



**Disability Sheffield**  
The Centre for Independent Living

# **Disability Sheffield**

## **VOLUNTEERING POLICY**

**AGREED BY DISABILITY SHEFFIELD BOARD**

**Date**

**Chair of Board**

**Signed**

**Review Date**

## **SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY**

Disability Sheffield is committed to the 'social approach' to disability, rather than the 'medical approach'. We believe that people with impairments are disabled by the barriers they face in every day life such as inaccessible communication formats, people's attitudes or inaccessible buildings not by the way their minds and bodies work

## **STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Disability Sheffield exists to support disabled people overcome the barriers which prevent them from being fully included in society, using a social approach to disability. Disability Sheffield works to promote good practice in volunteer management. This policy is intended to provide the framework for our involvement with all our volunteers and to help define the role of volunteers within the organisation. This policy is not intended to create a legally binding contract or employment relationship.

## **DEFINITION** (if relevant)

Volunteering is when people choose to give their time and energy without being paid to help an organisation or individual to whom they are not related.

## **RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE POLICY**

Disability Sheffield Executive Directors are responsible for implementing this policy.

## **THE POLICY**

### **Introduction**

Disability Sheffield's volunteering programme demonstrates our commitment to involving volunteers in the delivery of our services in a considered and thoughtful way. We wish to develop and apply good practice in supporting and managing our volunteers and have processes and procedures in place that provide clarity to the volunteer and the organisation. The policy will enable volunteers to know where they stand, how they can expect to be treated and where to turn to if they are unhappy. It is also important that paid staff, senior management and trustees all fully understand why and how volunteers are involved and what role they play within the organisation.

Disability Sheffield will abide by and is committed to the following principles:-

- Volunteers will be valued by the organisation and able to contribute to its development
- Volunteers will be treated equally and fairly
- Volunteers require satisfying and interesting voluntary work to do and will not be used to replace paid staff
- No volunteer will be out of pocket whilst volunteering for Disability Sheffield

### **Role description**

All volunteers will be provided with a role description giving an outline of the purpose of the role, the tasks involved and the skills and experience required for the role.

### **Recruitment**

We wish to create a fair and welcoming application and interview process. As part of the selection process volunteers will be asked to complete an application form,

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provide a reference and attend an informal meeting with paid staff to discuss the volunteer role and the individual's suitability to it.

The application form is a good way of recording basic contact details and can provide a more rounded picture of the applicant's background. The application form and request for a reference is not intended to be off putting, formal or complicated or create in any way a barrier to someone applying and this will be explained on the form itself.

As part of the selection process, all volunteers will be asked to attend an informal meeting with paid staff to discuss the role and the individual's suitability to it.

Potential volunteers will have an opportunity to meet with existing volunteers as part of the informal meeting or at a later date.

### **Disability Sheffield Advocacy Service Users Exemptions**

Advocacy work can be very intense in nature and there may potentially be a conflict of interest within the organisation between the volunteering role and the service user experience. To avoid any possible conflict it is Disability Sheffield's policy that advocacy service clients will not be recruited to volunteer with the organisation until a period of a minimum of six months after their last contact with the advocacy service. The volunteer would not be able to access the advocacy service again whilst remaining in their volunteering role. This 6 month exemption applies to existing volunteers who may wish to access the advocacy service. The exemption period is subject to review on an individual basis at the discretion of the organisation.

### **Induction, Volunteer Agreement and Review Meeting**

All volunteers will attend an induction programme and have access to an induction pack which will include:-

- A basic introduction to the work of Disability Sheffield and the aims of the service where the volunteer will be based
- An introduction to the volunteering environment including basic health and safety, staff and Disability Sheffield policies and procedures relevant to their role description
- An explanation of their role as a volunteer and how the volunteering relationship with Disability Sheffield will work
- An opportunity to reflect on the personal development of the volunteer
- An opportunity to ask questions

As part of the induction process volunteers will be asked to formally sign a Volunteer Agreement to declare that they have understood the nature of their volunteering relationship with Disability Sheffield.

New volunteers will attend a review meeting after 6-8 weeks with a member of paid staff to ensure that the volunteer relationship is working well for both the volunteer and the organisation.

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### **Adjustments to Support Volunteers**

The recruitment process will identify if a volunteer has an impairment which requires an adjustment to help them to take part in their volunteering activity. This could be for example a request for equipment, assistive technology, changes to the physical environment or volunteering times. Disability Sheffield is committed to supporting a volunteer with an adjustment requirement but will have to consider if the adjustment is reasonable and affordable for the organisation to put in place.

### **Training**

Volunteers will be provided with training and guidance on an ongoing one to one basis by a named member of paid staff and on occasion by more experienced volunteers who will act as a 'buddy' to help with tasks.

There will be opportunities to attend training courses ( internally and externally ) relating to the volunteer's role description and with the prior knowledge and consent of Disability Sheffield. These opportunities may be identified during support sessions or in the course of volunteering at Disability Sheffield and will be booked by Disability Sheffield on behalf of the volunteer.

### **Expenses**

Disability Sheffield believes that no volunteer should be out of pocket as a result of their volunteering .Reimbursing the expenses that a volunteer reasonably has to pay in order to volunteer means that volunteering is accessible to everyone regardless of their income.

By reasonable expenses we mean:-

- travel costs ( any costs by public transport /mileage cost paid at a rate of 40p per mile in accordance with HM Revenue and Customs approved mileage rate/ cost of a taxi if public transport is not accessible )
- personal support costs
- meal costs ( up to a maximum of £7.50 and only payable for volunteering sessions of at least 4 hours )

Volunteers will fill out a Volunteer Expenses claim form and attach receipts as proof of payment before expenses will be reimbursed. Volunteers can choose to be paid by money from petty cash, by cheque or through a bank account.

### **Supervision and Support**

All volunteers will have access to and support from an appropriate member of Disability Sheffield staff on an ongoing basis. Support will be more intensive during the induction period leading up to the review meeting.

After the review meeting there are no 'formal 'supervision' sessions but one to one support sessions will take place regularly as agreed between the volunteer and supporting staff member to provide an opportunity to identify and discuss any

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problems or issues that may arise. One to one support sessions can take place at any time on request should a matter of a sensitive or urgent nature arise.

Volunteers will be encouraged to attend team meetings in their relevant service area and in a representative role at staff team meetings as appropriate .

### **Problem Solving**

Disability Sheffield has a problem solving procedure to deal with complaints by or about volunteers. The procedure includes what to do if a volunteer has a grievance and any 'disciplinary' procedures if a volunteer has acted in an inappropriate manner. In rare cases, where a serious problem has occurred Disability Sheffield has the right to discontinue a volunteer's relationship with the organisation. This would only happen within the terms of the agreed volunteer problem solving procedure.

### **Insurance**

All volunteers are covered by Disability Sheffield's insurance policy whilst they are on the premises or engaged in any activities authorised by the organisation.

### **Equality and Diversity**

Involving volunteers from differing backgrounds, ages, cultures, genders and outlooks helps throw up new ideas and fresh approaches. Disability Sheffield is aware of the benefits of having a diverse group of volunteers and is committed to offering equal opportunity to volunteers from different backgrounds

Disability Sheffield has an Equality and Diversity policy which will be covered as part of the volunteer's induction. All volunteers are expected to have an understanding of and commitment to the policy.

Volunteering England has an information sheet 'Who is Allowed to Volunteer' providing up to date information on potential issues organisations need to be aware of covering the following groups of people who wish to volunteer:-

- People receiving state benefits
- Children and Young People
- Older People
- Vulnerable People
- Ex- offenders

The information sheet will be included in the volunteer induction pack and covered in their induction training.

### **Confidentiality**

Volunteers will be bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff and will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement in their induction training to declare that they have read and understood Disability Sheffield's Confidentiality policy.

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**Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Checks**

Where appropriate, volunteers will be required to have a CRB check

**Health and Safety**

Disability Sheffield has a duty of care to avoid exposing volunteers to risks to their health and safety. Volunteers will be made aware of Disability Sheffield's Health and Safety policy and practical safety issues as part of their induction training.

**Data Protection**

Disability Sheffield will hold contact details for all volunteers but records will not be held for longer than necessary and will be stored and disposed of securely. Individuals who wish to access personal information held about them are entitled to make a request to see such information under Data Protection legislation.

**ACCOMPANYING PROCEDURES** (list as appendices if relevant)

Problem Solving Procedures

**RELATED POLICIES**

Staff and Volunteers Code of Conduct

Confidentiality

Equality and Diversity

Data Protection

If relevant include the following:

**CONFIRMATION**

***I confirm that I have read and fully understand the contents of this Policy  
(to be signed by staff, volunteers, trustees)***

Name (please print):

Signed:

Date:

Reviewed:

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Review Date:

