



Arun Sunshine Group

For Adults With A Learning Difficulty

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Chair: Mr. Terrence Elderfield Registered Charity No 1114803

Volunteer Policy

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to set out the Arun Sunshine Group (ASG) aims and approach to the involvement of volunteers. It also provides guidance and direction to volunteers and to staff involved with volunteers. This is not intended to create a legally binding relationship or contractual agreement.

2.0 Definition

Volunteering is work for a not-for-profit organisation, or work for someone who is not a member of the volunteer's family, where only reasonable expenses are paid.

- 2.1 A volunteer is someone who commits time, energy, expertise and skill for the benefit of others, through personal choice and without expectation of financial gain, except for payment for actual out of pocket expenses.
- 2.2 The ASG Volunteer is a highly valued member of the team. This is reflected in ASG's recruitment and selection process, supervision and on-going support provided throughout the time volunteers are with ASG. Whatever the reason for volunteering, ASG values the gift of a volunteer's time and commitment.

3.0 Aims

ASG is committed to maximising the participation of volunteers in its existing work.

- 3.1 ASG will ensure that the appropriate organisational structures and financial arrangements are in place to support the participation of volunteers.

ASG Board of Trustees and staff at all levels will encourage volunteer participation as appropriate and will support volunteers.

4.0 Volunteering with ASG

Volunteers are seen as an essential, unique and valuable part of ASG complementing the work of employed staff.

- 4.1 Volunteers will, whenever possible, be included in all areas of work within the group.
- 4.2 Volunteers do not have the same rights as employees; however, to our members there will be no discernible distinction between employed staff and volunteers.
- 4.3 ASG makes its commitment to volunteers through the following: -

4.3.1 ASG volunteers can expect:

- to be valued as an individual
- to be respected for their individual knowledge and skills
- to have support, feedback, appreciation, and encouragement
- to have opportunities to contribute to developments
- to have opportunities to discuss concerns or problems relating to their duties
- not to have their duties changed without prior discussion
- to be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses
- to be insured
- to have access to training and induction relevant to the tasks being undertaken
- that ASG has an agreed volunteering policy
- up to date information about the organisation and its development
- information about philosophy, policies and procedures
- to have clear guidelines within which to carry out duties
- to have a clearly defined task description for their role
- to have an organised working schedule
- a safe working environment

4.3.2 ASG expects its volunteers to:

- show commitment to the Group
- accept and attend training
- attend supervision sessions
- treat members, staff and volunteer colleagues with respect
- have a flexible approach to their duties
- be sensitive and tactful in their dealings with members
- follow procedures and guidelines
- be punctual
- be reliable and regular in their attendance
- inform the Group in all cases of absence
- report any accidents promptly to staff
- respect confidentiality
- have read and understood volunteer policy and procedures
- carry out their tasks to the best of their ability
- discuss concerns with the appropriate person
- consult the appropriate person, if in need of help and guidance
- report sickness to the appropriate person
- declare any conflict of interest

5.0 Recruitment and Selection

5.1 Volunteers will be recruited from the widest of sources in the community.

5.2 Volunteers who have the appropriate knowledge and skills and are representative of the community in which the group is based will be welcomed.

5.3 All volunteer applicants will be given clear, complete, and current descriptions of the tasks and responsibilities, they would be expected to fulfil.

- 5.4 All volunteer applicants are required to complete an ASG volunteer application form.
- 5.5 ASG will require potential volunteers to make a declaration and sign a volunteer agreement in regard to:
- any physical or mental health problem, or disabling condition, which may be relevant to the volunteer placement
 - data protection
 - any criminal conviction, caution or bind-over
 - the accuracy of information provided on the application form
 - treating all information obtained during the course of tasks assigned as confidential.
- 5.6 Prospective volunteers must go through a proper selection process, which will include a written application, a selection interview and written references. (Two references will be obtained, which must be from someone who has knowledge of the volunteer i.e. a friend/work colleague, not a relative).
- 5.7 Prospective volunteers will be required to undergo Criminal Records Bureau checks appropriate to working with vulnerable adults.
- 5.8 Each volunteer will be expected to undertake a 2-month probationary period at the end of which each volunteer position will be reviewed.
- 5.9 At the end of your voluntary service with ASG, we will provide you with a reference for any prospective placement.

6.0 Volunteer Management Procedure

6.1 Volunteer records

Confidential records detailing names, addresses and telephone numbers are maintained on a database. Original copies of the volunteer application form, references, interview notes, and specific checks will also be held. Volunteer records are accorded confidentiality and each volunteer will have access to their own personal record in accordance with data protection.

6.2 Volunteer Code of Conduct

The purpose of this code is to ensure that the relationship between volunteers, staff and members is as positive and successful as possible and to ensure clarity of role.

6.2.1 Some Do's have and Don'ts

DO:

- **Do** respect the members' right to confidentiality by not discussing them in any forum or context other than in discussions with the Board of Trustees Board or your senior session's worker.

- **Reason:** you are providing a service for someone who will need to feel safe and secure in the knowledge that they can trust you. It is also easy for other people to identify clients from the slightest bit of information.

- **Do** remain within the law when working with clients and encourage them to remain within the law.

Reason: if you break the law or encourage a member in any way to break the law this could put yourself, the member, and ASG at risk.

DON'T!

- **Don't** buy gifts or give money to members. Don't borrow from members.

Reason: you will be giving a gift of time, interest, and consistency during your relationship with the members. You are not expected to spend money and doing so could create an expectation or dependency.

- **Don't** develop a physical relationship with members. Clear boundaries are essential.

Reason: you are in a more powerful position than the service user and such a relationship would be exploitative.

- **Don't** accept/put up with any form of harassment from members. If such incidents occur, or you feel they are likely to occur, please contact your senior session's worker, who will support you in dealing with this.

Reason: any form of harassment, intimidation or abuse is not to be tolerated and you have the right to conduct your voluntary work without fear of it.

- **Don't** give your home address to members and never invite them into your home.

- **Reason:** your time away from volunteering is exactly that – time away. You need space and privacy. During your agreed time with members, you are protected by policies and guidelines and in your time you are not.

7.0 Communication

Achieving good communication within the group is crucial. Everyone must work to achieve this. Volunteers are asked to make every effort to keep up to date with information and to attend relevant meetings. Those with supervisory responsibilities will provide relevant and updated information to Volunteers on a regular basis. In order to meet Health and Safety requirements Volunteers must sign the Attendance Register when both arriving and leaving a meeting.

8.0 Insurance

All volunteers are covered by ASG's Employers Insurance Policies whilst they are engaged in activities on ASG's behalf. Volunteers are also covered by ASG's Health and Safety policy

9.0 Reimbursement of expenses

All volunteers will have appropriate out of pocket expenses, such as travel costs reimbursed (25p per mile) on production of receipts. A maximum of £5.00p per day will be paid to cover travel expenses. Volunteers working a minimum of 5 hours in any one session will be provided with a lunch allowance to the maximum of £8.00p.

10.0 Absence

Volunteers are asked to inform their supervisor if they will not be available to attend a meeting due to illness, holidays or for any other reason. It is helpful if volunteers can give ASG as much notice as possible so that cover may be arranged. There may be occasions when volunteers may wish to take a break for a period and ASG respects this.

11.0 Dress Code

As ambassadors of ASG, volunteers are expected to present a positive image of the project but the dress code is informal.

12.0 Health & Safety

ASG has a statutory responsibility under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, not to harm or damage the health of volunteers through their involvement in the activities of the organisation.

All volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a safe manner and not to act in a way that may cause injury to others.

13.0 Smoking

ASG operates a non-smoking policy within any meeting venues. Doing so is considered to be a breach of ASG's policy.

14.0 Drug/Alcohol/Substance Misuse

The misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances, which may inhibit the faculties of an individual, is not permitted at any ASG meeting. Any member of staff or volunteer in breach of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with ASG's Disciplinary Procedures.

15.0 Confidentiality

- Volunteers should regard all information they have access to or are given as a result of their volunteering as being confidential unless advised otherwise. No information should be released to a third party without first seeking the agreement of your

- supervisor and/or the individual concerned, as appropriate.
- Volunteers should not disclose personal details (home address, telephone number etc) to clients but should use the business address when an address has to be given.
- ASG will fulfil its duty to safeguard the information contained within application forms etc.
- Volunteers have the right to access their own records and application forms. Should you wish to see these records this can be arranged by giving the Board of Trustees 20 working days notice.

Derek Moore MBE
Project Leader