

## **POLICY ON VOLUNTEERS**

### **1. Values and Principles**

Agenzija SAPPOR embraces the following values and principles by which it:

- Recognises volunteering as a means of contributing to the quality of life of disabled people, often in ways that may be impracticable for paid staff;
- Values volunteering as integral to its work at all levels and recognises that the contribution of Volunteers is a valid resource towards its well-being and success;
- Distinguishes volunteering from employment and exploits the flexibility and informality that it allows to complement the work of paid staff;
- Appreciates that volunteering must be enjoyable and that it can change and enrich the lives of both clients and Volunteers;
- Takes into account individual motivation, aspirations and fulfilment needs when assigning responsibilities to Volunteers;
- Values and respects Volunteers from all backgrounds and both listens and learns from what they have to say, and, where possible, follows up their suggestions and ideas;
- Provides equality of opportunities for all who volunteer;
- Recruits Volunteers on a needs-led and task-led basis to work towards meeting clients' needs while considering Volunteers' skills, knowledge, experience and motivation.

### **2. Responsibilities**

Agenzija SAPPOR acknowledges the need for a clear and consistent framework for voluntary involvement, which creates a positive climate for development. The Agency will strive to maintain effective partnership through harmonious and mutually beneficial Employee and Volunteer dialogue to maximise contributions, minimise confusion, and enhance the well being of its clients.

In order to achieve this:

- Through the Chief Operations Officer, the Corporate Manager has an overall responsibility for Volunteers. With the support of the Volunteer Co-ordinator, s/he is responsible for their operational deployment and support;
- The Volunteer Co-ordinator is responsible for recruiting, retaining, training and developing Volunteers in their roles in support of disabled people;
- Through the Services Manager, the Supervisors in liaison with the Volunteer Co-ordinator would be responsible for the assignment of day to day activities;
- Further advice, support and guidance will be available from staff working alongside the Volunteers or designated staff.

Volunteers add value to the lives of Agency clients by: undertaking a wide range of supporting roles, practical tasks, participating in meetings and planning, fund raising and befriending. There are many imaginative ways in which Volunteers add that extra dimension to the support provided by the Agency; contributing time, flexibility, contacts, and specialist skills.

Although Volunteers offer time freely and willingly, there is an expectation of mutual support, loyalty and reliability – as well as attainment and maintenance of the high standards on which the Agency's reputation depends.

### 3. Application, Recruitment and Selection

SUPPORT is committed to equal opportunities and will ensure that volunteering is open to all regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion, background or beliefs. The sole criterion is the individual's suitability to undertake the task in question.

SUPPORT will pursue the following guidelines:

- All Volunteers are expected to undergo a thorough application process, to support good practice;
- The potential Volunteer will express in writing his/her interest in volunteering, specifying the area of contribution, and level of time commitment;
- All volunteering enquiries will receive a prompt, efficient and welcoming response, which reflects the value that SUPPORT attaches to Volunteers;
- Flexible recruitment arrangements will recognise the different levels/styles of time commitment given by Volunteers;
- Before engagement, the Agency will take up independent references, except where the voluntary role is very occasional or closely supervised or where the task does not involve direct contact with clients. This is essential to protect the client, the potential Volunteer and the Agency. Such is done with the approval of the candidate Volunteer signing the Reference Check Consent Form to obtain the information (HR002F2);
- Potential Volunteers will be subject to the same disclosure requirements as paid staff. A police conduct will be requested before recruitment;
- Potential Volunteers, who will have contact with clients, will have to complete a period of observation following the first interview. Having successfully completed the observation, the Volunteer will be obliged to participate in appropriate training;
- Before the training period is completed, a written agreement is signed between the Volunteer and the Agency, binding the Volunteer to abide by SUPPORT Policies and Procedures and participate in training. The Contract of Service (Volunteer) is used;
- During the training period, the Volunteer is required to sign the Statement of Confidentiality (HR007F1), the Volunteer Information Form (HR024F1), the Volunteer Consent Form (HR024F2) and any other necessary forms;
- The Volunteer is required to submit to Head Office two (2) passport size photos, a copy of his/her driving license, a letter by his/her GP certifying the Volunteer as physically fit to perform duties such as lifting and team control, as well as free from TB, and any other relevant documents;
- Volunteers will undertake personal care tasks **only** following agreement of the client/s involved and appropriate training;
- There will be no lower age for recruitment, provided Volunteers are able to make a useful contribution, undertaking only suitable tasks for which there is no legal minimum age. If Volunteers are under 18, permission will be sought from parents/guardians, and the Volunteers will be closely supervised;
- SUPPORT does not specify an upper age limit and recognises the valuable contribution made in terms of life experience, expertise and knowledge. However, Volunteers must not continue beyond a point where it could be detrimental to their own or other people's health and safety.

### 4. Training and Development

In order to ensure that the highest standards of conduct and responsibility are maintained at all times, SUPPORT will endeavour to provide its Volunteers with the necessary and appropriate training and development. It is therefore important that:

- The Corporate Manager or delegate will ensure that each new Volunteer will be met and welcomed to SAPPOR, ensuring a good match between the skills, experience and motivations of the Volunteer and the needs of Agency clients whether direct or indirect;
- New Volunteers, whatever their role, will receive induction and appropriate training;
- Opportunities for further support and development will be provided on an ongoing basis, with regular reviews.

## **5. Access to Confidential Information**

Volunteers working directly with clients shall not have access to documents containing confidential information, such as Log Books, Communication Books, Daily Recording Forms, Incident and/or Serious Occurrence Reports (unless directly involved in the incident), Medical/Dental Appointment Records, Cumulative Medical/Dental Appointment/Telephone Consultation Summaries, Medication Error Reports, etc.

Access shall only be granted in exceptional circumstances where it is considered beneficial for the Service operation, and duly authorised by the Volunteers Coordinator in liaison with the Supervisor.

## **6. Volunteer Support**

Every effort will be made to ensure that the experience of volunteering is positive, useful and fulfilling, and therefore SAPPOR will guarantee that its Volunteers are valued through the provision of the following support system:

- Information for Volunteers will be made available through the Volunteer Handbook and other policy documents;
- Volunteers will have access to monthly supervision with a designated person, usually the Volunteer Co-ordinator, during which they can discuss and review their input, raise matters of concern and make suggestions for positive improvements;
- The Volunteer Co-ordinator will liaise with the Supervisors to ensure that Volunteers are given the necessary support to carry out their duties;
- Volunteers will be included in the Insurance Policies as deemed necessary by Operations-Management;
- All Volunteers are encouraged to claim reasonable expenses in line with SAPPOR Reimbursement for Damage Policy (HR020) and Driving Policy (HR018);
- In the event of Volunteers ending their involvement with SAPPOR, the Corporate Manager will offer appropriate recognition and thanks, demonstrating how a volunteer's input has been valued;
- An exit interview may be arranged to support good practice. The Volunteer Exit Interview (HR024F3) must be signed by both the Corporate Manager and the volunteer.

## **7. Absence, Lateness and Change of Plans**

### *Voluntary Work within Community Services*

It is expected that whenever there is a change of plan, foreseen absence or lateness, the Volunteer informs as swiftly as possible the client and/or carer concerned. If such is not possible, the Volunteer must inform the Volunteer Co-ordinator or in his/her absence the On-call Person. The Volunteer Co-ordinator or On-call Person must pass on the information to the client and/or carer as soon as possible.

### *Voluntary Work within Residential Services*

It is expected that whenever there is a change of plan, foreseen absence or lateness, the Volunteer informs as swiftly as possible the client and the Person-in-Charge. If such is not possible, the Volunteer must inform the Volunteer Co-ordinator or in his/her absence the On-call Person. The Volunteer Co-ordinator or On-call Person must pass on the information to the client and the Person-in Charge as soon as possible.

Ideally 24 hours notice would be welcomed, but it is appreciated that this is not always possible.

There are reciprocal expectations, and SAPPOR will endeavour to inform Volunteers of any changes as swiftly as possible.

### **8. Reporting Concerns**

Volunteers are often in prime positions to notice problems. In the first instance, they should consult with Volunteer Co-ordinator, who can be made aware of the situation in a confidential way. When the situation in question is of a particularly sensitive nature, consultation with the Volunteer Co-ordinator or his/her delegate should be done promptly. If the problem is more general, and if it involves the possibility of bad practice, SAPPOR's Policy on Incident and/or Serious Occurrence Reporting (S&S005) should be followed.