

The Family & Community Group

Volunteer Policy 2024

Recruitment

- Volunteers can access opportunities either informally where family members offer to help for a short period of time or formally recruited through The Family & Community Group's committee.
- Formally recruited volunteers will require an informal interview with members of The Family & Community Group's committee. Where possible, they will need to supply details of 1 referee, of which should be from outside their family. Depending on the nature of their proposed role, enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service Check (DBS) may also be required.
- Formally recruited volunteers will be told at the interview if they appear to be suitable for a volunteer position with The Family & Community Group, but this will always be "subject to references" References may be taken up orally or in writing by discussion with the referees.
- Selection of volunteers will be in line with The Family & Community Group's Equal Opportunities Policy, a copy of which is available separately. Choice of volunteers will always be made solely on the basis of their suitability for the volunteer roles available at the time of interview and their potential for enhancing the work done by our staff for the people of Torfaen. Decisions will be made irrespective of the volunteer's background, or any factor not relevant to the above aims.
- Should the volunteer applicant be found to be unsuitable for working within the group, or any project that is delivered through the Charity, he or she will always be given the reasons for this and an offer to try to find other, more suitable volunteer placements be made to them, even if there may be nothing which matches their need available at the time of the interview. The potential volunteer will then, if they so wish, be treated as any other applicant to the volunteer bureau, who wants advice on volunteering.

Welcoming diversity

The Family & Community Group values diversity; involving people from differing backgrounds, outlooks and cultures will help to make our organisation more welcoming to the public, more dynamic and open to new ideas. Some volunteers are therefore likely to have experienced adversity and social exclusion for various reasons in their past. It is worthwhile to focus on two particular areas of concern: criminal record and health, in order to avoid any worries for staff, Committee members, or for any volunteer applicants who may wonder how their disclosure may be perceived and acted upon.

- i. Criminal records – All appointed volunteers through The Family & Community Group who are required to work with vulnerable people, handle cash, it will be necessary to do a formal DBS Enhanced check. questions will be asked from their referees as to their integrity and trustworthiness. If a criminal record is disclosed, an assessment will be made as to their suitability, based on detailed questioning at interview and of referees and further checks made, if it is thought to be necessary, by the Committee. The volunteer will only be rejected if, after this process, there is seen to be a significant risk to staff, or members of the public. The Family & Community Group believes that everyone deserves an opportunity to prove their capability and trustworthiness and, providing that no clear risk to staff or members of the public is perceived, the disclosure of a criminal record will go no further, after the volunteer is taken on.
- ii. Health – a volunteer who is known to have recent health problems (mental or physical) at the time of applying to volunteer may be asked to give information about their medication regime, for health and safety purposes. It is good practice to ask all volunteers whether they take regular medication, solely for this reason (Health and Safety)

It is important that all concerned respect the confidentiality of the volunteer. If it appears to be important that the disclosure of any personal information is discussed with another person at any time, this should never be done without first obtaining the permission of the volunteer.

No prior knowledge of a volunteer is a substitute for good and caring supervision on the job and The Family & Community Group staff will ensure that every

volunteer understands the supervision process and is aware of the Disciplinary and Complaints procedures.

Induction

Volunteers will, on their first day be introduced to:

- This policy, which they can have read to them or take away a copy to keep, whichever they choose. They should know where to find a copy.
- Staff/Volunteers - those present face to face and others by name and job description (for face to face introduction as soon as possible)
- Layout of buildings in which they will carry out their role at any time in the future
- Health and safety and fire arrangements
- Domestic arrangements (e.g. drinks making, toilets, lunch arrangements, washing up, no-smoking and phone calls policies)
- A place, probably a paper tray, where they can store small items and where any communications for them can be left, when they aren't around
- Procedures for reporting absence or holidays, for claiming expenses and for asking for any tools or equipment needed for the jobs being done
- All relevant cupboards and other storage areas and their arrangement
- How to use the telephones, particularly those linked, and the standard way to answer the phone.
- How to take a message and ensure it gets to the right person
- Any other details which are important for their particular role

NB It is important not to overload a new volunteer and it will be sufficient for some volunteers to cover only the first 4 points above the first day. In this case, a mark will be made on the induction sheet, to show what points were covered, to show that the rest should be covered the next time the volunteer attends.

Expenses

All volunteers can claim expenses incurred through their supportive role, this can include expenses such as food and travel, repaid within a week. An expense sheet must be filled in to show attendance, expenses accrued and number of hours volunteered. Expenses claimed through The Family & Community Group may claim up to £5 per meal, and a maximum of £10 for any expenses incurred through travel

NB It is important that evidence is kept to show that amounts given cover only out of pocket expenses, to avoid any problems either with the Benefits Agency, if the volunteer is claiming, or with National Minimum Wage standards. This evidence may be in the form of an Expenses Claim form or a Petty Cash voucher, whichever is most appropriate and should have receipts/bus tickets attached.

Supervision and support

Each volunteer will have a named supervisor, which should normally be the person who works most closely with them, but may at the request of either party be a committee member instead. In the latter case it will be necessary for the committee to work alongside the volunteer for a few hours at the start and at some time in the future, so that (s)he may be acquainted with the work environment and style of management adopted.

It should be made clear to the volunteer that the named supervisor should be the first person to be consulted if (s)he has a problem and that they would always rather be told sooner than later, as that will prevent problems growing.

A system should be set up to provide for a regular one to one supervision session to be held at least every 3 months, depending on the regular daily contact which the volunteer has with his or her supervisor. A Volunteer Review form should be used to record the outcomes of such sessions and a copy given to the volunteer. The focus of these reviews should be upon the positive

contributions and progress made by the volunteer. If there are problems to be dealt with, these should be second to the above.

Insurance

When a volunteer is spending time at any of The Family & Community Group premises they will be covered by Public Liability Insurance (P.L.I.). If a volunteer helps with an off site event, the building used should also have P.L.I., but in the case of an outside event, or project, a check should be made with The Family & Community Group insurers (or the insurer of another organisation involved with sponsoring the event) to ensure cover for the duration of the event, or project, for everyone involved.

Health and Safety

The Family & Community Group has an H&S policy which covers everyone. This should always be shown to a volunteer at induction. However, in the case of volunteers a couple of points need to be made:

1. A volunteer does not undergo the same selection process as a member of staff, so, in order to ensure their health and safety in an emergency, they should be asked to say, at the induction stage, if they are taking any regular medication. This should be noted in their file for referral only in case of a medical emergency.
2. A volunteer may answer phones without supervision, but should not deal with personal callers unless another person is in the office.

Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure

Volunteers do not have the same rights as employees in their place of work. However, volunteers should always be treated with respect and the following points should be used as a guide when dealing with a complaint on either side.

1. Except in the case of a potentially dangerous situation when the staff member concerned must act immediately, in accordance with Health and

- Safety procedures, any staff member who hears a complaint by or about a volunteer, should report this to the volunteer's supervisor for action.
2. Any complaint will involve more than one person and the volunteer supervisor should listen to all versions of the story before deciding how to act.
 3. Any decision should be explained to the volunteer, before taking action.
 4. Any disciplinary action or complaint made by a volunteer will be dealt with in privacy and any agreed secrecy adhered to.
 5. In a situation where a volunteer has to be asked to leave the organisation, this should be done in the presence of the Committee, who should offer assistance to find another volunteering opportunity. A volunteer should always be thanked for the help they have given the organisation in the past, whatever the present circumstances.

Confidentiality

Any volunteer who contributes towards the work of The Family & Community Group is expected to keep confidential any information he or she hears or reads about the organisation, its staff, members, Committee or other volunteers, unless the information is clearly for public consumption (e.g. Advertising an event).

Training

The Family & Community Group is committed to offering free training to all its volunteers, within the scope of its own training program, as determined by members and staff. Volunteers should be made aware of this and of the current program, at induction. If, at a review, a volunteer expresses a desire to train in something not offered by The Family & Community Group, help should be offered to find the means to find an appropriate course and the means to pay for it, if possible.

Leaving

When a volunteer decides to leave, he or she should tell her or his supervisor as soon as possible, as it may well be important to look for a replacement volunteer at that point. If possible there should be a final review to sum up the contribution made by the volunteer, arrange for future references to be sought and ensure that the volunteer is aware that

confidentiality about The Family & Community Group internal affairs will still be important in the future. It may be appropriate to arrange for the volunteer to stay in contact with the organisation at intervals in the future and it is always a good idea for the Committee to ask for feedback (spoken or written, as appropriate) on the volunteer's experience of being with The Family & Community Group.

Dated 1st May 2024

Reviewed by

Cornish, D & Driscoll, R