



Volunteer Policy

1. Introduction and Purpose

Nantwich Buddies recognises the significant and valuable contribution that volunteers make. Volunteers give freely of their time and in return they have the right to involvement and participation throughout the group, and recognition for the work they perform through the volunteering role.

Nantwich Buddies promotes equality and diversity and actively seeks to involve a variety of individuals who can contribute and add value to our work either as members, staff or volunteers. It is recognised that volunteering can benefit the organisation by increasing the range of skills, interests, life experience and cultural backgrounds available to Nantwich Buddies and its service users.

As well as providing a valuable resource, Nantwich Buddies recognises the benefit of volunteering to the individual. Where possible, Nantwich Buddies will aim to respond to volunteers' needs by providing opportunities to gain relevant skills and work experience, through suitable training and activities.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- To demonstrate our commitment to volunteers
- To provide an example of good practice
- To provide a foundation on which our volunteers involvement will be based
- To ensure a fair and consistent approach to volunteer involvement
- To provide guidelines for staff and volunteers in relation to volunteering.

Nantwich Buddies will demonstrate our commitment to volunteer involvement by ensuring that volunteers are:

- Provided with adequate information about their role in a formal Volunteer Task Description
- Issued with a Volunteer Welcome Letter
- Inducted appropriately and provided with relevant training and support

- Safe in the volunteer environment
- Reimbursed for reasonable out of pocket expenses
- Treated fairly with dignity and respect
- Recognised for their contribution as a volunteer
- Not overstretched or exploited

In return we expect volunteers to agree to:

- Undertake their volunteer role in line with the Volunteer Task Description
- Undertake their volunteering role in a positive manner and in a way that positively promotes the work of Nantwich Buddies
- Undertake volunteer activities safely and efficiently
- Respect their duty of care towards those around them by not acting in a way that might cause offence or endanger others

2. Recruitment and Selection

Volunteer recruitment materials may be available in different accessible formats. Any requests for information will be dealt with as promptly as possible by the organisation.

3. Application Procedure

If an individual is interested in undertaking voluntary work they will be asked to complete a Registration Form. The Volunteer Coordinator will contact the applicant via phone for a discussion about the role and their suitability.

In most cases, volunteers will be asked to undertake a DBS check. The Volunteer Coordinator will make contact to arrange this where required.

Before starting to volunteer the Volunteer Coordinator may invite volunteers on an introductory visit. On this visit volunteers will meet other volunteers to gain an insight of practical delivery and the expected role he or she is to undertake.

4. References

Any offer of a voluntary opportunity may be made subject to the checking of references and ID checks. References can be professional or personal, but not from a relative. Applicants will be informed of the need to provide referees if applicable.

Where volunteers are working face to face with vulnerable service users they must complete at least a standard DBS check, and where applicable an Enhanced DBS check. This must be explained fully at the application stage in order to ensure that the applicant has a thorough understanding of the process, and any potential implications. Potential volunteers must also disclose details of any previous convictions or cautions in line with our Disclosure and Barring Policy, however this may not de-bar them from undertaking voluntary work with Nantwich Buddies.

5. Volunteers With Disabilities or Special Needs.

It is important that all volunteers, including those with disabilities or special needs such as learning difficulties, are fully aware and are able to understand the implications of this policy. This may include adapting any selection, induction, facility or training to meet their particular needs. If the volunteer with disabilities or special needs is selected to volunteer with Nantwich Buddies, Nantwich Buddies will undertake to provide all reasonable facilities to support them in their work.

6. Acceptance/Rejection of Potential Volunteer

If Nantwich Buddies has reason to believe that a potential volunteer is not suitable for the role which has been applied for, the volunteer should be informed as soon as possible.

All appointments will include a 'trial' period to ensure that both the volunteer and Nantwich Buddies are happy with the arrangement.

Anyone who is turned down will be offered the opportunity of feedback.

7. Induction and Training

Volunteers will undertake an initial Nantwich Buddies induction as well as any specific induction relating to the project/activity they are working within.

The initial induction will include familiarisation of policies and procedures, including confidentiality, safeguarding and health and safety. Volunteers will be able to access some training opportunities in discussion with their volunteer coordinator.

8. Conduct

All volunteers are in a position of trust and are required to have a professional approach to their relationships to service users and colleagues. Volunteers must have a clear understanding of boundaries of behaviour and are expected to comply with Nantwich Buddies standards of conduct at all times.

9. Communication

In order to involve volunteers as fully as possible, Nantwich Buddies is committed to keeping volunteers informed about the activities of the organisation. This will demonstrate the value and significance placed upon volunteers and their work.

Every attempt will be made to include volunteers in the circulation of information within the organisation. This will include setting up a Nantwich Buddies email account where appropriate, or a similar accessible communication channel; ensuring volunteers have access to Nantwich Buddies appropriate messages, newsletters, etc. Final responsibility for keeping volunteers informed will rest with the Volunteer Coordinator.

10. Ongoing Support

Volunteers will be supported on a regular basis with the ability to refer any questions/issues to the Volunteer Coordinator when required.

Volunteers are also able to review their role and activities when necessary.

Volunteers must be included in team meetings to discuss evaluation and planning. Staff can support and recognise the value of volunteers by remembering to thank the volunteer.

11. Providing References For Volunteers

Nantwich Buddies will be in a position to provide a reference after the volunteer has been actively volunteering with the organisation for a minimum of three months.

12. Paid

Volunteers are welcome to apply for paid positions within Nantwich Buddies as they arise but will be subject to the same application/interview procedures as all other applicants.

13. Data Protection and Confidentiality

Nantwich Buddies will protect volunteer information in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Data will be held securely and confidentially and will only be accessed by authorised individuals.

Please see our Privacy Policy on the website for further information about how we collect, manage and use the personal data of our volunteers. We expect all volunteers to comply with the Nantwich Buddies Data Protection Policy and associated policies.

When volunteering with Nantwich Buddies, volunteers are likely to become aware of confidential information about its staff, people supported by the organisation and third parties. All volunteers are required to maintain confidentiality and should not disclose the organisation's information during their volunteering services and any time afterwards.

Volunteers are required to comply with Nantwich Buddies Confidentiality Policy.

14. Representing Nantwich Buddies

Where volunteers are representing Nantwich Buddies at an external event, they must behave in a manner that will not endanger the organisation's professional reputation.

15. Expenses

Volunteers are entitled to prompt reimbursement of reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred as a result of their voluntary work, these must be paid through volunteer project budgets and agreed with the Volunteer Coordinator prior to being incurred. Records of such payments must be kept.

'Reasonable' out of pocket expenses might include travel costs.

16. Health and Safety

Volunteers must take reasonable care of themselves and others while volunteering for Nantwich Buddies and follow any health and safety advice and instruction given for their role. Volunteers should cooperate with Nantwich Buddies on health and safety matters, and immediately report accidents/incidents (including near misses – accidents/incidents that may have led to injury). Volunteers should not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything in the interests of health, safety and welfare.

Nantwich Buddies will ensure that all volunteers are provided with appropriate information, supervision and training required to enable them to complete voluntary work safely. This includes providing suitable systems and procedures and guidance as outlined in the Health and Safety Policy.

17. Insurance

Nantwich Buddies provides Employers Liability, Public Liability and Professional Indemnity cover for all volunteers whilst working on Nantwich Buddies activities. Nantwich Buddies does not provide motor insurance cover. The insurance will not cover unauthorised actions or actions outside the volunteering agreement

18. Absence/Illness

Volunteers are performing a valuable role within the organisation and are relied on by staff and other volunteers to fulfil agreed duties at stated times. If volunteers are unable to attend, or expect to be late, it is important that volunteers inform their designated Volunteer Coordinator or client as soon as possible. Continued inability to attend or to contact the Volunteer Coordinator to explain their absence, will result in a review of their position. An interview will be held with the volunteer to clarify the situation. The outcome of this interview will be to reach an agreement that produces a mutually acceptable level of commitment to Nantwich Buddies and access whether the volunteering role is right for the volunteer.

19. Complaints/Issues

Any complaints and/or issues that arise either on the part of the volunteer or Nantwich Buddies must initially be raised through a meeting between the volunteer and the Volunteer Coordinator. Where a complaint is made concerning the Volunteer Coordinator, and no resolution has been reached, the volunteer should make contact directly with the founder of Nantwich Buddies, Liz Parkin.

20. Ending Volunteer Involvement

Volunteers are free to cease volunteering with Nantwich Buddies at any time but must inform the Volunteer Coordinator. When deciding to finish volunteering, give as much notice as possible to help alternative arrangements to be put in place if required.

There may also be times when Nantwich Buddies will ask a volunteer to cease volunteering. This may be because the role no longer supports the needs of the organisation or because the volunteer is no longer able to satisfactorily carry out a particular role. When this happens Nantwich Buddies will aim to give as much notice as possible to the volunteer and try to find an acceptable alternative role. In all cases, the volunteer will be treated with dignity and respect.