

WELLSPRING SETTLEMENT

Volunteer Policy



Introduction

Volunteers are vital to the running and development of Wellspring Settlement (WS) and in return WS aims to provide enriching, fulfilling, challenging and varied volunteer roles that meet self-identified personal and professional development needs. WS promotes good practice for volunteers and keeps up to date with changes in policy that impact on volunteering roles.

WS recognises that volunteers are not only crucial to the day to day running of projects, but are central to the decision-making processes at all levels of the organisation. WS will make every effort to shape services, volunteering roles and governance in line with the needs of its users, including our highly regarded volunteers.

Recruitment

WS will use appropriate means to advertise for volunteers that take into account the principles of our Equal Opportunities policy.

All volunteers are asked to complete a *written application form which will include:

- contact details
- emergency contact details,
- support needs
- a brief description of skills and knowledge that the volunteer can bring to the role
- a brief description of how the voluntary role could develop the volunteer's skills
- availability for volunteering including days and times
- contact details of two people who can provide references for the applicant

A task description will be provided by WS for each volunteering position available, which applicants are asked to consider prior to completion of the form. * WS will provide additional support for those volunteers who may need help with written English to complete the application form and equal opportunities monitoring form.

All volunteers are also asked to complete a 'first contact' monitoring form, to enable WS to monitor its equal opportunity policy, and to register learners if the volunteer is a student on placement, a code of conduct form and volunteer agreement. Monitoring form information will have no impact on the assessment of the application.

The volunteer will be formally met by a WS member of staff and if successful in their application, referees will be contacted. All volunteer placements are subject to receipt of satisfactory references. Unsatisfactory references will be discussed with the applicant where appropriate. In some circumstances a Volunteer will be offered a "taster" session to see if the role they are interested in meets with their expectations.

Disclosure and Barring (DBS checks)

For some voluntary roles a DBS check may be necessary. All volunteer positions that require this, will say so on the task description. WS will help you complete an online application and will also request that you sign up to the DBS update Service. WS will cover the cost of this.

Supervisor

A named member of staff will be provided for each volunteer. The name of the supervisor will be provided on the task description. Any changes in supervision, owing to issues such as staff employment changes, sickness, or change to volunteer role will be discussed and agreed with the volunteer.

Induction

There will be an induction prepared and delivered by the volunteer's named supervisor which will include:

- Welcome and introduction to WS staff and volunteers
- An introduction to the role of WS and its key services
- Volunteer handbook (see Volunteer Handbook) to include copies of all relevant policies
- Essential procedures i.e. building induction, health and safety, timekeeping, rota etc.
- Action plan (skills development) agreed and signed by both volunteer and supervisor to include details of training for the period of the voluntary placement
- Signing of two copies of the volunteer agreement (one for the supervisor and one for the volunteer)
- Initial volunteer role training
- Other information as appropriate.

Volunteer handbook

The volunteer handbook is an essential resource for volunteers at WS. Each volunteer will be provided with their own copy of the volunteer handbook by their named supervisor.

Adherence to WS policies

Volunteers are expected to read and adhere to all WS policies and procedures that apply to them for the duration of the volunteer placement in all WS activities. The volunteer supervisor will ensure that the volunteer understands the requirements of the policies as given in their volunteer handbook. The volunteer must ask the supervisor or another member of staff if they are unsure what the policy means or how to apply it. Specific training on policies will be provided where appropriate.

WS will apply all WS policies and procedures as outlined in the organisational handbook to its volunteers. This includes providing up to date public liability insurance should an injury due to negligence be caused to or caused by a volunteer at WS.

Introductory probation period

There will be a 3 month introductory probation period to give WS and the volunteer time to discover if they are suited to each other. A review will be made at the end of this period to appraise the work of the volunteer and the support offered by the supervisor, and to assess any difficulties that have arisen in this period. If the role is not suitable for the volunteer, an alternative role may be offered where possible and appropriate.

The continuation of the voluntary placement will depend on satisfactory work undertaken in this period. If there are problems which cannot be resolved at the review, volunteers can apply WS Complaints policy. WS reserves the right to end a voluntary placement if the volunteer has breached their volunteer agreement without good reason.

A volunteer placement will be suspended or stopped immediately should a Safeguarding Children and Young People or Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults problem arise. A volunteer placement will also be suspended or stopped should WS confidentiality policy be breached where there is no obvious public interest (such as a Safeguarding concern). All volunteers will be inducted into the relevant WS policies and should discuss any queries with their supervisor.

Training

All volunteers will be provided with their induction to WS, role specific induction training and ongoing supervision sessions. Volunteers will complete an action plan in their first meeting with their supervisor to discuss training needs to develop their generic and specific role skills.

Supervision

Supervision and support of WS volunteers is vital to ensure volunteers are able to carry out their role effectively. It is also a valuable way for WS to show recognition and appreciation of the volunteers' contribution to the organisation.

All volunteers will therefore receive both regular supervision sessions and ongoing support with their supervisor. Ongoing support will take the form of regular, informal, oral feedback sessions and the supervisor will be readily available to deal with any questions or problems that may arise.

Expenses

WS values volunteers and wants to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. All reasonable out-of-pocket expenses, if required, will be reimbursed, including expenses for travel and adult/childcare. Lunch will be provided, from our Cafe or Lunch Club, if the volunteering session lasts more than four hours. In order to claim

expenses, an expenses form must be completed and evidenced by a receipt, this will then be authorised by the volunteer's named supervisor or another agreed member of key project staff for payment.

No payments will be reimbursed to Volunteers without receipts.

All expenses will be paid promptly and in line with WS's expenses section of the Financial Procedures and Department for Work and Pensions guidance on volunteering while getting benefits.

Gifts and Gratuities

Sometimes Volunteers may find themselves in the position where a person within a service they are volunteering in wants to thank them personally. This is alright if it is a note of thanks or verbal recognition of the Volunteers support. It is not acceptable to receive any gifts or payment from people for volunteering duties. We understand that this can be difficult if a grateful service user wants to thank a volunteer, but any such gifts or gratuities must be individually refused. If the Volunteer feels that this may cause offense, they must suggest that the gift can be put into the next WS fundraising raffle.

Resolving Problems

The relationship between WS and its volunteers is entirely voluntary and does not imply any contract. However, it is important that the organisation 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 there are any problems for which solutions cannot be found in discussion with the supervisor, WS Complaints Policy must be applied.

Job Substitution

Volunteers in WS should not substitute paid workers. Volunteers in WS are substituting paid workers if they are:

- Performing tasks that were being carried out by paid employees
- Exclusively performing tasks which, because of their continuous, repetitive or unattractive nature, require to be paid
- Performing jobs or tasks that are the legal responsibility of someone else, e.g. a volunteer may work in the crèche but cannot be responsible for the day to day management but can be considered in the staff to children ratio
- Performing jobs or tasks for employees who are in formal dispute with management

If a volunteer is seen to have, or to have gained, the appropriate skills, experience and qualifications to become a paid worker in the area they are volunteering, they should be notified of any staff vacancies and in the case of the crèche, encouraged to be added to the 'Bank' staff register.

Staff Guidance

Staff guidance must be read by all volunteer supervisors to enable them to apply this policy in full. Staff guidance will also include all relevant supervision, action plan, volunteer agreement and evaluation templates to be used throughout the volunteer placement. Volunteer supervisors must make every effort to ensure the volunteering placement is an enriching experience that meets self-identified learning and development needs. Supervisors must apply WS policies in full.

This Volunteer policy is freely accessible to all. It will be reviewed on a two yearly basis to adapt or improve it.