

Rights and Responsibilities

Unlike paid staff, volunteers are not covered by award conditions or contractual conditions. Volunteers however, do have rights and responsibilities, some which are captured in legislation and some which are the moral obligations set out by the Samaritans Foundation. The organisation expects that volunteers will undertake their allocated tasks in a professional manner – respecting the needs of the clients or customers, their colleagues and the organisation. All members of staff will also aim to work within the rights and responsibilities listed below:

VOLUNTEERS RIGHTS

- To be treated as a co-worker within the team
- To be given suitable placement with consideration for personal preference, abilities and skills
- The right to know as much as possible about the organisation - policy, people and services offered
- The right to sound guidance and direction
- To be given the opportunity to expand knowledge and skills
- The right to be heard
- The right to receive acknowledgment and recognition
- The right to a safe working environment
- The right to know 'why' if unsuitable for a task
- The right to say "no" if you are uncomfortable undertaking a task and be able to negotiate tasks and activities
- The right to debriefing
- A right to a grievance process

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

- To work as a member of a team
- To be punctual and reliable
- To ensure awareness of expectations of your position
- Treat clients and co-workers with respect
- Respect racial, cultural, religious and other individual differences
- To keep all information, including client/customer, project and organisation, confidential
- Approach all tasks and activities with a non-judgmental attitude
- Be open to guidance and supervision
- To inform oneself of guidelines and policies within the organisation
- To follow the Grievance Procedure appropriately

RESPONSIBILITIES - CO-ORDINATOR/SUPERVISOR/ORGANISATION

- To treat volunteers with dignity and respect
- To give volunteers an appropriate placement and tasks in accordance with their abilities, strengths, training experience, etc
- To provide adequate information on the project and/or service

Rights and Responsibilities

- To set clear job descriptions and provide a training package, including orientation training, and OH&S information
- To include volunteers as a valued member of the team
- To provide appropriate supervision and support for the volunteers, with awareness of the team workers' needs, such as debriefing time
- To provide leadership
- To acknowledge the contribution made by individual volunteers by giving encouragement, ongoing feedback, and by recognising that person's contribution in an appropriate official way. For example, by providing a reference or certificate of service
- To provide adequate formal and informal channels for feedback (positive and change oriented)

RIGHTS OF PAID STAFF IN RELATION TO VOLUNTEER TEAM WORKERS

- To expect volunteers to work alongside with the same sense of purpose and dedication
- To be able to rely upon the presence of a volunteer for an agreed minimum period of time
- The right to expect attentiveness, and co-operation
- To have an increased responsibility and workload associated with managing additional personnel acknowledged by Samaritans
- To negotiate with the relevant Supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator concerning the right to decline the assistance of volunteers, taking into account the appropriateness of volunteer involvement in particular areas of work, staff workload, etc