Volunteer Policy

Aim: 'It is our aim to ensure that all volunteers are aware of their rights and responsibilities, and that relevant procedures are in place for managing and supporting them.'

1. General Principles

Communityworks welcomes volunteers and recognises the vital contribution that volunteers bring to its projects. Communityworks accepts that people will volunteer for a variety of reasons and will come from a variety of backgrounds, have different life experiences, abilities, strengths and needs.

Communityworks recognises that volunteers can bring a different perspective to the work of its projects, often one that reflects the views of the local community.

The purpose of the policy is to provide a foundation on which our involvement with volunteers will be based. The document provides a set of guidelines to ensure that volunteers are fully supported during their volunteer experience. Being able to refer to a written policy ensures that decisions are not made on an ad-hoc basis.

We recognise that volunteering is a two-way process and in return for the valuable time that volunteers commit to the project, we are committed to providing a positive volunteering opportunity.

Communityworks values this contribution and undertakes to follow the good practice guidelines set out below.

Volunteers will not replace paid staff, nor be used to expand the current range and volume of provision of the Centre.

2. Application Procedure

- Prospective volunteers will receive an application form and general information on the projects and policies. The application form will ask for the names of two referees and for a statement of criminal convictions. A privacy notice will be issued explaining how we use volunteer workforce information.
- Applicants will be informed that volunteering placements at Communityworks are sometimes subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service check, and their consent will be sought before one is undertaken.
- On return of the completed application, each volunteer will have a discussion to agree roles, sign emergency contact forms and volunteer agreement /contract.
- The volunteer and supervising worker will negotiate a volunteering agreement which will define the volunteer's rights, the tasks to be carried out, their responsibilities and time commitment, the volunteer's availability, the duration of the commitment, training needed, procedure regarding any expenses incurred, and any other requirements.

Equal Treatment and Equal Opportunities

- All volunteers are entitled to be treated on an equal basis with paid staff.
- All volunteers are covered by and expected to adhere to Communityworks policies and procedures.

- Communityworks strives to be an equal opportunities employer and seeks to challenge all forms of prejudice and discrimination.

3. Induction

- Volunteers will be given an induction. This will include an outline of their volunteering role, key policies and procedures (Section 16), organisational structure and health and safety.

4. Involvement

- Volunteers will be invited to take part in appropriate meetings, events and training.
- Volunteers will be invited to participate in the organisational project planning and reviews.

5. Training

Communityworks is committed to providing good quality training to all volunteers within their area of work and to support their personal development.

- Volunteers will be offered appropriate training including working alongside staff and attending training workshops.
- Information on training opportunities will be made available to volunteers.
- Individual volunteers training needs will be reviewed at regular intervals.

6. Support and Supervision

Supervision provides volunteers an opportunity to discuss their role, their achievements, any difficulties and future skill development.

- Volunteers will have regular supervision sessions with a designated supervisor.
- It is the responsibility of all members of staff to provide appropriate support and information to volunteers.
- Volunteer meetings will take place regularly; these will include some training, occasional social events and input into the running of the project.

7. Expenses

- The project will refund to volunteers all genuine agreed out of pocket expenses as a result of volunteering and will be actively encouraged to claim.
- All claims must be signed for by the recipient. Communityworks is unable to refund expenses without a receipt so please remember to keep them.
- All claims should be agreed in advance and claimed either weekly or monthly.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Volunteers may be asked to fill in an evaluation form at intervals and at the end of the period of volunteering to allow the project to respond positively to their feedback.
- Volunteers are expected to attend the evaluation meetings after their individual project.

9. Time Off

- It is expected that volunteers offer a reasonable commitment to volunteering and advance notification of any absences.
- Volunteers are entitled to take time off for holidays and emergencies.

10. Time Sheets

- Volunteers will be required to complete and sign a time sheet to record the hours they volunteer with Communityworks.

11. Confidentiality and Data Protection

- The project undertakes to maintain confidentiality concerning the personal details of volunteers.

- Volunteers are expected to respect the confidential nature of general information which may become known to them. Basic information is used for registers, invoices and for emergency contacts, however all records will be stored in a locked cabinet. (See relevant privacy notices).

- In so doing, Communityworks is obliged to comply with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and GDPR 2018.

12. Safeguarding

- All volunteers will be made aware of the Safeguarding and Child Protection and Adult Protection Policy and procedure**.**
- If you have a safeguarding or adult protection concern you must pass these concerns onto to the named people Jane Lees or Sandra Walker. It is not the role of the staff or volunteers to investigate any concern.
- Confidentiality cannot be maintained in such circumstances and should not be promised.

13. Health and Safety

- Volunteers have rights and responsibilities in relation to Health and Safety at work.
- Volunteers are covered by and must adhere to the Communityworks Health and Safety policies and procedures.

14. Insurance

- All volunteers will be covered by the Communityworks Public Liability Insurance cover whilst volunteers are on the premises and on any work on behalf of Communityworks.

15. Associated Policies

This policy has important associated policies that will be essential to the volunteering experience. Please ensure you read the following:

- Confidentiality and the Appropriate Sharing of Information Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Health and Safety
- Adult Protection Policy
- Comment, Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure

This policy will be reviewed annually and presented for approval if amendments are made.

Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

RIGHTS	RESPONSIBILITIES
a) Everyone has a right to respect from anyone using the Project, and to be valued and treated equally.	Everyone has a responsibility to respect anyone using the Project, and to promote the Equality and Diversity Policy.
b) Everyone has the right to feel welcomed and have easy access to the Project.	Everyone has a responsibility to respond in a welcoming manner to anyone who uses the Project and to any enquiry they may have.
c) Everyone has the right to feel and be safe while working on the Project.	Everyone has the responsibility to ensure the safety of others, to implement any safety regulations and to promote the Health and Safety Policy.
d) Volunteers have a right to equal status with staff.	Everyone has a responsibility to ensure that staff and volunteers are treated equally.
e) All volunteers have a right to receive any training necessary to help them work on the Project.	Volunteers have a responsibility to see through any commitment they have made to training.
f) Everyone makes mistakes; we all have a right to learn from these.	Everyone has a responsibility to take care with their work and to share key things they have learned.
g) Everyone has a right to have their confidentiality maintained within the limits of the confidentiality policy	Everyone has a responsibility to maintain confidentiality except where abuse and protection issues arise.
h) Everyone has a right to reasonable use of the project's available resources.	Everyone has a responsibility to ensure that resources are used properly.
i) Everyone has a right to contribute and have their ideas heard.	Everyone has a responsibility to listen to and consider the contributions of others.
j) Everyone has a right to be given all relevant information.	Everyone has a responsibility to keep other staff and volunteers informed.
k) Everyone has a right to expenses, support, supervision and competent organisation.	Everyone has a responsibility to work within the agreed policies, keep appointments & commitments, attend support & supervision, do what they said they would & tell their supervisors as soon as possible if there is a problem.
l) Everyone has a right to view, amend, or delete the personal information that we hold.	Everyone has a responsibility to assist in the completion of data collection in accordance with GDPR 2018 and signpost those with concerns to the CEO.

Volunteers who cannot be directly placed with Communityworks will be sign posted to other community or voluntary organisations.