

ADUR CVS VOLUNTEER POLICY

1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to state Adur CVS's policy on the involvement of volunteers in the organisation. It also sets out the standards we hope will be upheld in organisations to which we refer volunteers.

2 BACKGROUND

Adur CVS aims to support, promote and develop voluntary and community action in Adur District by:

- **understanding** the voluntary and community sector
- **communicating** with the voluntary and community sector
- **representing** the interests of the voluntary and community sector
- providing **support** services to the voluntary and community sector
- promoting **good practice** within the voluntary and community sector
- helping the voluntary and community sector to **grow**

3 RECRUITMENT

3.1 ADVERTISING

We aim to promote and encourage volunteering to every individual in as many outlets as possible using all accessible media.

3.2 SELECTION

In order to deal with your enquiry effectively, we will arrange to have a chat with you and find out what you want from us and why you want to volunteer. We ask you to fill in a registration form which will be kept solely so that we can: inform you of possible volunteering opportunities; check to see if you are happy in your placement; find out whether the service we provide could be improved. Volunteer placements within Adur CVS will have a written **Role Description** including skills required to perform the tasks to an acceptable standard.

3.3 REFERENCES

It is standard practice for organisations using volunteers to ask for references and we endorse this. Organisations whose service users are children or vulnerable adults are likely to ask you to agree to a Criminal Records Bureau check as well.

DIVERSITY

Adur CVS is committed to equal opportunities and working towards enabling everyone to volunteer.

*Volunteers within Adur CVS please refer to our **Equal Opportunities Policy**.*

RETENTION

We recommend that the organisations advertising opportunities with us promote and apply good practice in all aspects of their volunteer programmes. We expect them to offer appropriate support in the form of thorough **induction**, ongoing **support**, relevant **training** and appropriate **supervision** for the role.

Volunteers should be informed as to how they are covered by the organisation's **insurance** and **Health & Safety** policies which should be accessible to them as required.

Volunteers should never be out-of-pocket due to their voluntary work, and it is strongly recommended that relevant **expenses are reimbursed** by the organisation. Please let us know if you have any problems with these matters.

Volunteers within Adur CVS please refer to the following:

- *Induction Checklist*
- *Role Description and Skills*
- *Insurance details*
- *Health & Safety Policy*

PROBLEMS

If you have a problem whilst working as a volunteer, you should be able to resolve this quickly with the person concerned or with your supervisor. Should this not be the case, we would expect the organisation to have a procedure for you to follow, which should be accessible to you. If you have difficulty in addressing a problem with an organisation and you feel unable to speak to someone there, please get in touch with us. Volunteers with Adur CVS should refer to the Problem Solving Procedure.

VOLUNTEERING WITH ADUR CVS

1 INTRODUCTION

Thank you for offering your services as a volunteer with Adur CVS. In this document we aim to provide clear, concise information about volunteering with us. We welcome your opinions on this document and will be happy to discuss any suggestions you may have.

2 WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

This is not the selfish question it may seem! If volunteering is not an enjoyable experience you will soon look elsewhere for something that is. Even if someone is truly dedicated to the cause of an organisation, they are unlikely to continue volunteering if they feel taken for granted, unappreciated or simply find the organisation disorganised, ill-equipped or ill-prepared to involve volunteers.

Therefore we offer:

- Volunteer roles properly defined with **Role Descriptions** including the skills required to fulfil the role to an acceptable standard
- Ongoing **monitoring and support** whilst on duty ie access to your supervisor or other staff and access to feedback mechanisms such as questionnaires
- **Advice and information** through your Volunteer Handbook, volunteer meetings, talking to staff, newsletter, email and telephone
- **Experience** in various kinds of work
- **Opportunity** to make a personal contribution to Adur CVS
- **Training** in relevant topics.

3 EXPECTATIONS

Adur CVS expects volunteers to:

- perform volunteer duties to the best of their ability
- meet time and duty commitments, or provide adequate notice so that alternative arrangements can be made
- adhere to Adur CVS rules, procedures and policies
- accept supervision, abide by limits of your position and seek help from Adur CVS with any problems relating to your role
- accept that becoming a volunteer is not automatic, and that Adur CVS has the right to release you from your duties at any time if it believes doing so is in the best interests of Adur CVS, its clients or mission
- attend whatever training Adur CVS deems necessary to perform your duties well
- act at all times as a conscientious member of Adur CVS

Volunteers can expect Adur CVS to:

- provide adequate information, training and assistance for you to meet the responsibilities of the role/s undertaken
- ensure you have appropriate supervision and feedback on performance
- respect your skills, dignity and individual needs and do the best it can to adjust to individual requirements
- be receptive to any comments from you regarding ways we might better accomplish our respective tasks
- accept your wishes not to fulfil any volunteer task that you believe to be inappropriate, unsafe or unacceptable
- treat you as an equal partner with Adur CVS staff, jointly responsible for the accomplishment of the Adur CVS mission.

4 VOLUNTEER ROLE IDENTIFICATION AND SPECIFICATION

A role description outlining the duties, skills or personal qualities required and terms and conditions must be available in writing. Benefits to the volunteer must also be specified.

5 RETENTION

Adur CVS recognises the importance of retaining its volunteer workforce. In order to achieve this, volunteers must feel welcome, included, valued and supported. We endeavour to attain this by adhering to the following:

Communication

Open, honest, ongoing communication is vital to ensure that volunteers and paid staff are happy. This should be a two-way process initiated by both sides. Volunteers are expected to let us know if they have any problems, worries or relevant information eg just as staff who are running late or unable to turn up are expected to inform us as soon as possible, we require the same of our volunteers.

Adur CVS will use the following means of communicating with volunteers as appropriate: one-to-one via paid staff, email, phone and post. General information will be distributed via our regular newsletter, stop press updates, posters and articles in local papers and radio.

Role of Volunteers within Adur CVS

Volunteers are expected to give as much or as little time as they feel appropriate, but, having made a commitment, Adur CVS would expect this to be honoured unless negotiated otherwise. We also expect our volunteers to reflect the values of Adur CVS in the community. Volunteers are placed in order to:

- Work alongside paid staff in tasks that require or benefit from extra help

- Free up paid staff for tasks that are unsuitable for volunteers.

Role of Adur CVS Staff

Staff are expected to be proactive in offering their appreciation of volunteers' assistance at all times and to reflect this in their attitude and behaviour. They need to be aware of how they appear to volunteers. It is vital to present a welcoming, friendly and inclusive environment if volunteers are to feel comfortable and confident. Staff should remember that volunteers are likely to need extra support and supervision, especially when they first attend, as they are not usually in every day.

Support

Adur CVS recognises the importance of ongoing support for its volunteers and aims to ensure that staff are trained to support and work effectively with them. Therefore volunteers should feel able to approach any member of staff for:

- Advice
- Guidance
- Practical help
- Answering questions

However, a specific member of staff will be nominated to provide support to each volunteer and help with any problems arising. If that person is unavailable when a volunteer attends, clear instructions must be left for the volunteer and/or another staff member briefed.

Consideration will be shown for individual volunteers' needs.

Additional methods of support will be used such as regular Volunteers' Meetings, newsletters, availability and approachability of staff.

If you are unhappy in your role please do let us know so that we can discuss the problem and, hopefully, find a way round it. If you decide that you do not wish to continue in the role we will do our best to find a more suitable one for you. Should you decide to stop volunteering altogether we will respect your wishes, but request that you are honest about your reasons for leaving, as this will enable us to avoid similar problems in the future. *[see item 7]*

6 INDUCTION AND TRAINING

Thorough induction of volunteers is a prime objective of Adur CVS and takes the following form:

- Informal interview:
 - to provide an overview of Adur CVS
 - to demonstrate the value of investment of time as a volunteer
 - to have any questions answered

- for Volunteer Manager/supervisor and prospective volunteer to meet each other
- Thorough discussion of placement and expectations of the role including boundaries and training/skills required
- Tour of workplace; information relevant to role and venue including Health & Safety procedures; introduction to paid staff, other volunteers and service users
- Review after first volunteer duty
- Induction questionnaire after 'settling in' period

Adur CVS offers training appropriate to all its volunteer roles. Training opportunities are publicised through mailings, meetings, in person and by telephone, but volunteers are also encouraged to request suitable topics for training. Courses can be arranged 'in-house' if there is sufficient demand, and are tailored to volunteers' availability where possible.

7 WORKING CONDITIONS

Volunteers will not be asked to work in conditions considered unsuitable for paid staff. Volunteers can refuse demands they consider unrealistic, beyond the scope of their role or which they do not have the skills to carry out.

8 EXPENSES

The reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses will be discussed and mutually agreed on an individual basis.

Generally speaking, out-of-pocket expenses for voluntary work carried out with the prior agreement of the relevant staff will be reimbursed, including travel to and from the venue. Rates for mileage allowance will be those in operation for staff. Expenses forms will be given to volunteers and the procedure for reimbursement explained.

9 DEALING WITH PROBLEMS

If a volunteer has a problem

If you have a problem with a person you are working with you should try to discuss this with them. If you feel unable to do this, or it fails to resolve the situation, you should then take this up with your supervisor, unless that is the same person. In this case, or if the matter is still not satisfactorily dealt with, you should take the matter up with your supervisor's line manager or the Volunteers Manager. A meeting should be held within 2 weeks of this. If you feel the matter has not been resolved, you should put your case in writing to the Chief Officer.

If staff have a problem with a volunteer

If Adur CVS feels there is a problem with any aspect of your voluntary work, your supervisor will discuss this sensitively with you at the earliest opportunity.

Whilst Adur CVS accepts that we are all human and liable to make mistakes, the following behaviours are deemed unacceptable:

- breaches of confidentiality or health and safety
- racist or homophobic comments
- aggressive behaviour
- attending for voluntary work when in an unfit state eg under the influence of alcohol

If there is a matter of misconduct or unsuitable performance, the supervisor will take this up with you as soon as practicable, obtaining as much information as possible and taking notes. A time-scale will be given during which conduct will be monitored or additional training will be given to enable the volunteer to improve their behaviour or performance of the task.

At the end of this time, normally a month, the supervisor will meet with the volunteer, who may be accompanied by a friend. Discussions will be held over whether there has been suitable improvement, and alternatives discussed. A decision will be made about whether the voluntary work is suitable for this volunteer. The volunteer may take the matter to that staff member's line manager, or the volunteer representative whose decision is final.

10 HEALTH & SAFETY

Volunteers are covered by Adur CVS's Health & Safety policy and are required to understand it. Health & safety procedures should be included in volunteers' induction.

11 INSURANCE

Volunteers are covered by Adur CVS's

12 CONFIDENTIALITY

Volunteers are made aware of their confidentiality responsibilities.

Knowledge of volunteers' personal details is restricted to those who need it, and passed on only with volunteers' consent. Personal documents on volunteers will be kept securely.

13 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Adur CVS relies on volunteer participation to keep it relevant to the community it serves and so encourages involvement from all sections of the community.

Adur CVS will make every effort to accommodate volunteers with extra support needs or disabilities. If this does not prove possible, Adur CVS will give the individual in question a full explanation.

Adur CVS operates an Equal Opportunities Policy, and should ensure that it does not unfairly exclude or discourage the involvement of potential volunteers because of:

- class
- race, colour, nationality or ethnic background
- physical disability, learning disability or mental health need
- age
- gender
- marital status
- sexual orientation
- unrelated criminal record
- religious belief
- other criteria not relevant to the needs of the task.

Adur CVS will actively challenge discrimination in all of its forms both in its working practices and in relation to staff and volunteer discriminatory behaviour that may arise.

14 TRANSPORT

If volunteers are having problems with transport, particularly to evening events, they should contact their supervisor, who will see what can be arranged.

15 STOPPING VOLUNTARY WORK

As a volunteer you are free to leave at any time. Of course we hope you enjoy your time with Adur CVS and will continue your voluntary work as long as you can. Should you decide to stop, we would appreciate as much notice as possible in order to make arrangements to cover your role.

It is helpful to us if you are willing to complete an Exit Questionnaire. This gives us an idea of why you have decided to leave and enables us to improve our services if you have not been happy or satisfied with your time at Adur CVS. If you wish, we can help you complete this.