

NEW FOREST MENCAP

Volunteer Policy

Welcome and thank you for volunteering within New Forest Mencap (NFM). We hope you will have a happy and rewarding time as a volunteer.

As part of your induction programme we give you this copy of our Volunteer Charter and Volunteer Policy that sets out our principles regarding how we work with our volunteers and in return, what we expect from you. We hope that you will find it a useful reference document. We believe we have covered all the important points, but are always interested to receive your comments if you feel we have omitted anything. Any other feedback would also be appreciated.

Becoming a volunteer with New Forest Mencap

Interviews

All prospective volunteers will have an interview, which will be carried out by an appropriate staff member.

It is our intention that at all interviews prospective volunteers are encouraged to make enquiries about the work of this organisation and the voluntary role they are applying for together with any other relevant information they require. NFM will seek some basic information about the prospective volunteer as well as ensuring that the placement will match the volunteer's skills, talents and interests with this organisation's needs and requirements.

Selection

References will be taken and no volunteer will commence a placement with the organisation until references are received and are satisfactory. References do not necessarily need to be from an employer/former employer. If providing a reference proves a barrier to some prospective volunteers, the volunteer is urged to seek advice from the NFM.

Where the role is with children and other vulnerable people, the volunteer will be advised that a check with the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) will be carried out and will be asked for proof of identity and other relevant information. The volunteer will also be advised what the process entails and no volunteer will commence a placement with the organisation until checks are completed satisfactorily.

Volunteers must also inform NFM if they at any stage of their volunteering with the organisation receive a conviction or are subject to adverse child protection

proceedings or any other circumstances, which could impinge on the credibility of the organisation.

NFM does not preclude people who may have previous criminal convictions from volunteering with this organisation but will look at each individual situation objectively and fairly without compromising our legal duty of care taking into account: -

- The area of activity and volunteer role
- The nature of the former offence and the seriousness of it
- The time when the offence occurred and whether there has been any pattern of offending
- The circumstances of the applicant at the time of the application

In certain areas of work, professional, technical or other qualifications may be needed and volunteers involved in such activity will need to have evidence of relevant qualifications or have confirmation of experience.

Your role as a NFM Volunteer

Induction

Before taking up the volunteer placement, all volunteers will undergo a period of induction which at least will include: -

- Going through Health & Safety, Confidentiality, Safeguarding and other policies relevant to the volunteer role with the relevant staff member.
- Being shown and advised of all Health and Safety procedures
- Being introduced to colleagues (paid staff and volunteers)
- Being shown where the activity will take place
- Being advised of any training programme

Trial period

To see if both New Forest Mencap and the volunteer are compatible, all volunteers will initially have a trial period. The length of time will be agreed according to the time commitment of the volunteer. Should the volunteer not be best suited to the needs of the organisation, an alternative voluntary role may be suggested and support will be given to find this. Likewise, should the volunteer consider that the organisation or the volunteer role does not fulfil their requirements they are able to withdraw without embarrassment. Volunteers must be willing to accept direction by relevant paid staff of the organisation and to abide by NFM policies and procedures during the trial period and further throughout their entire involvement with the organisation as a NFM volunteer.

Availability

NFM believes that it should not be an embarrassing experience for a volunteer to say that they wish to stop volunteering. We appreciate that there are many reasons why volunteers "move on". When a volunteer wishes to let us know they want to leave, it would be appreciated if as much notice as possible is given. This ensures the smooth running of our services. We are always interested to know the explanation as to why a volunteer is leaving but respect the right of the volunteer who may not wish to give their reasons.

On occasions when you are not able to volunteer, perhaps through illness, please telephone and if possible, advise when you expect to be able to return. Also should you not wish to volunteer for a while, perhaps because of other commitments, notice of intended absence should be made to your team leader/volunteer supporter in accordance with the Volunteer Charter.

Should there be problems with your volunteering

As in any organisation, problems can occur from time to time. We hope that the occasion would not arise but if there are any concerns; in the first instance the volunteer should speak to their team leader who will try to resolve the matter informally. If this is not appropriate, the volunteer can inform the New Forest Mencap Office Administrator. Whilst NFM would endeavour to resolve any difficulties, there may be occasions when we have to end a volunteer's involvement in our activities. It is hoped that the situation would not arise and would only do so in circumstances that could not amicably be resolved. The Complaints procedure can be found on our website www.newforestmencap.org.uk or requested from the office administrator (details below).

Health and Safety

Health and Safety is a two-way responsibility. NFM strives to provide a safe working environment for its members, staff and volunteers. Volunteers, if they spot a situation that may give rise to Health and Safety concerns, should notify their team leader. All volunteers will be made familiar with Health and Safety practices and procedures.

Equal Opportunities

All volunteers are required to comply with the principles set out in the organisation's Volunteer Charter and during induction will be made familiar with the Society's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Smoking, Illegal Drugs and Alcohol

NFM operates a no illegal drug taking, smoking or consumption of alcohol policy. This includes no illegal drug taking or smoking whilst volunteering. No consumption of alcohol at any time while representing NFM in any role. There should be no smoking, drug taking or alcohol consumption at any time when volunteering with members or groups.

Definitions

NFM means New Forest Mencap

The Society means New Forest Mencap

Staff means paid employee

Volunteer means volunteer including Trustees

Office Administrator is the Office Administrator at New Forest Mencap, The Nedderman Centre. Tel: 01425 621893 Email: office@newforestmencap.org

Chairperson For most Club activities this refers to the Chairperson of the relevant Club Management Committee. Otherwise issues can be raised with the Chairperson of New Forest Mencap. At the address above.

Team Leader will be identified for each volunteer.

By signing this Volunteer Charter & Policy you accept to abide by the working practices, values and principals of New Forest Mencap.

Signed:

Volunteer

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Name (PRINT):

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Date:

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