



VOLUNTEERING

1. Volunteering with South Lakeland Mind

- 1.1 Volunteers are essential to South Lakeland Mind's operation. Without them we would only be able to achieve a small fraction of our work and their varied experience and skills add to its value. At the same time, we aim to offer volunteers rewarding opportunities for learning, experience and personal development.
- 1.2 This policy sets out South Lakeland Mind's undertakings in managing and supporting volunteers together with the requirements it asks volunteers themselves to meet. It also summarises the Procedures and Arrangements put in place to implement the policy.
- 1.3 Though they give their services freely, volunteers will, if necessary, be subject to the same disciplinary procedures as paid staff as set out in the Employment policy. Several other policies also apply directly to volunteers, including Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults, Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety (including, if appropriate, the Lone Working policy), Whistleblowing, Confidentiality, Complaints and Grievance, Conflict of Interest, and any others appropriate for their role.

2. Volunteering opportunities

- 2.1 We welcome both volunteers with a concern for and interest in mental health and those who are or have been users of mental health services. Volunteering with South Lakeland Mind is suitable for people in employment with available spare time, those seeking work and looking for useful experience, retired people and students seeking work experience placements.
- 2.2 We particularly welcome applications for volunteering from Service Users. Where necessary extra support will be given to enable them to help deliver services.
- 2.3 We ask volunteers to give only the amount of time they have to offer.
- 2.4 We offer involvement in
 - Provision of services and activities, working with people with mental health problems.
 - Administration – at Kendal and perhaps working from home.
 - Fundraising.
 - Contributing to the development of policy and good practice.
 - Serving on our Board of Trustees.

- Helping to campaign on mental health issues and to promote our services.

3. Recruitment

- 3.1 Volunteering opportunities will be promoted in the local community.
- 3.2 Volunteers will be subject to a formal selection process which will follow the principle of equal opportunities.

4. Management of Volunteers

- 4.1 During the probationary period, all new volunteers are given an induction pack which introduces them to the Association's policies, services, accommodation, and administrative, health and safety and HR procedures, other employees, volunteers and service users and appropriate contacts. Any other, specific, induction needs of each volunteer will be assessed in an initial appraisal and will depend on the extent of their experience and knowledge and the requirements of the post. All new volunteers are required to undertake Core Training in Safeguarding Adults, Confidentiality and Health & Safety, within one month of appointment, provided in-house or via outside provision, as determined by the Chief Officer.
- 4.2 Accepted volunteers are placed, by agreement, in roles which match their skills, talents and interests and available time. We will ensure that all paid staff and volunteers are clear about each other's roles and that good working relationships are fostered between them.
- 4.3 All volunteers are provided with support and supervision and offered opportunities for training and personal development. Volunteers will receive monthly supervision by the Chief Officer and/or the Service Development Officer.
- 4.4 We respect and take account of the value and needs of volunteers when planning services and in entering into service contracts or joint working with other organizations. We aim to ensure that the role of volunteers is fully recognized and that satisfactory arrangements and resources are in place for their management.
- 4.5 We encourage volunteers to contribute ideas and comments to the development of policies and services.
- 4.6 We endeavour to provide safe working conditions and ensure that volunteers are aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- 4.7 We maintain a fair and effective mechanism for dealing with complaints.

5. The Volunteer's Responsibilities

- 5.1 We expect volunteers to:
- Have or be willing to acquire a general understanding of mental health issues and to engage with service users without prior expectation based on their mental health condition.
 - Carry out their tasks in a responsible way which corresponds to the aims and values of SLM.

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- Become aware of and comply with relevant policies and procedures and to work within agreed guidelines and remits.
- Be reliable, punctual and honest.
- Respect confidentiality in all dealings with clients, staff and other volunteers and follow our Confidentiality Policy.
- Attend training and support sessions where agreed.
- Not discriminate against, staff, users and other volunteers.
- Maintain the good name of South Lakeland Mind.

5.2 Trustees are required to:

- Observe fair and non-discriminatory standards and legislation regarding conditions of employment and health and safety in respect of paid staff and volunteers.
- Pay regard to South Lakeland Mind's constitution and any relevant financial or governance requirements and relevant policies.

5.3 All Volunteers are encouraged to:

- To become members of South Lakeland Mind and National Mind.
- Help to promote South Lakeland Mind and its services in their local community and to raise awareness of mental health issues and the needs of people with mental health problems.

6. Support for Volunteers

- a) We will provide funding for volunteers' (including trustees') reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred as a result of their work for the charity, including travel expenses (car mileage, at a rate set by the trustees, and bus/train fares) and other expenses (including activity costs) subject to approval by the Chief Officer, Treasurer or Chairman. In the case of purchase of goods or services, a receipt should be produced. Major expenses over £20 should normally be approved in advance. Payment will be by cheque or cash.
- b) We provide insurance for volunteers in carrying out approved activities.
- c) We provide each new volunteer with a Volunteers' Handbook.
- d) Volunteers will have access to and be informed about information on legislation and other policies which may affect them, e.g., Health & Safety and Equal Opportunities. In these respects volunteers will be treated in the same way as staff for liability purposes.
- e) All volunteers will be offered the chance to consult informally a named staff member or trustee, should they have queries or concerns.
- f) Volunteers will be informed about emergency procedures and who to contact.
- g) We will seek to assign an appropriate Trustee to take a special interest in the role and needs of volunteers and make his or her name known to volunteers and staff.
- h) Volunteers will be consulted on the decisions which affect them, and policies will be checked as to how they affect volunteers.
- i) Volunteers will be made aware of SLM's complaints procedure and who to contact if they have a grievance about any aspect of their work.
- j) A designated investigating officer will be assigned responsibility for dealing with a complaint about the conduct of a member of staff.
- k) Volunteers will be invited to attend the charity's Annual General Meeting.

7. Gifts

From time to time, staff and volunteers may be offered gifts by service users or carers in response to support or assistance received or in friendship. While gifts of this kind should not be encouraged, they may be received, provided they are offered in good faith without condition, and are of a minor nature. However, any gift or gratuity to a value of more than £10 must be reported to the Chief Officer who will record it and inform the Trustees.

If a staff member or volunteer has any doubt about receiving a gift, he/she should consult the Chief Officer.

APPENDIX

Procedures and Arrangements

1. Recruitment, Selection and Management

- a) Applications to volunteer must be made by application form. References will be required.
- b) Selection will be by interview with the appropriate service coordinator.
- c) Volunteers are required to agree to a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check.
- d) Student placements will be welcomed by arrangement with a university, college or school representative, subject to agreed monitoring and supervision arrangements being in place.
- e) SLM reserves the right to reject the application of anyone who, it is felt, is not suitable for work as a volunteer. If a serving volunteer is felt to be no longer suitable, SLM reserves the right to dispense with their services. The Disciplinary Procedures will apply.
- f) Continuing Supervision and support will be provided by the Chief Officer or other nominated staff member with opportunities for feedback. Appraisal will be used as appropriate as a basis for considering changes in work and practice and future training and personal development.
- g) Records will be kept of volunteers' details and work. Volunteers will have access to their records.
- h) Volunteers will be asked to read and sign the Confidentiality Policy.

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- u) A designated investigating officer will be assigned responsibility for dealing with a complaint about the conduct of a member of staff.
- v) Volunteers will be invited to attend the charity's Annual General Meeting.
- w) Training which is appropriate to the role will be provided.

This policy is intended as a statement of intent and does not constitute a binding contractual or personal agreement. But it will be monitored and revised in the light of service user, staff or volunteer experience or comments and any operational changes and legislative or other external considerations. Interpretation and any matters not specifically covered by the policy will be decided by the Chief Officer and / or Trustees.

Policy Approved by Board of Trustees: 10th June 2010

Revision(s) approved: 14th August 2014

Review Date: September 2015

If at any time it seems appropriate to review the policy sooner than the review date, such as through a change in the law, then this should be done without delay.