



Volunteer Handbook

a pocket guide

Introduction

So you want to volunteer?

Well done you!

What a wonderful person you are!

In your hand is your indispensable, (almost) pocket-sized guide to student volunteering. It should cover everything you'll need to know as a volunteer.

If after reading it you do still have any questions though, please check out our website for more details on all our policies and procedures. Or why not get in touch – we'll be more than happy to help.

For more info...

Email: volunteering@nottingham.ac.uk

Telephone: 0115 846 8750

Log on to:

www.su.nottingham.ac.uk/volunteering
(You can also find us on Facebook)

Drop in: We are based on B Floor of Portland Building.

**We are open
9am to 5pm
Monday to Friday
- all year round.**



Mission Statement



“ To provide a diverse range of volunteering opportunities to enable students to learn new skills and enhance their personal development.

SVC volunteers are informed, supported and active within the Students' Union and wider community.

”

What you can expect as a volunteer?

Training & Support

You should receive support and training from your project to enable you to carry out your volunteering role effectively. If you feel that you aren't receiving the support that you need – let them know.

What is expected from volunteers?

- Be reliable, punctual and committed
- If you can't attend your volunteering session let the project know so that other arrangements can be made
- Never put yourself, another volunteer or client at risk
- Maintain professional boundaries
 - respect confidentiality and do not disclose any personal information
- Follow your project's policies and procedures
- Only carry out tasks that you are able to, say no if necessary
- If you are unhappy and considering leaving a project please let them / the Centre know



Equal Opportunity & Diversity



The Student Volunteer Centre is committed to offering equality of opportunity. We strive to ensure that everyone that we work with – including our staff, volunteers and all our projects – share this commitment.

We expect all volunteers to be treated fairly and with respect and to feel free from discrimination and harassment.

**To read our full
Equal Opportunities
and Diversity Policy
please see our website
or ask a member of staff
for more information.**

Confidentiality & Data Protection

The Centre is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of its service users and projects. In normal circumstances no information about an individual will be given to an external organisation without prior permission. This isn't always possible though and so in this situation you will be told what will happen and why.

This includes:

- where the health and safety of any volunteer, or another individual, may be at risk
- or
- the disclosure to a volunteer of abuse, or details of other criminal activity (see Child Protection).

Responsibility of Volunteers

It is important that all volunteers keep information about others confidential. All projects should have their own Confidentiality Policy which you should be made aware of when you begin volunteering with them.



Health & Safety

The Student Volunteer Centre strives to ensure that all our staff and volunteers remain safe from injury and harm. Therefore we all have a duty to provide for the health, safety and welfare of themselves and others.

All the organisations that we work with should have comprehensive Health & Safety policies which you should be made aware of when you begin your volunteering placement.

For more details about Health & Safety please ask a member of staff or consult our website.

Policy for Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults* (POVA)

We have a full and comprehensive policy relating to the POVA guidelines. If you are going to be working with Children or Vulnerable Adults as a volunteer and are unsure about what is expected of you please speak to a member of staff at your project or at the Student Volunteer Centre.

***For further information, definitions of Vulnerable Adults and tips on how to keep yourself and others out of risk please see our website.**



Criminal Disclosure Records

If you are likely to have regular contact with children or Vulnerable Adults as a volunteer then you may be required to have a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. This is a background check to ascertain whether you have any unspent criminal convictions.

Every organisation that we work with will have a CRB Code of Practice which is relevant to their activities.

If you have any unspent convictions please speak with one of the Centre's staff team who will be able to advise you on your chosen project's policy.

For more information about the CRB procedure please ask a member of staff or check out the full CRB policy on our website



Expenses

No volunteer should ever be left out-of-pocket when volunteering so where possible we believe that all projects should pay back volunteers' expenses. This will usually take the form of travel expenses to and from your place of volunteering.

If for any reason the project isn't able to pay these expenses do let us know and we may be able to reimburse you.

While all of our projects should be accessible by public transport you can also claim back expenses for travelling to your project by car or even bicycle. If you have any queries about what you may be able to claim back and why, please just ask.



Volunteering & State Benefits

There is some confusion about whether you can volunteer and continue to claim state benefits. As long as you inform your benefits advisor that you will be volunteering then this should be fine.

Volunteering should not affect your claim for Income Support, Disability Living Allowance or Incapacity Benefit as long as you do not receive any money other than as a reimbursement for expenses. If you are on Job Seekers Allowance though you must ensure that you remain available for and actively seeking work whilst volunteering.

If you are uncertain about volunteering and state benefits please talk to a member of staff at the Centre

Dealing with problems

We hope that most problems can be dealt with and resolved informally through discussion with the Community Officer or SVC Manager.

In the interests of fairness and the protection of volunteers, staff and our service users, it is necessary to have procedures for dealing with problems, complaints or other difficult situations which cannot be resolved informally.

For full details of our procedures for dealing with problems and complaints please see our website.

Problems with your volunteering placement

If you are having any difficulty as a volunteer please discuss it with someone at the Centre. While we advise all volunteers to be patient and give their placement a go for at least a few sessions, we want everyone to be happy. There are plenty of roles to choose from and we should be able to find something for everyone. So if it isn't working out as you thought please do let us know and we'll do our very best to sort it out.



Complaints Procedure

Everyone at the Students' Union wants our members and customers to be happy with our services. However, from time to time things do go wrong, and you may feel you wish to complain.

We have an Informal and a Formal Complaints Procedure both of which are available on our website and as a hard copy.



Student Feedback

We welcome feedback.

The Centre constantly seeks new ways to improve our services to students, and to help us do this we welcome suggestions and feedback from everyone involved in our activities.

*Suggestions and feedback can be given anonymously and if this is the case we ensure our student's anonymity is respected.



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This document is available in Braille, tape,
electronically and on disk upon request.
Please ask a member of staff.