

PATH WELFARE SOCIETY VOLUNTEERING POLICY (DRAFT)

Vision: We create enriching experiences for the people who volunteer and significantly impact the community we work in.

Introduction

This policy is to set out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in Path Welfare Society. It is applicable to all institution sending interns, volunteers, interns and researchers. The organisation is committed to promoting a culture of volunteering in society in general and to position Path Welfare Society as the preferred choice of people seeking to volunteer. This policy is endorsed by the Governing Body Members and will be reviewed regularly (as determined by the GB members) to ensure that it remains appropriate to the organisation's needs and its volunteers.

Commitment

Path acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways, that their contribution is unique and that volunteering can benefit users of services, staff, local communities and the volunteers themselves. The organisation values the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering.

Definition

Volunteers are people who, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community.

Statement of values and principles

Volunteering is a crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by the organisation. The role of volunteers is to complement but does not replace the role of paid staff.

The organisation will take appropriate steps to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to promote good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

The organisation will not impose any contractual or otherwise on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Similarly, the organisation cannot be compelled to provide either regular tasks, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

However, in case of interns deputed by institutions or colleges, the volunteer will give support based on the number of working hours assigned by their institute.

Volunteer Co-ordination

The organisation will nominate a staff for volunteers, if relevant to their role, to offer guidance and advice to help the volunteer carry out tasks effectively.

Engagement of volunteers

The Organisation is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of disability, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs or offending background that does not create a risk to vulnerable groups including children. The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out agreed tasks.

All volunteers may be asked for up to two references and to attend an informal interview. If the volunteer will be carrying out activities with vulnerable groups (children and/or adults) they would need to sign the Child Protection Policy of the organisation. This is a mandatory requirement without which the volunteer will not be allowed to start their work.

Volunteers will have a clear and concise role or task description, which will be subsequently reviewed annually or as per their internship requirements. The role or task description will be prepared in conjunction with the volunteer and the Nominated Person or appropriate staff member.

An induction to the organisation activities will be given to the new volunteers, appropriate to their role.

Training & Development

Volunteers must agree to the organisation's Child Protection Policy before undertaking any activities or tasks.

It will be the responsibility of the organisation guide/nominated person to see that if the volunteers require any training. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to attend relevant training whenever asked by the organisation.

Support, Supervision and Recognition

Volunteers need to regularly keep in touch with the organisation guide/nominated person and discuss their volunteering concerns and seek guidance and support.

This will enable both the volunteer and the supervisor to identify, monitor and evaluate the volunteer's involvement, recognise achievements and identify individual training needs, including that relevant to their particular volunteering role and to their wider personal development. The frequency, duration and format of these sessions will be negotiated between the volunteer and the designated organisation guide.

Expenses

All expenses for travel to the field if any will be borne by the organisation in cases where the volunteers are accompanied by the organisation guide. Volunteers can't claim any other expenses.

It is the responsibility of the Nominated Person to ensure senior staff make volunteers aware of the procedure.

Confidentiality

The organisation will advise the volunteer on its confidentiality policy and procedures, where relevant. This includes those relating to personal information held by the organisation relating to the volunteer.

Rights and Responsibilities

The Organisation recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- know what is (and what is not) expected of them
- have adequate support in their volunteering
- receive appreciation
- volunteer in a safe environment
- be insured in an appropriate and relevant manner for the tasks and/or activities undertaken
- know their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong
- receive relevant out-of-pocket expenses
- receive appropriate training
- be free from discrimination
- be offered the opportunity for personal development

The Organisation expects volunteers to:

- be reliable
- be honest
- respect confidentiality
- make the most of training and support opportunities
- carry out tasks in a way that reflects the Vision and Mission of the organisation
- carry out tasks within agreed guidelines
- respect the work of the organisation and not bring it into disrepute
- comply with the organisation's policies.

Settling Differences

The Organisation aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. The Organisation seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly and aim for a positive and amicable solution based on the Organisation's guidelines for settling differences.

The organisation's Director (or the Nominated Person if more appropriate) is responsible for handling problems regarding volunteer complaints and these should be referred to him/her. In the event of a problem, all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible. Support will be provided by the organisation to the volunteer while it endeavours to resolve the problem in an informal manner.

If an informal resolution proves impossible, the matter may be referred to the Nominated Person or a senior management whichever is the most appropriate forum, to investigate the complaint by or against the volunteer. The panel will determine how the complaint will be dealt with, including but not limited to setting out whether there

needs to be a hearing, whether the volunteer may have representation at that hearing and if the volunteer may question staff, other volunteers or bring members of the public to give evidence to the panel.

Sanctions

If a volunteer's behaviour is repeatedly or seriously unacceptable, and/or in serious breach of Code of Conduct and/or any of the organisation's policies, the panel has the right, subject to the rights of "natural justice"

- to suspend the volunteer for a time the panel deems appropriate
- to issue a verbal, written or final warning to the volunteer
- to change the volunteer's role or require them to accept training as a precondition of remaining in the role
- to require the volunteer, make recompense to the organisation if the actions of the volunteer have caused the organisation financial loss
- to require the volunteer leaves the organisation
- to prohibit any further attendance by the volunteer at organisation event (including those hosted, organised, co-hosted, or promoted by the Organisation).