

VSGWL Volunteering Policy

Introduction

Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian (VSGWL) exists to promote volunteering and ensures it supports volunteer involving organisations in West Lothian. As an organisation we promote volunteering as an ideal means of expanding an individual's skill set, building confidence and meeting new people.

Policy Aims

As an organisation we aim to:

- Provide potential volunteers with the means to access quality volunteering opportunities.
- Work with volunteer involving organisations to help them to build their capacity to support volunteer placements.
- VSGWL is committed to involving volunteers directly within the organisation to:
- Contribute to the delivery of our services.
- Make sure we are responsive to the needs of our users.
- Provide opportunities for volunteers to develop new knowledge, skills and perspectives.

This volunteer policy sets out the Principles and Practice by which we involve volunteers in VSGWL.

Principles

VSGWL:

- Recognises that voluntary work brings benefits to volunteers themselves, to VSGWL and to the Third Sector more widely,
- Will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to VSGWL work,
- Will not introduce volunteers to replace paid staff,
- Expects that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work,
- Recognises 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,

- Will cover reasonable costs of volunteers,
- Recognises that the management of volunteers requires designated responsibilities with specific roles,
- Recognises that board members are volunteers, dedicated arrangements set out in the Joining the Board Policy

Process

Recruitment

Recruitment of VSGWL volunteers will be in line with the VSGWL Equal Opportunities Policy. The 2010 Equality Act outlines 9 protected characteristics which it is unlawful to discriminate against, and VSGWL will ensure that the 2010 Equality Act is upheld.

People interested in becoming volunteers with VSGWL will be invited for an informal talk with the appropriate contact person. They will be given information, including general information about VSGWL and specific information on the volunteer role in which they are interested.

Volunteers will receive a role description and volunteer agreement containing full information about their chosen area of work, and a clear idea of their responsibilities with VSGWL. This description will outline time, commitment, necessary skills and duties.

All volunteers will be asked to complete a Registration Form and to supply two written references.

VSGWL will deal with applications to volunteer as quickly as possible. Provide volunteers with:

- Clear lines of support and supervision.
- Safe working conditions,
- Insurance,
- Training and on-going opportunities for learning and development,
- Reimbursement of reasonable out of pocket expenses,
- The right to be consulted in decisions which affect them.
- The right to withdraw from voluntary work.

Volunteers must comply with all VSGWL policies and procedures.

When Volunteering

VSGWL Volunteers will be assigned a named contact person who will provide regular supervision and support. They will provide regular supervision meetings to monitor progress. Volunteers will be given induction and training appropriate to the specific tasks to be undertaken.

Protection of Vulnerable Adults Scheme (PVG)

Any individual volunteering with VSGWL who may come into contact with vulnerable people and/or be in a position of trust, will be asked to provide information about any criminal convictions through the PVG Scheme. This information will be dealt with in the strictest confidence and, will not necessarily prejudice the person being accepted for voluntary work.

- VSGWL reserves the *right* to ask volunteers to leave and will give reasons.
- 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 opportunities.
- At the end of the volunteering opportunity the volunteer will be involved in an evaluation to look at outcomes.

Volunteer Placements

As part of organisational and individual volunteering support, VSGWL will provide a platform for highlighting volunteer opportunities and also support individuals into volunteering. VSGWL will liaise with any interested individuals to establish their interests and skillsets with a view to matching these with a suitable volunteering and mutually beneficial role in an organisation.

Any volunteering at these external organisations will be subject to and under the conditions and policies of the recruiting organisation.

Monitoring the policy

Responsibility for monitoring the application of this policy will rest with all employees and volunteers of VSGWL.

The policy will be reviewed every three years with the amendments being made as appropriate and communicated to all employees and relevant stakeholders.

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