



Volunteering Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

DASL recognises that volunteering is an important expression of citizenship. It is a commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain. Volunteers are engaged within DASL to support and compliment the client work delivered by paid staff. DASL will not involve volunteers to replace paid staff. Volunteers are involved in supporting vulnerable adults through their process of treatment in order to maintain the organisation's aim of providing high quality service and support that respond to the needs of people affected by substance misuse.

1.1 *Purpose of the Volunteer Policy*

The purpose of this policy is to set out the organisations approach and commitment to volunteers. It is intended to ensure fairness and consistency throughout the volunteer programme. The policy is intended for guidance only, and does not constitute a binding contractual or personnel agreement. DASL reserves the right to change any aspect of the policy at any time and expect adherence to the changed policy. Matters relating to volunteer involvement not covered in this policy shall be negotiated with the Service Manager.

1.2 *Scope of volunteer involvement*

Volunteers may be involved in all programmes and activities of the organisation and serve at all levels of skill. A volunteer must be recruited for a specific role prior to the performance of the task. Volunteers should not be used to displace any paid employees from their positions. Volunteers shall not be considered as employees of DASL. To this aim volunteers will not be appointed to the role of key-worker with services users.

1.3 *Conflict of interest*

No person who has a conflict of interest with any activity or programme at DASL, whether personal, philosophical or financial shall be accepted to serve as volunteer.

1.4 *Employees as volunteers*

DASL will only accept employees as volunteers on negotiation with senior management and then with the following provisions:

- That it is without coercion
- That it involves work that is outside of normal staff duties
- That it is provided outside the employees usual working hours
- That it does not compromise their role as a member of the staff team
- That the voluntary contribution does not impinge on EU working hour regulations

1.5 *Discretion of the organisation*

DASL accepts the service of volunteers with the understanding that it is at the sole discretion of the organisation. DASL reserves the right to decide to withdraw the placement within the organisation for whatever reason and at any time. Likewise, a volunteer may at any time, for whatever reasons decide to end their placement with DASL.

1.6 *Agreement*

The expectations of what would be expected from DASL and from a volunteer will be set out in a volunteer agreement which is an agreement which is binding in honour only and not intended to be a legal contract.

2. Procedures

2.1 Maintenance of records

A system of records will be maintained on each volunteer, including dates of service and positions held. Volunteers and appropriate staff shall be responsible for submitting relevant information to HR, including timesheets. Volunteer records shall be kept securely and confidentiality as staff personnel records.

2.2 Representation of DASL

Volunteers should consult with their supervisor within DASL or other appropriate senior staff member prior to any action or statement that may significantly affect or obligate DASL, e.g. in statements to the press or when in communication with other agencies etc.

2.3 Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves a single member of staff, volunteer or client or involves the overall business of the organisation. All incidences of Legal Privilege and Duty of Care must be brought to the attention of the Service Manager.

3. Recruitment and Selection

The criteria for selection and progression are determined solely on the basis of the requirements of the placement. People are selected and appointed solely on the basis of their relevant, assessable experience and abilities. DASL will follow its Recruitment and Equal Opportunities Policy when recruiting Volunteers

3.1 Requests for volunteers

It is the responsibility of all departments to inform HR when a volunteer leaves the service. All new requests for volunteers are to be made direct to HR. DASL reserves the right to refuse to recruit or place any volunteers until the project has made sufficient preparations to make effective use of the volunteer resource.

3.2 Ex-Service User as volunteers

From time to time it is recognised that ex-service users wish to support the work done at DASL. This is welcome provided that there is a 'rest' period of one month between leaving a service and beginning a volunteer placement. If DASL clients are at stage 3 of their treatment and are interested in becoming a volunteer, they would need to demonstrate a minimum of 1 months commitment to the stage 3 programme. In addition each application from an ex service user will be treated on a case by case basis.

3.3 Volunteer requirements

In order to safeguard volunteers whilst supporting our service users, it is recommended that all potential ex-service users volunteers are either substance use free or are maintaining a sustained level of substance use on commencement of their volunteering involvement. If volunteers do relapse then their placement will be reviewed.

3.4 Criminal records

We do not exclude volunteers with criminal records. However, due to contact with vulnerable clients, individuals on the Vulnerable Children and Adult's Barred List will be refused a placement and those with a serious cases of fraud, history of violent behaviour and those with

previous convictions for arson or sexual offences may also be excluded. All volunteers will therefore, be asked to complete an enhanced criminal record check and each case will be dealt with on an individual basis

3.5 Interview procedure

Prior to a placement being offered, all volunteers shall be interviewed to ascertain their suitability for and interest in that position. The interview is a two way process, to determine their qualification and commitment for the post and to answer any questions the volunteer may have about the post or the organisation. Potential volunteers will undergo an interview conducted by the relevant line manager and HR. This may be in the form of a group or 1:1 interviews. Recruitment rounds will be held approximately every 3 months depending on the level of vacancies at the time and any volunteer enquiries should be forwarded to HR.

3.6 Placement

When placing a volunteer, attention shall be paid to the interests and capabilities of the volunteer and the requirements of the position. No placement shall be made unless the requirements of both the volunteer and the supervising staff can be met. Placements shall normally be for a minimum of six months. A progress review will take place three months into the placement to assess the volunteer's training/skill learning needs. Volunteer opportunities exist on all sites within DASL and volunteers will be deployed throughout according to their ability or skill enhancement needs. Initially volunteers will be offered placements of one or two days a week. Any changes to the volunteer commitment are to be negotiated with the Service Manager.

3.7 Appointment

Placements shall not begin until volunteers have completed an application form, attended an interview and we are in receipt of a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau check, two satisfactory references, proof of their eligibility to volunteer in the UK and acceptance of the placement.

3.8 Volunteer agreement

On acceptance each volunteer shall receive a copy of the DASL Volunteer or Student Agreement. This Agreement contains information on relevant policies including Health and Safety, Confidentiality and Equal Opportunities.

4. ELEMENTS OF THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

4.1 Level 1 General Volunteers

These placements are for volunteers that do not have any relevant qualifications or experience and would like to offer their free time to DASL to gain some valuable experience. These placements are also for any ex service users either of DASL or of another service who would like to use their personal experiences to help others.

Level 2 Student Volunteers

To qualify for this level of placement, applicants must be in at least the second year of an accredited course. Volunteers must be able to commit to at least 6 months to these placements and must provide proof of continued studies. Counselling volunteers will be required to attend fortnightly clinical supervision. Student placements are available in the following areas: Counselling, Nursing, NVQ in Health and Social Care and Social Work

Level 3 Qualified Volunteers

To qualify for this level of placement, applicants must have a relevant qualification and some experience in the field that they are applying for. Counselling and group work placements will be required to attend fortnightly clinical supervision. Both volunteer counsellors and therapists need to hold professional indemnity insurance before commencement of the placement and all volunteers must provide evidence of training. Qualified placements are available in the following areas: Counselling, Group Work and Complimentary Therapies.

4.2 Placement review

At the end of each three-month period, the volunteer supervisor will review the volunteer's placement. The purpose of this is to ensure that a volunteer is satisfied with their placement, to address any issues arising, to evaluate the volunteer's progress in DASL and to discuss future plans.

4.3 Leave of absence

At the discretion of the department to which the volunteer is assigned, leaves of absence may be granted to volunteers. Volunteers must agree any leave with their volunteer supervisor.

5. VOLUNTEER TRAINING

5.1 Induction

The volunteer supervisor is responsible for ensuring that new volunteers receive a thorough general induction on the nature and purpose of DASL, health and safety procedures and relevant policies. The DASL Induction will also include training in communication skills, confidentiality and boundaries. Individual departments/projects are responsible for ensuring volunteers are inducted into the specific nature and operation of the post for which they have been recruited. Volunteers will not be permitted to commence their volunteering until both inductions have been attended.

5.2 Staff involvement

Staff who will be in a supervisory capacity to volunteers shall have primary responsibility for the design and delivery of on the job training and support of volunteers assigned to them. Project staff are responsible for delivering on the job training and informing the line manager where extra support is needed.

5.3 Volunteer involvement

Experienced volunteers shall be encouraged to become involved in the induction and training of new volunteers.

5.4 Meetings attendance

Volunteers are authorised to attend conferences and meetings that are relevant to their volunteer position. Prior approval must be sought from the volunteer's supervisor should attendance interfere with their agreed work schedule.

6. VOLUNTEER SUPPORT AND EVALUATION

6.1 Staff supervision

Each volunteer who is accepted to a position with DASL must have a clearly defined supervisor who is responsible for direct management of that volunteer. This supervisor shall be responsible for day-to-day management, support and guidance of the work of that volunteer and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance.

6.2 *Volunteer supervision*

In some circumstances experienced volunteers may have the opportunity to be involved in supporting and developing the skills of less experienced volunteers, provided that the supporting volunteer is under the direct supervision of a paid member of staff.

6.3 *Volunteer-staff relationship*

Volunteers and staff are considered to be partners in implementing the mission and programmes of the organisation, with each having an equal but complementary role to play. It is essential for the proper operation of this relationship that each partner understands and respects the needs and abilities of the other.

6.4 *Lines of communication*

Volunteers are entitled to all necessary information pertinent to the performance of their work. Volunteers shall receive information at the start of their day relevant to the fulfilment of their duties. Primary responsibility for ensuring that the volunteer receives this information rests with their supervisor. Lines of communication should operate in both directions and should be both formal and informal. Volunteers should be consulted regarding all decisions that would substantially affect the performance of their duties. This includes attendance to relevant team meetings.

6.5 *Absenteeism*

Volunteers are expected to perform their duties on a regular, scheduled and punctual basis. When expecting to be absent from a scheduled duty, volunteers should inform their staff supervisor as far in advance as possible so that alternative arrangements may be made. Continual absenteeism will result in a review of a volunteers work assignment or term of service. Supervisors are to inform the Service Manager of any irregular patterns of attendance.

6.6 *Leave cover*

Volunteers may be encouraged to organise cover of their duties during any future absences. Such cover should only be arranged after consultation with appropriate supervisors. Cover may only be recruited from other volunteers in the organisation.

6.7 *Support of volunteers*

All volunteers will receive regular support during their placement at DASL. This will be arranged with the support manager of the service. Volunteer support maybe one to one or group based support.

6.8 *Dismissal procedure*

Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of the organisation or who fail to satisfactorily perform volunteer duties may be subject to dismissal. No volunteer agreement will be terminated until the volunteer has been offered an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with supervisory staff. Prior to the dismissal of any volunteer, affected staff should seek the consultation and assistance of the Service Manager. Volunteers who are dismissed will not be permitted to request a reference for future employment. Possible grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Gross misconduct or insubordination
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Theft of property or misuse of equipment or materials
- Abuse or mistreatment of clients or co-workers

- Failure to abide by organisational policies and procedures

6.9 *Notice of re-assignment*

In the event that a volunteer is re-assigned to another volunteer position in the organisation, or seconded to a DASL partner organisation, it is the Service Manager who has responsibility to inform existing staff of the changes.

6.10 *Notice of resignation*

Volunteers may resign from their service at any time. It is requested that volunteers who intend to resign provide advance notice of their departure and a reason for their decision.

6.11 *Exit interview*

Where possible an exit evaluation form should be completed by the volunteer. This should ascertain the reasons for leaving, suggestions for improvement of that position and the possibility of involving the volunteer in some other capacity with DASL in the future. This evaluation of the volunteer programme informs in the developmental process of the volunteer service.

7. VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

7.1 *Expenses*

Volunteers are eligible for reimbursement of travel expenses incurred in performing their volunteer duties. This will normally mean reimbursement for travelling between home and DASL. Prior arrangement with the Service Manager is required before any expense outside of travel expenses is authorised. Travel expenses to and from the project to which a volunteer is assigned is to be recorded on the travel and expense form and tickets/receipts should be supplied. DASL will reimburse work related travel to the value of the cheapest/most reasonable form of transport and type of ticket.

7.2 *Insurance*

Liability and accident insurance is provided for volunteers engaged at DASL. Volunteer counsellors and Complementary Therapists must have their own added current indemnity insurance for a minimum amount of £2,000,000.

7.3 *Staff recognition of volunteers*

Staff are encouraged to undertake various methods of recognising volunteer work on a regular basis, for example verbal positive feedback. Staff are also encouraged to engage with volunteers on a daily basis to offer support and guidance.