

WORK STRESS SOLUTIONS

Volunteering Policy

1. Introduction

Work Stress Solutions (WSS) exists to help vulnerable young people and adults to enrich their lives and take steps toward employment or education. Volunteering is an important aspect of this work.

It does this by:

- Working with volunteers involving organisations to improve the diversity and quality of volunteer placements.
- Providing potential volunteers with the means to access volunteering opportunities, particularly those relevant to their aspirations and values.
- Helping people who might otherwise have found themselves excluded to take part in their communities.
- Providing courses, mentoring, signposting, practical help, and 1:1 support

WSS is committed to involving volunteers directly within the organisation to:

- Contribute to the delivery of our services.
- Form our board of management.
- Make sure we are responsive to the needs of our users.

- Provide different skills and perspectives.
- Offer opportunities for participation by people who might otherwise be excluded.

This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practices by which we involve volunteers. Our registration and induction process help to orientate the Volunteer to our Mission and Vision.

2. Principles

Work Stress Solutions

- Recognises that voluntary work brings benefits to volunteers themselves, service users, and paid staff.
- Will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to the volunteer centre's work.
- Will not introduce volunteers to replace paid staff.
- Expects that staff at all levels work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, 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 provide the training for them to do their work effectively.
- Will endeavour to identify and cover the costs of involving volunteers.
- Recognises that the management of volunteers requires designated responsibilities within specific posts.

- Will endeavour to involve volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities and ensure our volunteering opportunities are as accessible as possible.

3. Recruitment

Recruitment of volunteers will generally be from all sections of the community and will be in line with the WSS Equal Opportunities Policy. The positive action in recruitment may be used where appropriate. Clients who have been supported by WSS and where relevant Voluntary Work Experience can be provided will be encouraged to engage.

People interested in becoming volunteers with WSS will be invited for an informal talk with the appropriate contact person. They will be given information including general information about the organisation and specific information on the volunteering opportunity in which they are interested. All parts of the recruitment process must be completed, and a Volunteer Agreement signed before the Volunteer commences. All volunteers will be asked to complete an application form and to supply two references if applying externally or one if applying internally.

Every volunteer role will undergo a risk assessment, undertaken by the WSS Manager. For volunteer roles that involve 'regulated work' such as caregiving and/or sustained and direct contact with children or vulnerable adults, WSS has a legal obligation to ensure that volunteers are not barred from working with children or

vulnerable groups. This can be facilitated if the Volunteer does not have a current DBS certificate or is enrolled in the update service.

4. Volunteer Agreements and Voluntary Work Outlines

Volunteers will participate in completing a volunteer agreement in collaboration with the WSS Co-Ordinator. This will contain full information about their chosen area of work and a clear idea of their responsibilities and WSS responsibilities to them. The Agreement will also require the endorsement and signature of a Trustee, usually the Chair or Professional Advisor.

5. Induction and Training

Volunteers will be given induction and training appropriate to the specific tasks to be undertaken.

6. Support

Volunteers will be assigned a named contact person (usually the Co-Ordinator) who will provide regular support as required and not less than monthly. Support sessions will provide the opportunity for ongoing dialogue about the development of the volunteering role and any advice and guidance as needed. Where the volunteering role is emotionally demanding these sessions also allow volunteers to access emotional support from the organisation.

7. The Volunteer's Voice

Volunteers will be consulted on decisions that affect them. WSS is committed to developing consultation and representational procedures for volunteers.

8. Records

Minimum details will be kept on volunteers. This will include the registration form, references, placement details, crisis contact, correspondence, and any other relevant information per WSS Compliance and Data Handling policy (May 18). There will also be evaluation and feedback records kept which may be used for research and funding purposes.

9. Expenses

WSS will ensure that there is a clear and accessible system to enable volunteers to claim out-of-pocket expenses, if appropriate. Travel expenses will be discussed and agreed upon at the appointment stage and form part of the Volunteer Agreement.

10. Insurance

Volunteers will be covered by insurance while carrying out agreed duties.

11. Health and Safety

WSS will take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the volunteers' health, safety, and welfare while at work per the centre's Health and Safety policy.

12. Equal Opportunities

Volunteers and staff will work per WSS equal opportunities policy and will prevent discrimination on any grounds.

13. Problems

WSS has the policy to help deal with complaints that volunteers may have. In line with this policy, volunteers have the right to discuss any concerns they may have with their named contact at any time or refer the matter to a Trustee.

14. Endings

When volunteers move on from their role at WSS they will be asked to provide feedback on the volunteering experience by way of an exit questionnaire. They will also be allowed to discuss their responses to the questionnaire more fully with their Mentor or a member of the board.

Based on their voluntary work, volunteers will have the right to request a reference. Volunteers will be supported to move on to other options.

WSS has a complaints policy on how it will deal with any issue regarding a volunteer.

15. Monitoring and Evaluation

WSS will systematically monitor and evaluate its use of volunteers concerning this Volunteer Policy.