

## Volunteer Policy

<b>Policy information</b>	
<b>Organisation</b>	National Survivor User Network (NSUN)
<b>Scope of policy</b>	The policy covers all aspects related to the recruitment and management of volunteers.
<b>Policy operational date</b>	May 2010
<b>Policy prepared by</b>	Sarah Yiannoullou, NSUN Managing Director
<b>Date approved by Board of Trustees</b>	May 2010
<b>Policy review date</b>	May 2017, May 2018

### 1. Introduction

A Volunteer Policy demonstrates that care and thought has gone into how volunteers will be treated. It also ensures fairness and consistency, because being able to refer to a written policy will mean that decisions are not made on an ad hoc basis and that all volunteers are treated equally and fairly. A policy is also important from the volunteers' perspective as it ensures that they know where they stand. They will know what they can expect and where they can turn to if they feel things are not going as well as they would like.

### 2. Statement

NSUN is committed to offering equal opportunities to everyone who wants to volunteer and a clear description clarifying roles and responsibilities and the standards required. NSUN is committed to involving volunteers directly within the organisation to:

- Make sure we are responsive to the needs of our members.
- Provide different skills and perspectives.
- Contribute to the development and effectiveness of the organisation.
- Offer opportunities for participation by people who might otherwise be excluded.

### 3. Purpose

The policy aims to ensure:

- Consistency in the recruitment and management of volunteers
- That all volunteers are treated equally and fairly.
- Clear processes and practices so that decisions do not have to be made on an ad hoc basis.
- Volunteers know how they can expect to be treated, and where they can turn to if they feel that things are going wrong.
- Paid staff, senior management and trustees fully understand why volunteers are involved, and what role they have within the organisation.

#### **4. Principles**

- We recognise that voluntary work brings benefits to volunteers themselves, to our members and to paid staff.
- We will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to NSUN's work.
- We will not introduce volunteers to replace paid staff.
- We will ensure that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work.
- We recognise that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training for them to do their work effectively.
- We will endeavour to identify and cover the costs of involving volunteers.
- We recognise that the management of volunteers requires designated responsibilities within specific posts.
- We will endeavour to involve volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities and ensure our volunteering opportunities are as accessible as possible

#### **5. Definition of a volunteer**

A 'Volunteer' is defined as someone who commits time and energy for the benefit of others, who does so freely, through personal choice and without expectation of financial reward, except for the payment of actual out of pocket expenses<sup>1</sup>

A volunteer is a person who makes a commitment to support the work of the staff in order to enhance the provision of the organisation. It is vital that volunteers are not used to replace the employment of paid members of staff.

#### **6. Recruitment**

We will use appropriate means to advertise for volunteers locally that take into account the principles of the NSUN Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy. The applicant will have to complete an application form, but help can be given with this if necessary. The applicant will be interviewed by the (appropriate person) and if this is successful two references will be requested and taken up. A criminal records check with the DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) will be made for every volunteer.

#### **7. Induction and Training**

There will be an induction prepared and delivered by the (appropriate person). This will include:

- The role of the volunteer
- A list of all staff members, trustees and volunteers
- Copies of all the relevant policies including this Volunteer Policy, the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy, the Complaints Policy, Data Protection and POVA
- Essential procedures i.e. timekeeping, rota etc.
- Induction training and details of ongoing training
- Information about the relevant General Conduct Standards
- Other information as appropriate.

There will be a trial period of **four weeks** to give the organisation and the volunteer time to discover if they are suited to each other. A review will be made midway through the trial period and also at the end by the appropriate person.

## **8. Expenses**

We value our volunteers and want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. All out-of-pocket expenses, if required, will be reimbursed, including expenses for travel, meals and childcare. In order to claim expenses, an expenses form must be completed and given to the Office Manager with accurate copy of receipts.

## **9. Support**

The Office Manager and other volunteers will offer support to new volunteers. Regular briefing and feedback sessions will be agreed. The Office Manager will support all volunteers and will have regular meetings with the volunteers to discuss any problems or issues that may arise. The Office Manager will receive support and regular supervision sessions from the Managing Director. In order to make sure that the volunteers they manage are being properly supported.

## **10. Insurance**

The organisation has a valid insurance policy which volunteers are covered under.

## **11. Confidentiality**

NSUN's process requires an explicit confidentiality policy. All staff (paid and unpaid) undertake to uphold the good name of NSUN, including its relations with the public, its members and partners. This will ensure that relationships with our stakeholders are taken seriously.

Volunteers will uphold in the strictest of confidence all information of a personal nature that is learned about others including members, other organisations and staff. Such information will only be shared with others inside NSUN if required to do so as part of their duties, and in ways which will safeguard its sensitive nature. Such information will not be shared with anyone outside of NSUN.

Information such as arrangements for the storage of money and valuables, etc. that would put the business or the assets at risk will not be disclosed to anyone outside of NSUN. All volunteers will adhere to the principles of the Data Protection Act 1984 and remain under these obligations at all times including after they have left the organisation.

## **12. Resolving Problems**

The relationship between the organisation and its volunteer workers is entirely voluntary and does not imply any contract. However, it is important that the organisation is able to maintain its agreed operating standards to the members, and it is also important that volunteers should enjoy making their contribution to this charity.

If your role as a volunteer does not meet with the organisation's standards, here is how it will be dealt with:

1. Initially an informal meeting with the Office Manager will be held and concerns will be explained. This will be followed up within 10 working days.
2. If this does not resolve the concern then a meeting with the Managing Director will be called. Summary notes will be written up and shared with the volunteer with ten working days.
3. If this does not resolve the concern then a meeting with Chair of the Board of Trustees will be convened. Summary notes and decisions will be written up and shared with the volunteer with ten working days.
4. If your work still does not meet with our standards then we shall have to stop using you as a volunteer.

At all times you will be able to freely state your case and can have a friend to accompany you.

1. If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of our work you should:
2. Initially explain your dissatisfaction with the member of staff who supervises you.
3. If that does not resolve the concern then a meeting with the Managing Director should be convened. Summary notes will be written up and shared with the volunteer.
4. If that does not resolve the issue then a formal meeting with the Chair of the Board of Trustees should follow.
5. If after this, your dissatisfaction remains unresolved, and we are unable to resolve your complaint, then it would be inappropriate for you to continue to be a volunteer.

At all times you will be freely able to state your case and can have a friend or advocate accompany you.

### **13. Endings**

When volunteers move on from their role at NSUN they will be asked to provide feedback on the volunteering experience. On the basis of their voluntary work, volunteers will have the right to request a reference. Volunteers will be supported to move on to other options.

### **14. Policy review**

This policy will be reviewed annually and in line with any new legislation and good practice. Next review date: May 2018.

**May 2010. Reviewed: May 2012, May 2017**

## Appendix 1



### Volunteer Agreement

Volunteers are an important and valued as part of NSUN and we hope that volunteering with us will be satisfying and enjoyable for you. This agreement sets out what you can expect from us and what we hope from you. We aim to be flexible as we can and support you in your volunteering, so please speak to us if you would like to make any changes and we will try to do so where possible.

This agreement is a recognition that: **(name of volunteer)**

Has been through NSUN's volunteer recruitment and induction process and will begin their volunteer role on:

**Your volunteer role is:**

**The task involves:**

**Days agreed are:**

**NSUN** commits to the following:

#### **1. Induction and information**

- To introduce you to the organisation, our values and the way we work and to provide the training and information you need to meet the responsibilities of this role

## **2. Supervision and support**

- To explain the standards we expect and encourage and support you to meet them.
- To do our best to help you develop in your volunteering role with us.
- To provide a named person to meet with you regularly, discuss your volunteering and provide feedback and support.

### **Named person:**

- To provide 'Supportive Volunteering' arrangements that enable volunteers to identify further employment and educational opportunities.
- To discuss and agree mental health support and any 'reasonable adjustments' and flexible arrangements that might be needed.
- To discuss disclosure and 'advance directives' that include plans about what to do if someone becomes unwell.

## **3. Expenses**

- To reimburse any out of pocket expenses, as described in our volunteer policy including:
  - Actual travel fares from home to the place where you are volunteering or between places where you are volunteering for NSUN (with a receipt),
  - A mileage allowance at NSUN's current mileage allowance from home to the place where you are volunteering or between places where you are volunteering for NSUN.
  - Lunch costs to a maximum of £6.00 (with a receipt), if you are volunteering around mealtimes, or for at least 4 hours a day.

## **4. Health and safety**

- To maintain a safe environment and follow health and safety laws and practices
- To provide you with appropriate health and safety information and training.

## **5. Insurance**

- To provide adequate insurance cover for you during any voluntary work, which has been approved and authorised by us.

## **6. Equal opportunities**

- To follow our equal opportunities policy and principles of equality and diversity at all times. The member of staff who supports you can provide you with a copy of this.
- To respect the knowledge, skills, and individuality of all volunteers and to do our best to adjust to any individual requirements.

## **7. Valuing volunteers**

- To value the contribution of all our volunteers and to show recognition and appreciation of their work.

## **8. Problems**

- To try to resolve any problems, complaints or difficulties that you may have while you volunteer with us fairly and promptly.

This is an honourable agreement, rather than a legal one, and may be cancelled at any time by either party.

**This agreement is not regarded by either party as an employment relationship.**

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