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## **NORTHDALE HORTICULTURE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **VOLUNTEER POLICY**

#### **Introduction**

Northdale Horticulture's Volunteer policy aims to reflect the high esteem in which the Charity holds its Volunteers and the valuable experience of life they bring to the work of the Charity. They often champion the Northdale Horticulture cause and add value to the work the Charity undertakes with the many adults with learning disabilities and or physical disabilities that use the service each year. The contribution that Volunteers make spans the work of the Charity. The Management Committee, which controls the strategic direction of the Charity and its financial accountability, is made up entirely of Volunteers and the bed rock of our service, also our work based activities are supported by a loyal and committed band of regular Volunteers.

This policy sets out the broad principles for volunteering with Northdale Horticulture and has been produced in consultation with the Volunteers. The policy is relevant to everyone involved with the recruitment, development and coordination of Volunteers as well as Volunteers themselves.

#### **Policy Statement**

Volunteers are an established, valued and integral part of Northdale Horticulture and the work and support provided by Volunteers is crucial to the ongoing work of the Charity. Northdale Horticulture is committed to continually developing and maintaining the dynamic and mutually beneficial relationships between its Volunteers and the Charity.

#### **Equal Opportunities and Equality and Diversity**

Northdale Horticulture operates both an Equal Opportunities and Equality and Diversity Policy for Staff, Volunteers and Service Users alike and believes that no one should be treated less favourably than anyone else because of their gender, marital status, age, sexual orientation, social class, race, ethnic origin, religious belief or disability. The Charity is committed to diversity in all areas of its work and believe that it can learn from diverse cultures and perspectives.

## **Who is a Volunteer?**

A Volunteer is someone who does not receive financial compensation beyond the reimbursement of expenses and who performs a task at the request of, or on behalf of, Northdale Horticulture. The Volunteer relationship is binding in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise can be imposed on Volunteers to attend. Likewise the Charity does not undertake to provide regular Volunteering opportunities, payment or other benefits for any activity undertaken.

## **What does a Volunteer do?**

The Volunteer Role Description is at Annex A.

## **Scope of Volunteering**

The Charity acknowledges it has responsibilities to its Volunteers and similarly has expectations of its Volunteers.

Northdale Horticulture has the responsibilities to:

- Match the needs of the Charity with the skills, knowledge, experience and motivation of the Volunteer
- Recognise that successful Volunteer involvement incorporates the individual's motivations, aspirations and choices.
- Ensure that paid staffs are trained to work with Volunteers.
- Ensure Volunteers receive appropriate training and support to help them deliver in their roles.
- Respect Volunteers, listen and learn from what they have to say, and encourage two way communications.
- Provide timely and accurate information about the Charity's policies and procedures.
- Foster a friendly and supportive atmosphere.
- Make financial and other provisions in management plans for the needs of Volunteers.
- Try and resolve fairly any complaints or grievances.
- Ensure the health, safety and welfare of all Northdale Horticulture Volunteers whilst undertaking their Volunteering activities.

Northdale Horticulture expects its Volunteers to:

- Maintain and uphold the good name and reputation of the Charity.
- Co-operate with paid members of staff.
- Aim for a high standards of efficiency, reliability and quality in all aspects of their work.
- Encourage two-way communication with other Volunteers and encourage a pleasant and friendly atmosphere.
- Support the Charity's Equal Opportunities and Equality and Diversity policies.
- Work within the law.

- Respect the need for confidentiality.
- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety whilst volunteering and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions.
- Operate within Northdale Horticulture's Code of Conduct, Health and Safety, Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Abuse of Clients Policies.

## **Recruitment**

The Charity:

- Encourages involvement by Volunteers from all sections of the community and will not discriminate against any Volunteers in the selection procedure.
- Welcomes Volunteers of all ages. We do not specify an upper age limit and Northdale Horticulture recognises the valuable contribution made by older Volunteers in terms of knowledge and experience.
- Would be irresponsible if it permitted Volunteers to continue to volunteer if their involvement would be detrimental to their own or other people's health and safety and may decide it is appropriate for the Volunteer to reduce or cease their voluntary contribution.
- Selection procedures for individual Volunteers must protect the Charity's interests and the health and wellbeing of the vulnerable adults using the service.
- Must be satisfied that the Volunteer possesses the appropriate personal qualities e.g. responsible, reliable and considerate of those around them.

## **Recruitment Procedure**

The recruitment process for potential Volunteers will involve:

- Being invited to visit Northdale and meet senior members of staff and at least one member of the instructing team.
- Completing an Application form.
- The completed Application form is returned to Northdale Horticulture, including the details of two personal referees. (References will be sought in all cases and a Volunteer application will not be advanced until two satisfactory references have been received).
- A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check being undertaken and resulting in no reasons for concern.
- Being invited to negotiate hours of attendance and a start date.

## **Training and Development**

New Volunteers will be made to feel welcome and will be provided with relevant information, training and induction as appropriate to their role. Volunteers may wish to develop their skills whilst helping the Charity and where appropriate will be encouraged to undertake training where it is possible for the Charity to support it.

It is recommended that the progress and contribution of Volunteers is discussed regularly to provide an opportunity for each Volunteer and the Charity to identify and clarify any areas of concern.

### **Conduct and Grievance Issues**

If there are concerns around a Volunteer's behaviour or contribution, the matter will be discussed amicably and steps agreed to address it. These may include additional training or mentoring. However, if these areas of concern cannot be resolved after more formal discussions, their Volunteering relationship with the Charity may have to cease.

Northdale Horticulture must protect its reputation in all circumstances and where a Volunteer takes actions that may bring the Charity's name into disrepute, the Volunteer's involvement with the Charity will be stopped immediately. This also applies to any financial irregularity or violent conduct towards Staff, Service Users, other Volunteers or members of the public.

If a Volunteer has a grievance they will be expected to follow the Grievance Policy and Procedure.

### **Moving On**

The Charity recognises that Volunteers may cease their involvement at any time. If circumstances allow when a Volunteer chooses to cease their link with the Charity that their reasons for doing so are sought, any learning points are shared and it is established whether they might wish to be involved again in the future.

### **Expenses**

Northdale Horticulture will reimburse any out of pocket expenses incurred whilst volunteering for the Charity. However they must be agreed in advance by either the Chairman of the Management Committee, the General Manager or the Operational Manager and may include travel and training expenses. It should be noted that the Charity will not reimburse travel expenses incurred whilst travelling to and from Northdale or for the reimbursement of refreshment expenses.

### **Health and Safety**

The Charity is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for all Volunteers on its premises and whilst undertaking Charity business when off site. Where applicable appropriate instruction, training and supervision will be provided. All Volunteers will be expected to familiarise themselves with the Charity's Health and Safety at Work (HASAW) Policy and to conduct themselves in accordance with that policy.

### **Supervision and Support**

In most circumstances, Volunteers will be directly or indirectly supervised or supported by a paid member of staff. If a Volunteer would like to discuss any issue related to their volunteering or has a

more general observation to make about the work of the Charity they are invited to talk to their direct work team instructor or either the General or Operational Manager.

## **Insurance**

The scope of the Charity's insurance is extremely wide with the policy documents being available for inspection in the Charity's office. The Charity has a specific Social Welfare Insurance policy and the activities of Volunteers are specifically covered under its terms.

## **Data Protection and the Law**

Personal information about Volunteers is stored and maintained with appropriate safeguards for confidentiality. The Charity abides by all provisions of the Data Protection Act of 1998.

## **Training Requirements**

All members of Staff and Volunteers will be briefed on this policy as part of their Induction.

## **Related Policies and Procedures**

Abuse of Clients  
Code of Conduct  
Confidentiality, Record Keeping & Access to Information  
Equal Opportunities  
Equality and Diversity  
Grievance  
Health & Safety  
Risk Assessment  
Safeguarding Vulnerable People.

## **Annex**

A. Volunteer Role Description.

## **NORTHDALE HORTICULTURE** **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **VOLUNTEER ROLE DESCRIPTION**

**Role:** To provide support for adults with learning disabilities and or physical disabilities so that the individual being supported might take part in valued occupations and work-based activities.

**Where:** Northdale Horticulture.

**When:** To be arranged.

**What we would like you to do:** Northdale Horticulture volunteers are asked to support adults with learning disabilities and or physical disabilities so that they might take part in a range of work-based activities. The primary role of a volunteer is to bring added value to the service users experience and help the instructor support a work-group of up to six individuals. A volunteer will be asked to support individuals on a one to one basis or at most support a small group of individuals to complete a task in one of Northdale work areas.

**What you will not be asked to do:** At no time will a volunteer be asked to supervise an individual or work-group without the support and guidance of a work-team supervisor/instructor being present in the immediate work environment. At no time will a volunteer be asked to operate equipment on which they have not been trained.

**Personal requirements:** We require individuals of good character who can provide two personal references and are happy to successfully undertake an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check.

**Training:** Northdale Horticulture is happy to support volunteer training and will support individuals to undertake Safeguarding Alerter, Makaton Level 1, Epilepsy Awareness and Mental Health Awareness training.

A copy of Northdale Horticulture's volunteering policy is available on request.

**The official stuff:** Volunteering is deemed to be a relationship binding in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise can be imposed on the volunteer to attend. Likewise the Northdale Horticulture does not undertake to provide regular volunteering opportunities, payments or other benefits for activities undertaken.