



SKILLS & VOLUNTEERING CYMRU (SVC)

DIGITAL VOLUNTEERING POLICY

June 2020

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	Volunteering Policy
1	General
1.1	Introduction
	<p>Skills and Volunteering Cymru (SVC) is an independent, volunteer-led charity based in Cardiff. We were established in 1971 and our aim is to enhance the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in South Wales. This usually involves running clubs and befriending projects for our many beneficiary groups, which include - children and adults with disabilities, young carers, patients on dementia wards, patients with mental health conditions, homeless people and isolated older people.</p> <p>Following the COVID-19, pandemic we have ceased all of our face-to-face volunteering activities. However, we are now looking at new ways to support our beneficiaries, many of whom have been advised to self-isolate for their own safety. We are keen to provide our beneficiaries with as much support as possible and try to combat feelings of isolation and loneliness.</p> <p>To find out more about SVC have a look at our website: www.svcymru.org</p>
1.2	Objectives of the Policy
	<p>This policy aims to set out good volunteering practice throughout digital volunteering opportunities at SVC. To enable all staff, volunteers and outside bodies to access, and understand, the ethos in which volunteers are engaged in SVC's numerous digital volunteering projects. It aims to help ensure fairness and consistency across our digital projects, and procedures to ensure everyone is kept safe.</p>
1.3	Staff Responsibilities
	<p>All SVC staff are primarily here to support and ensure the safety of our volunteers, beneficiaries and partners.</p> <p>The staff each have responsibility for different areas of the Charity.</p> <p>When you register for digital volunteering you will be contacted by your key SVC staff contact. This will generally be the staff member who oversees the digital project you are registering on. If you register on several projects then you may have several lead contacts.</p>
2	Recruitment & Selection
2.1	Volunteer Recruitment
	<p>SVC will advertise volunteering opportunities through many different platforms – both online and through community centers, Universities and events.</p>
2.2	Application Procedure & DBS Checks
	<p>All volunteers will be required to complete a basic application form (these are currently only available in an online format).</p> <p>The majority of our opportunities are open to anyone aged 18+.</p> <p>There are a small selection of opportunities for young people aged 16-18 – if you are interested in these opportunities please contact the SVC Manager – A.Earls@SVCymru.org</p>

	<p>The majority of our digital roles will also require applicants to meet with an SVC member of staff (digitally) for an informal chat.</p> <p>For many of our projects, volunteers will be supporting children or vulnerable adults, therefore some of our digital opportunities may require a DBS check (for example, undertaking video calls with beneficiaries). At this stage, individuals will be required to disclose any criminal convictions, which will be treated in the strictest of confidence. More information regarding DBS checks can be found here - https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/about).</p> <p>Some of our projects also require additional application forms due to their complexity (volunteers may be matched with a beneficiary based on shared interests and availability).</p> <p>All information supplied to SVC through the application process will be kept confidential in line with GDPR.</p> <p>The SVC staff member assigned to your application will support you through the application process and inform you of any additional applications you may need to complete.</p>
2.3	References
	Currently we do not require references for volunteers supporting our digital volunteering projects/ opportunities (June 2020).
2.4	Equal Opportunities
	SVC's equal opportunities policy must always be adhered to in interactions with volunteers, beneficiaries and staff (please see Section 10).
2.5	Unsuitable Volunteers
	To the best of SVC's abilities, a suitable project will be found for each volunteer wishing to volunteer with SVC. If it becomes apparent that a volunteer is unsuitable for any role then the volunteer will be invited to discuss, and resolve, these issues with an SVC member of staff (through a digital meeting), to an extent that is of benefit to the beneficiaries and the volunteer.
2.6	Criminal Convictions
	Having a criminal conviction does not automatically mean an individual is unable to volunteer with SVC. SVC will endeavor 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.
3.0	Induction & Training for Digital Projects/ Opportunities
3.1	Volunteer Induction and Support
	<p>Digital volunteers will undertake a digital meeting with their key SVC staff member, who will explain more detail about the project they have applied for and how it operates.</p> <p>Where appropriate, digital volunteers (in particular digital befrienders) will be given guidelines about the do's and don'ts of their project. Ideas for topics of conversation, how to support your beneficiary, how to manage inappropriate information etc.</p> <p>Several of the projects have software we have specifically put in place to keep our volunteers and beneficiaries safe. This includes a phone system which protects the contact details of both the volunteers and the beneficiaries. Additionally, SVC have our own video calls platform which can</p>

	<p>be used by beneficiaries to safely engage in video calls. Both of these systems are recorded and monitored, for the safety of all involved.</p> <p>All volunteers will receive regular support by email/ phone call or video calls, to monitor how their volunteering experience is progressing. Volunteers are also welcome to contact SVC on info@svcmru.org or the SVC telephone number 02921 676780 (however this is not always manned).</p>
3.2	Volunteer Training and Volunteer Guidelines
	<p>Volunteers will be given a digital induction and/ or digital 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.</p> <p>Some training courses are mandatory, and volunteers must complete these training sessions to prepare them for their volunteer roles.</p> <p>Volunteers are also encouraged to attend optional training courses which will complement their chosen volunteering roles.</p> <p>Volunteers receive a Welcome Pack, or Project Guidelines outlining the appropriate forms of behaviour, conversation topics and instructions of how to use various digital platforms.</p>
3.3	Lead Volunteer Training
	<p>Lead Volunteers will receive role specific training, information, support and guidance. This will be delivered by your key staff member (SVC Project Co-Ordinator), and will cover areas including: -</p> <p>Project budget, recruiting and vetting of volunteers, Lead Volunteer responsibilities, project plans and development, e-learning modules and project specific info for the academic year.</p>
3.4	Board of Trustees Training
	<p>The SVC Board of Trustees receive training from the SVC Manager at the start of the academic year. This covers-</p> <p>a) The Structure of SVC;</p> <p>b) What SVC must adhere to, and what it should do regarding best practice;</p> <p>c) Trustee Liability and how to manage risks.</p> <p>If you have any ideas for new digital opportunities, or would like to share feedback on your digital volunteering then please contact the SVC Chair on Chair@SVCymru.org</p>
4	Supervision & Monitoring
4.1	Lead Volunteer Supervision
	<p>Lead Volunteers will be offered formal supervision sessions from either the SVC Manager, or an SVC Project Co-Ordinator. Supervisions will be offered at a minimum of twice per year.</p> <p>Where possible, volunteers will also be welcome to book an appointment to meet with a member of staff in the SVC office, in a socially distanced capacity.</p>
4.2	Volunteer Supervision
	<p>It is primarily the role of either the volunteer's key SVC staff member, or the Lead Volunteer of the digital project, to monitor the welfare of their digital volunteers and undertake regular supervision.</p> <p>Should there be any issues, volunteers have the option to contact their Lead Volunteer, their Project Coordinator, the Board of Trustees or the SVC Manager.</p>

	<p>All volunteers will be given the contact name and contact details of their key SVC staff member, or Lead Volunteer; they will also be given the SVC office contact details.</p> <p>Several of our digital projects are managed directly by SVC staff, rather than Lead Volunteers. In these circumstances' volunteers will be given the details of their assigned staff member, plus (where applicable) the details of the supervisor/s within their organisations/locations of their chosen volunteering project/s.</p>
5	Volunteer Expenses
5.1	Reimbursement
	It is the policy of SVC to reimburse out of pocket expenses incurred by volunteers in their volunteering activity upon presentation of receipts.
5.2	Out of Pocket Expenses
	<p>Out of pocket expenses include: Resources for projects (arts & crafts, food), cost of online activities (project applicable), cost of postage (for our pen pal scheme) and cost of telephone calls (for our digital befriending scheme).</p> <p>If your digital volunteering role requires any travel (project specific) petrol and travel costs will also be covered - mileage must be recorded, or receipts retained. The full Transport Policy may be viewed in the SVC office or SVC website.</p>
5.3	SVC Staff & Volunteers Expenses Policy
	<p>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.</p> <p>Receipts can be emailed to the either the key SVC staff member, or the Lead Volunteer. This money will then be reimbursed by a BACS transfer to the volunteer's preferred bank account.</p>
6.0	Recognition
6.1	<p>SVC truly values the commitment, time and dedication made by all our volunteers.</p> <p>All SVC volunteers will receive certificates annually, to evidence the contribution they have made through their volunteering.</p> <p>SVC will produce regular articles about the amazing work conducted by our volunteers. Where possible, SVC hold social events to thank volunteers and awards annually for the Volunteer of the Year and/or Special Recognition Awards.</p> <p>Additionally, SVC will be pleased to offer references for our volunteers, detailing the project/s, commitment and roles volunteers have undertaken with SVC.</p>
7	Health & Safety
7.1	Risk Assessments
	<p>All volunteers will be given Health & Safety instructions from their key SVC staff member, and or the Lead Volunteer on their digital project.</p> <p>A risk assessment for each project is undertaken by an SVC staff member. Volunteering in a digital world comes with many different areas of potential risk and concern, therefore SVC have put together detailed assessments for</p>

	<p>each digital activity. Additionally, we have implemented many security procedures to ensure the safety of all of SVC's volunteers and beneficiaries. These are all outlined in the project guidelines.</p> <p>Volunteers will be notified about specific risks associated with their chosen project/s.</p>
7.2	Health & Safety Policy
	<p>The full Health & Safety Policy may be viewed in the SVC office or SVC website.</p> <p>Health & Safety will be brought to the attention of all SVC volunteers. All volunteers will be expected to work in accordance to information, guidance and training provided.</p>
7.3	Accidents and Incidents
	<p>Accidents: In the event of an accident (when medical attention is required), as digital volunteers will only be witness by phone or vide call, an ambulance must be called. The key SVC staff member or Lead Volunteer must be notified of the accident/ incident. An accident report form must be completed promptly; these forms will be emailed to the volunteer.</p> <p>Incidents: SVC considers that incidents are anything that occurs that is outside the norm within a project or beneficiaries behaviour. If volunteers are concerned about anything disclosed by a beneficiary, or any events that occur whilst volunteering, they should contact their SVC staff member, or their Lead Volunteer. They will be emailed an incident form to be completed and returned as quickly as possible.</p>
7.4	Problem-Solving Procedure
	<p>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 (all of the contact details for the whole team are available on the SVC website).</p> <p>If the problem concerns the SVC Manager, the volunteer should discuss this with the SVC Board of Trustees.</p> <p>SVC hopes that all problems can be resolved informally with discussion. However, if this is not the case then then the Problem-Solving (formal) procedure will come into effect.</p> <p>The full Problem-Solving Policy may be viewed in the SVC office or SVC website.</p>
8	Harassment

	<p>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 not acceptable. Volunteers who have encountered any form of harassment are encouraged to discuss the situation with SVC as soon as possible.</p> <p>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.</p>
9	Equal Opportunities and Diversity
9.1	Equal Opportunities
	<p>SVC undertakes a wide variety of projects with socially excluded individuals across South Wales. As such, SVC has a responsibility to oppose discrimination.</p> <p>SVC will treat all people we meet equally, this includes our volunteers, staff, trustees, beneficiaries and partners. SVC expects all of 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.</p>
9.2	Diversity
	<p>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 the community. 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 can participate and contribute. SVC pledges to regularly evaluate and monitor its progress towards diversity. Details of this can be found on the SVC website - https://www.svcymru.org/news</p>
10	Insurance
	<p>All volunteers are covered by the appropriate Employers Liability Insurance and Public Liability Insurance.</p>
11	Confidentiality
	<p>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.</p>
12	Data Protection
	<p>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.</p> <p>The full Data Protection Policy (including our policies relating to GDPR) may be viewed in the SVC office or the SVC website.</p>
13	Volunteering on Multiple Projects

<p>Many of our volunteers choose to volunteer on several SVC projects, to gain experience working with different beneficiary groups. Volunteers are welcome to participate in several projects at once. However, we ask volunteers to be mindful of their workloads/ other responsibilities, and to only register on projects that they can commit to.</p>
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