

# Volunteering Policy



Having this policy provides Innercycle with a framework for establishing and maintaining a volunteering programme. The aim of a volunteering policy is to provide overall cohesion to the various policies and procedures that affect volunteering e.g. recruitment, expenses, health and safety, etc. It also helps us define the role of volunteers within the charity and how they can expect to be treated, with the aim that our volunteers have a fulfilling, productive and positive experience.

## Introduction

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in and on behalf of the charity. It is of relevance to all personnel, including staff, outsourced practitioners and advisors, the senior leadership and the trustees elected or appointed to positions of responsibility. This policy is endorsed by the Board and will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of the charity and its volunteers.

## Commitment

Innecycle trustees and the senior management team acknowledge that volunteers contribute in many ways, that their contribution is unique and that volunteering can benefit users of services, staff, local communities and the volunteers themselves. We value the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering. The charity recognises its responsibility to arrange its volunteer force efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

## Definition

Volunteering is a vital expression of citizenship as well as an integral component of democracy. Volunteers are people who are unpaid and, of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit a community and society at large.

## Statement of values and principles

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged but is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment. The role of volunteers complements, but does not replace, the role of paid staff.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

Volunteers will not be used during times of industrial action to do the work of paid staff.



The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise, Innercycle cannot be compelled to provide regular tasks, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged: of what the charity expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect from the charity.

#### **ESSENTIAL STEPS IN OUR MODEL FOR VOLUNTEER SUPPORT:**

- Clear rationale for wanting volunteers
- Development of role descriptions
- Screening of prospective volunteers
- Recruitment and Conduct orientation
- Training
- Supervision
- Retention
- Evaluation
- Recognition of efforts and achievements

#### **Recruitment & Selection**

Innecycle is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all adults regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs or offending background that does not create a risk to vulnerable groups, including those with mental health concerns. The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out agreed tasks. Information about the volunteer not relevant to the performance of the volunteering tasks concerned will be disregarded by the charity in terms of recruitment and selection.

Volunteering opportunities will be widely promoted in ways that makes them accessible to all members of the community.



Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task will either be offered alternative voluntary involvement with Innercycle or referred to the nearest or appropriate Volunteer Centre.

All volunteers will be asked to produce two references and will be invited to attend an informal interview. If the volunteer will be carrying out activities with our vulnerable service-users (whether individually or in groups) there will be other 'safer recruitment' procedures carried out including asking a volunteer to undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check where an existing Certificate is either unavailable or unsuitable. More detailed information will be made available specific to legislative requirements and to the particular volunteer position.

Volunteers will have a clear and concise task description, which will be subsequently reviewed quarterly. The task description will be prepared in conjunction with the volunteer and the designated person referred to above (or as determined by Innercycle).

New volunteers will be properly inducted into the charity.

Volunteers will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform with confidence.

### **Training & Development**

All volunteers will be made aware of and have access to all the charity's relevant policies, including those relating to volunteering, health & safety, complaints handling, safeguarding vulnerable clients and equal opportunities.

The development of training and support for volunteers is a high priority for Innercycle in order to equip them with the necessary information and skills to carry out their tasks. It will be the responsibility of the designated person to see that this training is provided. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to undergo relevant training.

Training in the supervision of volunteers will be provided for all those who have direct responsibility for volunteers.

### **Volunteer Co-ordination**

All volunteers will have a nominated member of staff or senior volunteer to offer guidance and advice to help the volunteer carry out tasks effectively. Volunteers will be informed of whom to contact to receive support and supervision.

The nominated post holder with overall responsibility for the development of voluntary activities within the charity is the Chief Executive. This person is responsible for the management and welfare of the charity's volunteers. In due course, an alternative post holder may be appointed.



## **Support, Supervision and Recognition**

Volunteers will have a named person to whom they can take their volunteering concerns and seek guidance and support.

Volunteers will have access to regular support and supervision. This will enable both the volunteer and the supervisor to identify, monitor and evaluate the volunteer's involvement, recognise achievements and identify individual training needs, including that relevant to their particular volunteering role and to their wider personal development. The frequency, duration and format of these sessions will be negotiated between the volunteer and the designated officer.

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with Innercycle's wider staff, at staff meetings etc.

A process will be developed in order to give formal recognition of the contribution of the charity's volunteers (e.g. internal awards, articles in newspapers and newsletters, thank you letters, etc.) or outline any existing process.

## **Expenses**

The Innercycle trustees and senior management team recognise that the reimbursement of expenses incurred in traveling to and from a place of volunteering or in the course of volunteering is important from an equal opportunities perspective. This is necessary to ensure that all individuals have access to voluntary opportunities.

Volunteers are able to claim reasonable out of pocket expenses, subject to the production of receipts as evidence of the expenditure. What can be reclaimed and the calculation of expenses will be explained to the volunteer before they start any activity likely to give rise to expenses.

Innercycle has a consistent approach to the reimbursement of expenses which are the same for volunteers, staff, etc. and are as approved by HMRC.

It is the responsibility of the designated person to make volunteers aware of the procedure for the reimbursement of expenses.

## **Insurance**

The charity's liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them.

Innercycle does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage

## **Confidentiality**

The charity will advise the volunteer on its privacy policy and procedures, where relevant. This would include those relating to personal information held by the charity that relates to the volunteer.



## **Settling Differences**

The charity aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. Innercycle seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly and aim for a positive and amicable solution based on the charity's guidelines for settling differences.

The designated officer is responsible for handling problems regarding volunteer complaints or conduct and these should be referred accordingly. In the event of a problem, all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible. Support will be provided by the charity to the volunteer while it endeavours to resolve the problem in an informal manner. If an informal resolution proves difficult or impossible, Innercycle's wider grievance or complaints policies and procedures (which include volunteers) will be referred to. If a volunteer's behaviour is repeatedly or seriously unacceptable, they may be asked to change their role, or to leave the charity.

## **Rights and Responsibilities**

Innercycle recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- know what is (and what is not) expected of them
- have adequate support in their volunteering
- receive appreciation
- volunteer in a safe environment
- be insured
- know their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong
- receive relevant out-of-pocket expenses
- receive appropriate training
- be free from discrimination
- be offered the opportunity for personal development



The charity expects volunteers to:

- be reliable
- be honest
- respect confidentiality
- make the most of training and support opportunities
- carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of the charity
- carry out tasks within agreed guidelines
- respect the work of the charity and not bring it into disrepute
- comply with all of Innercycle's policies

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