

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Volunteering

Category: Staff and Volunteers

Policy Statement



SoLO
Life
Opportunities

38 Walnut Close
Chelmsley Wood
Birmingham
B37 7PU

Charity No. 1102297
England Company No.
5025939

SoLO recognises the immense value that volunteers bring to our organisation, and aims to provide an enjoyable and worthwhile experience in return for the time given by volunteers.

SoLO's volunteers will:

- Enrich all the activities we provide, but not be used to replace paid staff
- have a defined place in the structure of the organisation
- be integrated and treated equally as part of the team
- be recognised for the individual skills and knowledge each unique person brings to the organisation
- be supported and valued in their role and included in the SoLO training programme.

Recruitment

We will use appropriate means to advertise for volunteers locally that take into account the principles of our Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policies. Volunteers should be 16 years of age or over due to the nature of the role. Volunteers under 16 may be considered, provided that they are undertaking a Duke of Edinburgh bronze, silver or gold award or similar supervised activity showing a degree of commitment. This will provide for SoLO the necessary permissions which are required for minors, and is covered by SoLO Insurance.

Prospective volunteers will receive background information such as our values, aims and objectives & the person specification and then complete an application form. Help can be given with the completion of the form if necessary. The applicant will be interviewed by our Volunteer Manager who will confirm details such as availability, preferences of role & location, and motivation for volunteering. The Manager will also explain our expectations regarding the role in line with our standards of behaviour, our requirement for reliability, and our policy on expenses. If this is successful and both parties wish to continue with the recruitment, two acceptable references will be

required. A criminal records check with the Disclosure and Barring service will be made for every volunteer. Projects will not accept, or arrange volunteers without this process being adhered to.

Induction and Training

Once placed on a project or role there will be an induction prepared and delivered by the project leader or an appointed person. This will include completion on our induction checklist template and will cover:

- The specific role of the volunteer
- Introduction to the other staff, members, and volunteers on that project
- Important information regarding individuals such as medication, health issues, allergies, anxieties & triggers etc.
- Awareness of relevant policies including Volunteer, Confidentiality, Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities and Diversity, Safeguarding and Complaints, and Whistle blowing.
- Essential procedures i.e. timekeeping, fire, etc...
- Contact information and process in case of absenteeism

In addition Volunteers will undertake mandatory level 1 Safeguarding training as soon as possible, and be invited to other relevant training courses deemed appropriate to the role.

There will be a trial period of 3 sessions to give the organisation and the volunteer time to discover if they are suited to each other. A review will be carried out at the end of the period with the project leader, but if the volunteer wishes to discuss relocation before the end of the period this will be considered.

Expenses

We value our volunteers and want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement, but also have to consider our limited finances as a charity. Travel expenses will be reimbursed up to the cost of a daily bus pass, any other expenses will need to be agreed in advance with a project manager. These should be claimed on the prescribed form as soon as possible and no later than 2 months after the event, and be counter signed by the project leader. The project leader will forward any expense claims with timesheets on a monthly basis.

Support & Supervision

If placed on an activity based project the project leader will have responsibility for supervision and will arrange support from the wider team. In the office or fundraising group supervision will come from an appointed person.

There will be a general briefing session at the beginning and a de-briefing at the end of each session, and the project leader/appointed person will hold short “catch ups” with volunteers to discuss any issues that may arise and confirm that they are happy in their role.

The project leader/appointed person will in turn receive support and regular supervision sessions from their line manager.

Supported Volunteers

In line with SoLO’s Vision and Values, Equal Opportunities & Diversity, Capability, Protection of Vulnerable Adults, Safeguarding and Special Needs Policies, SoLO will offer a limited number of “supported volunteer” placements. These will be available to adults with a low / moderate learning disability / needs. These will also include provision for those with physical disabilities as well as acquired brain injury or mental health issues

In recognition of the additional support that may be required to enable this volunteer to successfully fulfil their role, SoLO will carefully determine which roles are available at the time of application to them. Each placement will be assessed on the basis of suitability and level of support required to ensure that the placement is successful for the volunteer as well as the members they will be supporting.

Supported volunteers will not be placed on a project which they would be eligible to attend as a member.

Insurance

All volunteers recruited through this process will be covered by SoLO’s insurance policies whilst on project. If claiming travel expenses incurred using their own car, volunteers will need to have business use included on their own car insurance.

Confidentiality

All volunteers and staff members are required to comply with SoLO’s Confidentiality and Data Protection policies.

Health & Safety

All volunteers and staff members have a responsibility for their own safety in the first instance, and should not engage in any activity which they deem to be too dangerous for their own capability or health.

SoLO has a comprehensive set of policies in relation to health & safety which must be adhered to including:

- Harassment & bullying
- Hygiene
- Incident reporting
- Lone working
- Manual handling
- Safeguarding
- Stress Management

Resolving Problems

Although the relationship between volunteers and SoLO is not bound in the same way as a formal contract it is important that SoLO is able to maintain its agreed standards of service to the clients who use it, and it is also important that volunteers should enjoy making their contribution to this service.

If SoLO feel that the performance of a volunteer is not satisfactory in any way the following process will apply:

1. The project leader/appointed person will informally discuss the concerns in private, and an agreement will be made about how to rectify the issue.
2. If this does not resolve the concern the project leader will refer the matter to the project manager of that project, or in the case of an appointed person their next in command.
3. The manager will discuss the situation with the volunteer and decide if a move to another project should be considered. If this is the case, and the volunteer wishes to pursue this option, the Volunteer Manager will be approached to arrange another placement. However it will be made clear to the volunteer what SoLO's expectations are regarding performance and that if this project also proves to be unsuccessful we may have to consider ending the relationship. If this is not considered to be viable option the relationship will be terminated forthwith.

If a volunteer is dissatisfied with any aspect of their work they should:

1. Initially explain the dissatisfaction with the project leader or appointed person. If the grievance is against the project leader/appointed person it should be raised with their line manager.

2. If that does not resolve the grievance then a formal meeting with the project manager or line manager of the appointed person should be convened.
3. If after this the volunteer is still dissatisfied a move to another project may be considered, or the relationship may be terminated.

The volunteer will be freely able to state their case and can have someone accompany them to the formal meeting.

Retention

SoLO recognises that people's motivations for volunteering are varied (e.g. feeling useful, making friends, having fun, gaining a qualification or experience) and will try to recognise these motivations throughout their time as a volunteer.

In addition to informal recognition, certificates of thanks, formal accreditation (where possible) and acknowledgement in the Communication Bulletin & Newsletter will be given.

In order to gain intelligence on why volunteers leave the organisation an Exit Questionnaire will be issued on departure. The information from this will be analysed and used to evaluate our processes with the aim of improving retention.

Progression

It is anticipated that volunteers will benefit greatly from the experience of volunteering with SoLO. Volunteers should undertake 6 months volunteering before applying for paid work with SoLO. Whilst this experience will be advantageous if applying for paid work, there is no **automatic** progression route from volunteer to paid worker within SoLO.

All volunteers and paid staff will be made aware of current vacancies in the Communications bulletin and other media. Adverts will state whether it is an internal exercise (open to existing staff only), or external (open to volunteers and others). In the majority of cases vacancies not filled internally will then become open to external candidates.

Linked with:

Recruitment, Equal Opportunities & Diversity, Disciplinary, Grievance, Capability.