

**Volunteering policy**

**Aim**

* To set out how Sutton Mencap values and supports volunteers.
* To explain the procedures used to recruit, support and involve volunteers.
* To ensure Sutton Mencap complies with legal obligations and good practice when involving volunteers in the organisation.

**Introduction**

Sutton Mencap places a huge value on volunteers. We recognise volunteers bring a wide range of life experiences, backgrounds and skills to the organisation. Volunteers also keep us rooted in our community, enabling us to develop and support community action to enhance the lives of people with a learning disability and their cares.

**Definition and scope**

A volunteer is someone who gives time and effort freely to the organisation, through personal choice and without expectation of financial reward outside the reimbursement for out of pocket expenses.

Sutton Mencap seeks to provide a wide range of roles that volunteers can carry out in support of the organisation. These include acting as a trustee, supporting delivery of services, administration support, fundraising and helping in one-off activities.

This policy applies to regular volunteers who have an ongoing role with Sutton Mencap and to trustees and staff who manage or work alongside volunteers. Volunteers carrying out a one off task (e.g. a half day fundraising event, or one off building maintenance project) are referred to the specific procedure for One-off Volunteering.

**Procedures**

1. **Volunteer recruitment**

* We will provide a volunteer role description specifically related to the role being covered. This will set out what the role is, which manager will support the role and what we would like people to bring to the role.
* We will advertise volunteering opportunities in a number of places, including our own publicity materials, and through other organisations.
* People interested in the volunteering role will be invited for an informal discussion with the relevant staff member.
* If we are able to offer an opportunity to participate in a volunteering role, it will normally be subject to two references and a check with the Disclosure and Barring Service, in accordance with our safeguarding procedures.
* If volunteers are in receipt of benefits we will encourage them to inform the benefit office about their role with us.

1. **Induction**

* New volunteers will be provided with a copy of the volunteering handbook, which includes background information about volunteering at Sutton Mencap, plus a role description and key policies and procedures.
* Volunteers will be invited to an induction session with their supporting manager, with the aim of ensuring the volunteer knows everything they need to enable them to start their role.
* Volunteers will normally undertake a 3 month introductory period, during which they will have meetings with their supporting manager to discuss how the role is proceeding.

1. **Ongoing support**

* After the 3 month introductory period, volunteers will continue to have regular support sessions with their supporting manager.
* Sutton Mencap recognises that working with people with a learning disability can be both rewarding and challenging, and will make time available for volunteers to offload as required.
* Volunteers are also welcome to attend group supervision sessions alongside paid staff.

1. **Training**

* Sutton Mencap requires volunteers to undertake parts of our mandatory training programme, in particular Safeguarding and Health and Safety.
* Sutton Mencap will encourage volunteers to take up training appropriate to their volunteering role.
* We will also seek to provide access to other training which can help develop skills.

1. **Volunteering as a trustee at Sutton Mencap**

As a registered charity, Sutton Mencap’s Trustee board is made up solely of volunteers. The Trustee board is ultimately responsible for directing the affairs of the charity, and ensuring that it is solvent, well-run, and delivering its charitable outcomes.

Sutton Mencap seeks to ensure its trustee board contains a wide range of skills and experience. This might include management or financial experience, or direct experience of learning disability, whether as a person with a learning disability or as a carer, or a professional working in the field.

1. **Volunteering on children and adult services**

As an organisation working with very vulnerable children and adults, Sutton Mencap recognises its responsibilities to ensure the safety of its clients, and to ensure volunteers are not placed in a position that they are unable to manage. The following procedures must be adhered in relation to volunteers working directly on children and adult services:

* Volunteers will be under the supervision of a paid staff member at all times.
* Volunteers will never be left alone with a service user, or be asked to take sole responsibility for their safety and wellbeing.
* Volunteers will not be asked to participate in the personal care of a service user.
* Volunteers are encouraged to take part in all aspects of service provision, including maintenance and cleaning of equipment, session planning and session briefing and debriefing.
* A central role for volunteers is to interact with the service users and help them to participate in and enjoy the activity.
* If a volunteer has any concerns about the role they are being asked to do, they should discuss this with their supporting manager.

1. **Volunteering for administrative roles**

Office based volunteers can provide a range of support in administration, publicity or ICT functions. Sutton Mencap is keen to ensure the safety of volunteers in these roles and for these reasons we will seek to ensure that volunteers are not normally left alone in the building, given the responsibility for opening up or locking the building, or for handling large amounts of cash.

1. **Volunteering for fundraising roles**

Sutton Mencap welcomes the support of volunteers in fundraising activities. We draw a distinction between:

* Those fundraising ‘on behalf of’ Sutton Mencap. Volunteers fundraising on behalf of Sutton Mencap are seen as part of our organisation and come under Sutton Mencap’s policies and procedures.
* Those fundraising ‘in aid of’ Sutton Mencap. Volunteers fundraising in aid Sutton Mencap are independent of us and in some cases may be unknown to us. Such volunteers would normally act outside of our policies and procedures. However, if for example a complaint is made against such a volunteer, we would seek to act accordingly.

1. **Attendance**

To assist us in planning our activities, we ask where possible that volunteers aim for a regular pattern of sessions or times for volunteering. If for any reason volunteers are unable to attend as planned, please let your supporting manager know. Sutton Mencap will of course let the volunteer know if for any reason a volunteering opportunity cannot go ahead as planned.

1. **Problem solving**

Any concerns from the organisation or from volunteers themselves in relation to their role at Sutton Mencap will normally be discussed between the volunteer and supporting manager. The aim of such discussions will be to explore how best the concerns can be addressed will be explored and hopefully resolved. However it may be that the organisation decides that the way forward will be to make significant changes to the role, or to end the volunteer placement.

Volunteers are not covered by Sutton Mencap’s disciplinary and grievance policy. They are however included in the whistleblowing policy, a copy of which is included in the volunteer handbook.

1. **Volunteer expenses**

Sutton Mencap is committed to the principle that volunteers should not be out-of-pocket as a result of their volunteering role. As such we encourage volunteers to claim out-or-pocket expenses.

Typical out-of-pocket expenses can include:

* Transport: public transport costs, car parking costs (up to a maximum of £5 per day) and car mileage.
* Food: volunteers participating in an activity for more than 5 hours in one day can claim for the cost of a meal, up to £5.
* Other necessary ad hoc expenses in connection with the role, where agreed with the supporting manager.

Out of pocket expenses should be claimed on the standard claim form with receipts attached as required on the claim form.

1. **Insurance**

Although not employees, all volunteers are covered under Sutton Mencap’s Employer’s Liability Insurance whilst they are on the premises or engaged in activities on our behalf. If volunteers have any concerns about whether a particular activity is covered they should refer to their supporting manager.

1. **Managing risk**

Sutton Mencap carries out risk assessments in relation to premises we use, activities we carry out and people we support. Volunteers are expected to take account of these risk assessments in carrying out their role and raise any queries with their supporting manager.

1. **Health and Safety**

Sutton Mencap is committed to the safety of its service users, staff and volunteers. Volunteers will be issued with a copy of the health and safety policy and are required to adhere to it at all times. Volunteers are also required to attend mandatory training on health and safety. If a volunteer has any queries or concerns they should raise this with their supporting manager.

1. **Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults**

Sutton Mencap recognises its responsibilities in relation to safeguarding service users. All trustees, staff and volunteers are required to attend safeguarding training and adhere to Sutton Mencap’s Safeguarding policy at all times.

Breach of Sutton Mencap’s safeguarding policy is likely to lead to the volunteering placement coming to an end. Sutton Mencap will also notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of a serious breach where it is it necessary to safeguard children and vulnerable adults in the future.

1. **Equality and diversity**

Sutton Mencap’s equality and diversity policy states that we recognise that certain individuals and groups face discrimination. We are committed to working towards eliminating this. Sutton Mencap recognised that the equalities act 2010 applies solely to paid employment, but it is also our intention that the aims and principles of our policy should cover volunteers. Volunteers will be provided with a copy of the policy and will be expected to adhere to it at all times.

1. **Departure of Volunteers**

When a volunteering placement comes to an end, the supporting manager will arrange an exit interview with the volunteer. Volunteers are also welcome to request references from Sutton Mencap to support future paid work, volunteer placements and/ or training.

**Responsibilities**

Trustees

* To approve and review the policy on a regular basis
* To take reasonable steps to satisfy themselves that the policy is being implemented.

Senior staff

* To act in accordance with the policy.
* To communicate the policy to other staff and volunteers and to ensure it is being implemented correctly.

All Staff and volunteers

* To familiarise themselves and act in accordance with the policy

**Related policies and procedures**

* Safeguarding
* Health and Safety
* Code of conduct
* Confidentiality
* Data protection
* Dealing with emergencies
* Environmental policy
* Equality and diversity
* Professional boundaries
* Risk assessment and management
* Whistleblowing

**Signed on behalf of the Executive Committee of Sutton Mencap**

**Chairman: Date: May 2017**

**Mavis Peart**

**Reviews:**

**2020**

**2023**