



STUDENT VOLUNTEERING CARDIFF (SVC)

VOLUNTEERING POLICY

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1. General

Introduction

Student Volunteering Cardiff (SVC) is a registered charity (no. 500765) formed through the partnership of Student Community Action (SCA) and Innovate Trust in 2001. Its principle aim and purpose is to enhance the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable members of the Cardiff Community.

This aim is achieved by offering individuals the opportunity to volunteer on SVC's own projects or those run in co-operation with other organisations based in the local community.

SVC was established by students from Cardiff University, and values the contribution of all its staff members, volunteers and associated bodies in its continued work. SVC aims to promote positive links between members of the community by providing a range of projects on which individuals can volunteer. **No volunteer within these projects will take the place of a paid member of staff.**

Objectives of the Policy

This policy aims to set out good volunteering practice throughout SVC so that all staff, volunteers and outside bodies are able to access and understand the ethos in which volunteers are engaged in SVC's numerous volunteering projects. It aims to help ensure fairness and consistency across projects.

Staff Responsibilities

All SVC staff are primarily here to support and ensure the safety of our volunteers, beneficiaries and partners.

2. Types and Roles of Volunteers.

SVC values itself on being a student-led organisation. SVC will ensure that the appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure all volunteers have the opportunity to contribute to the ongoing development of the organisation.

The SVC Board of Trustees

This is a group of volunteers whose shared responsibility is to oversee the charity's work and ensure its continued development.

The Board of Trustees is a source of support and guidance for Lead Volunteers and Volunteers across our projects.

Lead Volunteers

The majority of SVC's projects are co-ordinated by one or more Lead Volunteers. They are responsible for the overall running of the project. Lead Volunteers recruit, induct and train their volunteers as well as offering support throughout the year. Lead Volunteers are supported by a designated staff member, called SVC Project Coordinators, who will support them with the needs and requirements of their particular project.

Project Volunteers

SVC offers a diverse range of projects in which individuals can volunteer. It is up to the individual to decide which project they are interested in, they can choose to volunteer on more than one project should they want to. All volunteers within SVC have the opportunity to become a Lead Volunteer or apply to be on the SVC Board of Trustees (elections for the Trustee roles occur annually).

3. Recruitment & Selection

Volunteer Recruitment

At the start of every academic year SVC will attend different recruitment events including Freshers' Fairs within the local universities and related workshops and community events, workshops and assemblies within local colleges/schools, related community events and engage with other volunteer providers to raise awareness of our services.

Advertising our Projects

SVC will advertise our volunteering opportunities in numerous ways including:-

- a) **Posters:** Posters are displayed within local universities/ student unions, on notice boards in university halls of residence and within the community – such as GP practices.
- b) **Recruitment Events:** SVC will host stands at numerous events including freshers' fairs, third sector events, careers service events and college assemblies/ workshops.
- c) **SVC Website:** Details of all SVC projects and how to apply are available on our website (www.svcardsiff.org), individuals can apply online or within the SVC office.
- d) **University Career Hubs:** Information about SVC's projects are also available through some University Career Hubs (Cardiff University and Cardiff Metropolitan University). Additionally details can be found at Cardiff Metropolitan's Jobshop.
- e) **SVC Project Booklet:** Available in paper or electronically on the SVC website; detailing all of our projects, their time commitments, training requirements and project overviews (please contact the SVC office for a copy).
- f) **Local Advertising:** SVC's services are also featured within some local marketing materials, such as letting agencies and libraries.

Application Procedure and DBS Checks

All volunteers will be required to complete a basic application form (these are available in both paper and online formats). For many of our projects, volunteers will be supporting children or vulnerable adults and will therefore also be required to complete a DBS check. At this stage individuals will be required to disclose any criminal convictions, which will be treated in the strictest of confidence (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/about>).

Some of our projects also require additional application forms due to their complexity. Additionally volunteers will be required to complete health declarations and volunteer agreements confirming their commitment to volunteering.

References

On most SVC projects (other than Environmental Champions) volunteers are asked to provide two references, they are required to **have known these referees for two years or more and they must not be family members or personal friends**. A formatted reference form and cover letter are sent to all referees.

Equal Opportunities

SVC's equal opportunities policy will be adhered to at all times in interactions with volunteers, beneficiaries and staff (please see Section 11).

Unsuitable Volunteers

To the best of SVC's abilities a suitable project will be found for a volunteer. If it becomes apparent that a volunteer is unsuitable for any role then the volunteer will be invited into the office where the issues can be discussed and resolved to an extent that is of benefit to the beneficiaries and the volunteer.

Criminal Convictions

Having a criminal conviction does not automatically mean an individual is unable to volunteer with SVC. SVC will endeavour to find a suitable project for the volunteer. If you have any concerns about how an offence may affect your volunteering options then please contact the SVC Manager to discuss this further.

4. Induction & Training

Volunteer Induction

For each project the Lead Volunteers and/or SVC Project Coordinators will give volunteers induction information about the project/s which interest them. This may be through a brief induction talk, or through an information sheet detailing "Frequently Asked Questions" specific to the project. At this time a project Welcome Pack will also be distributed to potential volunteers giving general information.

Often volunteers are taken on site visits to their chosen project/s. Here volunteers will be shown around the location and given instructions regarding health and safety and fire regulations.

Every project has different induction procedures; many are carried out at the place of volunteering, by the staff who will be supporting the volunteers within their work.

At SVC we operate an “open door policy”, and therefore volunteers are always welcome to pop into the office to ask for more details about specific projects of interest.

Volunteer Training

Volunteers are given training specific to their chosen project/s, this may include child protection, protection of vulnerable adults (POVA) and learning disability awareness, to name a few. Some training courses are mandatory, and volunteers must attend these training sessions to prepare them within their volunteer roles. Volunteers are also encouraged to attend optional training courses which will complement their chosen volunteering roles. For a full list of SVC training courses please contact the SVC office.

SVC Board and Lead Volunteer Training

Having been successfully elected onto the SVC Board of Trustees, or successful in achieving a role as a Lead Volunteer on a project, both groups will be invited to specific training days where they will have the opportunity to discuss the development of the charity, project specifics, learn more about their roles and the plans for the year ahead.

Both SVC Trustees and Lead Volunteers will receive role specific training, information, support and guidance.

5. Supervision & Monitoring

SVC Board of Trustees and Lead Volunteer Supervision

All Trustees and Lead Volunteers will be offered formal supervision sessions from either the SVC Manager, or an SVC Project Coordinator.

Additionally SVC operates an “open-door policy”, all volunteers, Lead Volunteers and Trustees are actively encouraged to come into the office to discuss any issues or problems.

Different projects are funded in different ways and therefore have different monitoring requirements, some volunteers will be requested to come into the office to undertake one-to-one meetings, this helps SVC to ensure the project is running smoothly and that our volunteers are happy within their roles.

Volunteer supervision

It is primarily the role of the Lead Volunteer to monitor the welfare of their volunteers and undertake regular supervision. Should there be any issues volunteers have the option to contact their Lead Volunteer, the Board of Trustees or any member of SVC staff. All volunteers will be given the contact name and contact details of their Lead Volunteer; they will also be given the SVC office number/ contact details.

Some of our projects are managed by SVC staff directly rather than Lead Volunteers, in these circumstances volunteers will be given the details of their assigned staff member, plus the details of the supervisor/s within their organisations/locations of their chosen volunteering project/s.

Monitoring

Through these supervision sessions volunteers will be asked questions about their volunteering, how they have been supported, what's worked well, any issues or concerns, new ideas, etc. These volunteer responses are then recorded, and collated yearly to look at changes required and recommendations made.

At the end of every year evaluation questionnaires are also sent out to our partners and beneficiaries to monitor how the projects have progressed, and if they have met their requirements.

6. Expenses

Reimbursement

It is the policy of SVC to reimburse all out of pocket expenses incurred by volunteers in their volunteering activity upon presentation of receipts.

Out of Pocket Expenses

Out of pocket expenses include: Petrol and travel (mileage must be recorded or receipts retained), resources for projects (arts & crafts, food), entrance to activities and equipment.

SVC Expenses Policy

The full Staff & Volunteers Expenses Policy may be viewed in the SVC office, or on the SVC website. Any expenses to be reimbursed must be accompanied by a receipt; only in exceptional circumstances will staff be able to reimburse expenses without a receipt, this will be at the discretion of the SVC Manager and/or Board of Trustees.

7. Recognition

SVC truly values the commitment, time and dedication made by all of our volunteers.

All SVC volunteers will receive certificates annually, to evidence the contribution they have made through their volunteering. Additionally Lead Volunteers, who meet the criteria of GwirVol, will also be registered for Millennium Volunteering certificates.

SVC will produce regular articles about the amazing work conducted by our volunteers, hold social events to thank volunteers and hold awards annually for the Volunteer of the Year and/or Special Recognition Awards.

Additionally SVC will be pleased to offer references for our volunteers, detailing the project/s, commitment and roles volunteers have undertaken with SVC.

8. Health & Safety

SVC, under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and subsequent legislation, will bring Health and Safety to the attention of all its volunteers. All volunteers will be expected to work in accordance to information, guidance and training provided.

Risk Assessments

All volunteers will be given Health and Safety instructions at the location of their project. A risk assessment for each project is undertaken by an SVC staff member. Additionally all new activities or volunteering ideas will have a new Risk Assessment undertaken to ensure the safety of the volunteers and beneficiaries. Volunteers will be notified about specific risks associated with their chosen project/s.

Health and Safety Policy

The full Health and Safety Policy may be viewed in the SVC office or SVC website.

9. Accidents & Incidents

SVC is aware that accidents or incidents may occur during the normal course of a project.

Accidents

In the event of an accident, as volunteers are not trained in the assessment of injuries, an ambulance must be called. If the accident involves a beneficiary then parents/carers and/or supervisors must always be informed. An accident report form must be completed promptly; these forms are kept in the SVC office. The completed form must be given to the SVC manager.

Incidents

SVC considers that incidents are anything that occurs that is outside the norm within a project or beneficiaries behaviour. An incident form must be completed; these are kept in the SVC office. On completion these must be given to the SVC manager.

10. Settling Differences Policy and Problem Solving Procedure

Settling Differences Policy

Should a volunteer have a problem within their volunteering, in the first instance this should be discussed with their Lead Volunteer or assigned staff member. If the problem concerns the Lead Volunteer and/ or assigned staff member, a member of the SVC Board of Trustees or SVC Manager is available to discuss the problem. If the problem concerns the SVC manager the volunteer should discuss this with the SVC Board of Trustees.

SVC hopes that all problems can be resolved informally with discussion, however if this is not the case then the formal procedure will come into effect.

The full Settling Differences Policy may be viewed in the SVC office or SVC website.

Problem Solving Procedure

The full Problem Solving Policy may be viewed in the SVC office, or SVC website.

11. Harassment

SVC recognises that harassment is a serious issue, and should it occur when volunteering may affect the confidence of volunteers. Any volunteer who feels they are being harassed should not accept the situation and should make it clear from the outset that this behaviour is unwelcome.

Volunteers who have encountered any form of harassment are encouraged to discuss the situation with SVC as soon as possible. The Lead Volunteers, SVC Trustees and SVC staff are available should a volunteer want to discuss, or report any situation. The volunteer may elect to have the complaint investigated, in the full knowledge that the matter will be dealt with seriously, promptly, sensitively and with the strictest of confidence.

12. Equal Opportunities and Diversity

Equal Opportunities

SVC undertakes a wide variety of projects with socially excluded individuals in and around Cardiff. As such SVC has the responsibility to oppose discrimination. SVC will treat all people we come into contact with equally, this includes our volunteers, staff, Trustees, beneficiaries and partners. **SVC expects all its members to respect each other and will not tolerate discrimination or abuse in any form.**

The full Equal Opportunities Policy may be viewed in the SVC office, or SVC website.

Diversity

SVC is firmly committed to diversity in all areas of its work. We recognise there is much to gain from diverse cultures and perspectives, and that diversity will make the organisation more effective in meeting the needs of all its stakeholders. We are committed to developing and maintaining an organisation in which differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are fostered and valued, and where those with diverse backgrounds and experiences are able to participate and contribute. SVC will regularly evaluate and monitor its progress towards diversity.

13. Insurance

All volunteers are covered by the appropriate Employers Liability Insurance and Public Liability Insurance on all work done on projects.

The full insurance details can be viewed in the SVC office.

14. Confidentiality

The majority of SVC projects work with vulnerable members of the community. During the course of volunteering volunteers will be privy to information that is confidential to the people they are volunteering with. This information must remain confidential to the volunteer and appropriate others.

The full Confidentiality Policy may be viewed in the SVC office, or the SVC website.

15. Data Protection

SVC will only use data relevant to carrying out its legitimate purposes and functions as a charity, and in a way that is not prejudicial to the interests of our volunteers. SVC will take due care and responsibility in the collection, storage and sharing of any sensitive data relating to our volunteers, beneficiaries and projects.

The full Data Protection Policy may be viewed in the SVC office, or the SVC website.