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| **Volunteer Policy****Ability Shetland** |
| **Scope and Purpose****Ability Shetland** is committed to providing a professional and efficient service in supporting volunteers in Shetland.We recognise that in order to achieve our goals we need to involve volunteers in our own work too. It is also essential that we present a model of good practice in volunteer management.We regard volunteers as a valuable resource and encourage them to get involved at all levels of the organisation and within all appropriate activities. We aim to train, support and supervise our volunteers to the best of our abilities, and to act quickly and fairly if difficulties arise.**1. General principles** 1.1 PurposeThe purpose of this internal document is to provide guidance on all aspects of volunteering at Ability Shetland. It does not constitute a binding contract. It supplements other **Ability Shetland**policies and procedures, as well as our definition of volunteering, our mission statement and our value base.These procedures apply to all non-elected volunteers who undertake tasks on behalf and at the direction of **Ability Shetland**.1.2 ResponsibilityThe **Ability Shetland**. Team Leader is responsible for ensuring that the policy and the procedures in this document are implemented efficiently and effectively. All other staff and volunteers (including voluntary Trustees) are expected to facilitate this process.1.3 Eligibility**Ability Shetland**will consider involving anyone as a volunteer. Individuals must, however, be able to demonstrate a commitment to the aims of the organisation and may only be placed if their needs as volunteers match the needs of the organisation. No person who has a conflict of interest with any aspect of the organisation will be accepted as a volunteer. 1.4 Relationship with paid staff (Where applicable)Volunteers are appointed to enhance the capacity of paid staff (including Session Leaders), not as a substitute for them. Clear roles are established to differentiate between paid staff and volunteers to foster mutually beneficial and complementary relationships.1.5 Working conditionsVolunteers are treated as full members of the **Ability Shetland**team. They are treated as equally and fairly as contractors and are included in the organisation’s, functions and decision-making processes wherever practical. Volunteers have access to the space, equipment and facilities necessary to volunteer effectively and comfortably.1.6 Working timesWorking times are negotiated between **AbilityShetlandTeam Leader or Field Worker** and the volunteer and are as flexible as the tasks allow. Voluntary time commitment is never expected to match that of paid contractors, but unscheduled absences can create organisational problems. When expecting to be absent, volunteers should inform their Session Leader or Field Worker as soon as possible, so that alternative arrangements can be made.1.7 Appropriate behaviourVolunteers are expected to work within the policies and procedures of **Ability Shetland**and adhere to its ethos. As representatives of the organisation, they are responsible for presenting a positive image of **Ability Shetland**to the outside world.1.8 Representation of Ability Shetland.Volunteers must seek prior approval from the **AbilityShetlandTeam Leader** before undertaking anything that might affect the organisation. This includes, but is not limited to, statements to the press, joint initiatives with other bodies, and agreements involving contractual or financial obligations.1.9 Confidentiality**Ability Shetland**respects the volunteer’s right to privacy and confidentiality. In turn, volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information to which they are exposed while volunteering with **Ability Shetland**.1.10 RecordsA system of records is maintained on all volunteers, including dates and times of service, duties performed, evaluation of work, etc. Volunteer records are accorded the same confidentiality as per Ability Shetland Data Protection Policy.1.11 Service at the discretion of **Ability Shetland**.Any voluntary service is at the discretion of **Ability Shetland**. **AbilityShetland**may, at any time, and for whatever reason, decide to terminate volunteer’s relationships with the organisation. Similarly, volunteers may at any time, and for whatever reason, decide to terminate their relationships with **Ability Shetland**. Notice of such decisions should be communicated at the earliest opportunity, preferably in writing.2. Recruitment2.1 Role descriptions and person specificationsLike paid contractors, volunteers require a clear and accurate description of the tasks and responsibilities they are expected to undertake. Prior to any volunteer assignment the Team Leader or Field Worker will meet with the volunteer in order to discuss the volunteering role, starting and finishing dates, hours and place of work, name of Session Leader and tasks to be undertaken. If appropriate, a brief person specification may also be drawn up. The role description may be amended in joint agreement with the volunteer and **Ability Shetland**. 2.2 ApplicationsVolunteers are recruited on a pro-active basis by the organisation using publicity avenues that are suitable for the roles that need to be filled. Volunteers are recruited in accordance with **Ability Shetland’s** equal opportunities policy. All volunteers are required to complete an application form.2.3InterviewsSuitable candidates are invited to attend an informal chat with the **Ability** **Shetland** Team Leader or Field Worker to ascertain their interest in and suitability for the role. Written records of all interviews are kept. All unsuccessful candidates are thanked for applying and encouraged to reapply for other volunteering opportunities, either current or in the future.2.4 Checks for suitabilityReferences are always taken up and a PVG check is carried out in accordance with the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007. The **Ability Shetland** Team Leader ensures that no-one is allowed to work at the club sessions until the results of such checks are known. Volunteers are always warned in advance of the intention to make these checks. If they refuse permission and cannot provide an acceptable reason, they will not be placed.2.5 AppointmentFormal appointments are made only after the role description has been agreed and all necessary checks have proved acceptable. No placements are made unless the requirements of the volunteer and the volunteer’s supervisor can be met. The only exception is for new volunteers who may shadow existing staff while waiting for the results of their PVG check. Whilst shadowing, new volunteers are under the constant watch and supervision of senior staff and are never left alone with clients.2.6 MonitoringThe Session Leader will provide monitoring reports to the Team Leader or Field Worker in relation to the capability of the volunteer’s performance and suitability to the role. Where necessary, additional support may be provided to allow the volunteer to participate fully in all aspects of **Ability** **Shetland’s** sessions. Where a volunteer falls short of the requirements of the role after additional support has been offered, they may on occasion be asked to leave.3. Training3.1InductionAll volunteers receive induction when they begin voluntary work with **Ability Shetland.** This consists of a general introduction to the organisation, as well as a specific orientation on the purposes and requirements of their volunteering role.3.2 On-the-job trainingVolunteers receive initial and ongoing on-the-job training to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their tasks well. The training must be appropriate for the demands of the position and the capabilities of the volunteer.3.3 Additional trainingVolunteers are actively encouraged to identify training courses, seminars, conferences, and so on, which would help them to perform their roles better and which would aid their personal development. Approval to undertake such training free-of-charge must be given by **Ability Shetland**and this will only be done if sufficient funds are available. Priority is given to long standing volunteers and those who have received little or no training in the past. Training opportunities will be disseminated by the Team Leader to those who it is deemed will benefit from the additional training.3.4 Training informationIf additional training was paid for by Ability Shetland, any course or other materials belong to the organisation and must be filed in the **AbilityShetland**office. All volunteers should inform the Team Leader or Field Worker of their attendance on the course in order that training records can be kept up-to-date. Training information must be disseminated to relevant people within the organisation.4. Supervision4.1 Lines of communicationLines of communication should operate in both directions and should exist formally and informally. Volunteers must have access to all appropriate information, memos, materials and meetings relevant to their assignments. Volunteers must be consulted on all decisions that would substantially affect their volunteering conditions.4.2 SupervisorsEach volunteer must have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for the day-to-day management of that volunteer. The **Session Leader** normally takes on the supervisor’s role, overseen by the Team Leader or Field Worker, but all Session Leaders receive training and guidance on how to involve volunteers effectively in the work of the organisation.4.3 Supervision sessionsOn occasion the Field Worker may invite the volunteer for a discussion, sometimes within the duration of the session. The Field Worker will brief the volunteer of relevant information and will ensure that the volunteer’s needs are heard. The sessions are a two-way opportunity for conversation and provide an outlet for feedback.4.4 Corrective actionIf appropriate, corrective action may be taken following evaluation sessions. Examples include the organisation of training for an identified training need, the reassignment of a volunteer, or the dismissal of a volunteer.4.5 DismissalVolunteers who do not adhere to the organisation’s rules or who fail to perform their volunteer assignments satisfactorily may be subject to dismissal. No volunteers’ involvement will be terminated in writing until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with their supervisor. Grounds for dismissal include, but are not limited to, the following: gross misconduct, being under the influence of drugs (including alcohol), theft, misuse of equipment and materials, abuse of clients and co-workers, breaches of confidentiality, failure to abide by **Ability Shetland’s**policies and procedures and failure to complete duties to a satisfactory standard.4.6 Concerns and grievancesIf volunteers are not satisfied that issues relating to their volunteering are being handled appropriately, they are entitled to have their concerns reviewed by the Trustees. The Trustees will discuss the issue as soon as practical after receiving a written complaint, and take appropriate action. The chair of the Trustees makes the ultimate decision.4.7 Exit interviewsWhere possible, informal exit interviews are held with any volunteers who are leaving the organisation, either because they have reached the end of their project, or are leaving for some other reason. Interviews are usually conducted with the volunteer’s Supervisor and written records are kept. The session should ascertain why the volunteer is leaving, how they found the volunteering experience and what suggestions they offer to improve the way the organisation operates. The offer of a personal reference for future employment etc. is made to each volunteer.5. Support and recognition5.1 Support***Ability Shetland*** endeavours to provide the support necessary to encourage and empower volunteers to make a meaningful contribution and gain significant benefits from their voluntary work. Support forms part of the regular supervision sessions and gives volunteers a safe setting in which to express themselves, let off steam and discuss how they feel about volunteering. The **Ability Shetland**Team Leader will always try to be available to volunteers who require support in other areas that are affecting their performance.5.2RecognitionVolunteers provide a unique service to **Ability Shetland**, the benefits of which are difficult to quantify. It is essential that their efforts are recognised and rewarded. **Ability Shetland**Session Leaders are responsible for thanking all volunteers informally on a regular basis for the valuable contribution that they make to the organisation. The ***Ability* Shetland**Team Leader is responsible for ensuring that more formalised recognition takes place at key times, for example in the recording of volunteer hours that can count towards the Saltire Awards. **Ability Shetland** will ensure that due credit is given to those volunteers who are successful in achieving each stage of the volunteering awards.5.3 ExpensesVolunteers give their time and skills free of charge, so it is essential that **Ability Shetland**offers to reimburse any out-of-pocket expenses they may incur in the course of undertaking voluntary work for the organisation. The costs of volunteering should never be allowed to discourage those on low incomes. Current rates and procedures for claiming expenses are agreed by the Trustees and publicised to all volunteers.5.4 InsuranceInsurance is provided by **Ability Shetland**to cover all volunteers working on behalf and at the direction of the organisation.5.5 Personal and vocational developmentVolunteers are encouraged to develop their skills while involved with the organisation and are assisted into assuming additional and greater responsibilities over time, if they desire this.6. Monitoring and evaluation6.1 **Ability Shetland**volunteer involvement. **Ability Shetland**monitors and evaluates volunteer involvement in the organisation on a regular basis and seeks to make ongoing improvements.6.2 FeedbackConstructive feedback on this document is always welcome. It must be given to the Ability Shetland. Team Leader who will ensure that it is considered fully. |