the same page.