



VOLUNTEERING POLICY & PROCEDURES

This policy was approved by the
Management Committee of Foyle
Women's Aid on

Date: _____

Signed: _____

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy explains Foyle Women's Aid's position on volunteering and sets out the conditions under which volunteers are involved in the work of the organisation.
- 1.2 The conditions apply to voluntary workers engaged to work in refuges, playgroups, aftercare/outreach centres, offices, driving etc., **but not to Company Directors of the Federation or Management Committee members of local groups, since the terms of their involvement are governed by the companies' Memorandum and Articles of Association or Constitution.**
- 1.3 Foyle Women's Aid strives to create a diverse and inclusive organisation within a diverse and inclusive community. Therefore, Foyle Women's Aid is committed to ensuring equality of access to high quality volunteering opportunities and equality of treatment for volunteers in all policies and practices.

2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 Volunteering has been defined as the "commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community, the environment, or individuals outside one's immediate family. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for fundamental gain." (*Make a Difference: An Outline Volunteering Strategy for the UK, 1995.*)

Women's Aid endorses this definition and recognises the value and benefit of volunteers to the organisation and the important roles that they fulfil. Voluntary work is a fundamental part of the organisation's practice, from voluntary committees to practical help with the establishment and delivery of services, the range of voluntary worker involvement has been extensive from the inception of Women's Aid.

- 2.2 Foyle Women's Aid will provide opportunities for volunteers to work in roles that are distinctive and complementary to staff.
- 2.3 Foyle Women's Aid is committed to protecting all women and children who use its services from abuse and will work to promote an abuse-free environment throughout the organisation. Foyle Women's Aid will not tolerate any kind of abusive behaviour.
- 2.4 Foyle Women's Aid is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity in respect of the recruitment, retention and training of voluntary workers. It is the policy of Foyle Women's Aid to provide volunteering opportunities to all, irrespective of:
- Race or ethnic origin
 - Marital or family status

- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Religious belief or political opinion
- Disability
- Nationality

2.5 Foyle Women's Aid is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All voluntary workers and prospective voluntary workers will be treated fairly. Selection for voluntary roles, retention, training or any other benefit will be decided on the basis of aptitude and ability.

2.6 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Child Protection
- Comments & Complaints
- Confidentiality
- Equal Opportunities for Clients
- Bullying & Harassment
- Health & Safety
- Lone Working
- Safeguarding & Protection
- Retention of Records
- Whistleblowing

3.0 IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 The Director has specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. Each Line Manager also has responsibilities and all staff are expected to abide by the policy.

In order to implement the policy, Foyle Women's Aid will ensure that:

3.2 All staff and volunteers are made aware of the Volunteering Policy through induction training.

3.3 All staff and volunteers understand the policy, and are able to fulfil their responsibilities.

3.4 Managers are aware of their responsibilities through appropriate and regular training.

3.5 Voluntary work opportunities will be advertised in a variety of places, so as to be accessible to as wide a variety of people as possible.

3.6 Voluntary workers will receive appropriate training, supervision and support to enable them to fulfil their role and responsibilities.

3.7 Any breach of the Volunteering Policy & Procedures will be regarded as misconduct and may lead to disciplinary action.

4.0 PROCEDURES

- 4.1 Recruitment & Selection – see Appendix 1.
- 4.2 Induction Supervision and Support – see Appendix 2.

5.0 COMMENTS & COMPLAINTS

- 5.1 Any member of staff who believes that they have been treated unfairly has the right to pursue a grievance through the procedure outlined in the Employment Contract. Any volunteer who believes that they have been treated unfairly has the right to pursue a grievance through the procedure outlined in this policy.
- 5.2 A breach of the Volunteering Policy and Procedures will be regarded as misconduct and may lead to disciplinary action.
- 5.3 Any other comments or complaints in relation to this policy should, in the first instance, be raised with the Director/Senior Manager, who will carry out an investigation in line with the Comments & Complaints Policy.

6.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 6.1 This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to identify areas for improvement and, where appropriate, to make changes.

PROCEDURES

1.0 Recruitment & Selection

- 1.1 When considering the possible involvement of voluntary workers in Foyle Women's Aid, a decision will be made bearing in mind the following factors:
- 1.2 Any decision to recruit voluntary workers to **new areas of work** will be made following full discussion by the team and approved by the Management Committee.
- 1.3 It is the responsibility of Foyle Women's Aid to identify worthwhile and satisfying voluntary work opportunities which can complement the work of paid workers and which can be identified as pieces of work for which volunteers can take responsibility.
- 1.4 Voluntary work opportunities will be advertised in a variety of places, so as to be open to as wide a variety of people as possible.
- 1.5 All potential volunteers will be required to complete an application form and will be asked to give two referees.
- 1.6 Pre-employment background checks are carried out on all prospective staff, paid and unpaid, working in a regulated position whose normal duties will include caring, training, advising, supervising or being in sole charge of children, or the supervision of an individual in a 'regulated position' to ensure that prospective staff are not disqualified from working with children under the Disqualification from Working with Children List (DHSS & PS).
- 1.7 All potential volunteers will be required to comply with Access NI, which supports the framework for the care and protection of children and vulnerable adults. It requires that the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety maintain a list of individuals who are considered unsuitable to work (in a paid or unpaid capacity) with children and vulnerable adults.
- 1.8 All potential volunteers will be required to attend an informal interview prior to trial appointment.
- 1.9 If unsuccessful, individuals will be offered an opportunity to discuss the outcome and identify possible alternatives within or outside Foyle Women's Aid.

1.0 Induction

- 1.1 All voluntary workers will be given a draft agreement and role description setting out what Foyle Women's Aid is offering them and what is expected of them.
- 1.2 All volunteers will undergo induction training within their respective place of work and core training provided by Foyle Women's Aid. At induction, volunteers will be made aware of the policies and procedures governing the work of the organisation. Core training incorporates:
- Child Protection
 - Confidentiality
 - Equality and Human Rights
 - Health & Safety
 - Volunteer Training
- 1.3 All voluntary workers with Foyle Women's Aid will be clearly briefed about the importance of keeping confidential information gained in the course of their work (see Confidentiality Policy).
- 1.3 During a trial period of 6 months, voluntary workers can access day-to-day direction, support and assistance to enable them to carry out their allocated tasks from any staff member within the project the volunteer has been allocated to.
- 1.4 The following employees Line Manage volunteers in each area:
- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| Support Services | Jo Corcoran |
| Admin/Finance | Sharon Devine |
| Youth Work | Rosin Hamill |
| Childcare | Isobel Ramsay |
| Gardening | Eleanor McGuckin |
| Events | Louisa Young |
- 1.5 On successful completion of the trial period, the voluntary worker will become a full, voluntary member of the project team.

2.0 Supervision and Support

- 2.1 Volunteer meetings, which will include supervision sessions, will be arranged to ensure professional development of volunteers and that appropriate support is available from Line Management.
- 2.2 Attendance at volunteer meetings is mandatory as per Volunteer Agreement.

- 2.3 If a voluntary worker requires one-to-one support or supervision, they approach the worker who line manages them within their allocated project, who will arrange a meeting to facilitate this.
- 2.4 Voluntary workers may access support from any staff member on their allocated project if they wish to raise enquiries on difficulties they may experience.
- 2.5 Voluntary workers will be expected to attend supportive discussion, sharing or training groups, specifically to deal with work-related issues.

3.0 Training and Accreditation

- 3.1 **In-house training:** Ideally, paid workers and voluntary workers will be trained together wherever tasks and roles require the same type of training. This will ensure greater understanding of the complementary roles and responsibilities.
- 3.2 Where appropriate, voluntary workers will be offered work-based assessment for NVQ or other relevant accreditation.
- 3.3 Training opportunities will also be made available specifically for voluntary workers, as appropriate.

4.0 Entitlements

- 4.1 Voluntary workers will be entitled to claim for out-of-pocket expenses incurred during the course of their voluntary work for Foyle Women's Aid. These include:
 - travel
 - subsistence
- 4.2 Every volunteer will be required to complete and submit a monthly Expenses Form.
- 4.3 Voluntary workers will be covered by Foyle Women's Aid insurance policies, in respect of public liability and personal accident.
- 4.4 Voluntary workers moving into paid employment or other work will be entitled to receive a reference from Foyle Women's Aid.

GRIEVANCE & DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE (RELATING TO VOLUNTARY WORKERS)

Grievance Procedure

Foyle Women's Aid seeks to cultivate supportive working relationships in order that any frustrations or grievances may be more easily resolved when they arise.

In the event of a grievance being unresolved in the work context, the voluntary worker should raise it informally, in the first instance, with the Line Manager of the project. Where such discussion does not resolve the matter, the following stages apply.

The Formal Procedure, as outlined in the Comments & Complaints Policy, will apply.

Disciplinary Rules & Procedure

In the event of a concern or complaint about the performance or conduct of a voluntary worker, this will be brought to the voluntary worker's attention at a meeting. The object of such a meeting is to discuss the issues involved and agree ways of improving the situation.

If there is no improvement or a recurrence of the problem within 6 months, then the relevant Line Manager will refer the matter to the Director. The Director will convene an interview to which the voluntary worker and Line Management will be required to attend. Should it be concluded that a significant breach of organisational policy and procedure working practice has been breached, the following options will be considered:

- Reassign to a new area of work
- Retrain to refresh or develop skills
- Revitalise by offering a short 'holiday' from their volunteer work
- Refer to another organisation or a source of help
- Retirement from the organisation

The Director's decision will be final.

Misconduct

The following list includes examples of the type of behaviour which the organisation has authorised for each level of misconduct.

Minor

- A careless, grudging or uncooperative attitude towards the work
- Ignoring safety/hygiene/security rules
- Failure to maintain a tidy and safe working environment
- Misuse of the telephone

Major

- Dangerous physical horseplay
- Neglect, causing damage to or loss of organisation's users of service or donors
- Serious neglect of safety/hygiene/security rules
- Consuming or bringing intoxicants into the premises without permission
- Wilful or excessive wastage of material
- Unsatisfactory attitude to users of the service, donors or colleagues

Gross Misconduct

- Theft
- Deliberately ignoring safety/hygiene/security rules
- Fraud
- Wilful damage to, or gross negligence of, property of the organisation or property of service users
- Falsifying records
- Inappropriate behaviour towards a client
- Breach of confidentiality