

# Volunteering Policy

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## Scope

This policy is relevant to all volunteer opportunities within SensationALL except the work of Councillors, Trustees and Branch Committee Members.

It should be read and understood by anyone involved in promoting volunteering activity within SensationALL including those recruiting, supporting, developing and managing volunteers.

## Policy Summary

Volunteering is an important resource of SensationALL and makes a vital contribution towards the achievement of the Charity's aims and objectives.

Volunteers should be encouraged, developed and supported so their contribution can complement and even add value to the work of paid employees.

This policy document outlines how volunteers are supported within SensationALL. All staff and volunteers must follow the guidance outlined within.

## Expectations of Volunteers and SensationALL

### Volunteers can expect SensationALL to:

- ✓ communicate the mission, roles and activities of SensationALL
- ✓ tell them to whom they are answerable
- ✓ include them as part of the team
- ✓ provide access to training relevant to their role
- ✓ communicate to whom to talk if there are problems or difficulties
- ✓ value and thank them
- ✓ provide constructive feedback
- ✓ ensure there are safe working conditions and adequate insurance cover
- ✓ not ask unreasonable requests.

### SensationALL expects that volunteers will:

- ✓ adhere to SensationALL rules, procedures and standards including the Confidentiality and Data Handling Policy
- ✓ promote a positive image of SensationALL as a charity
- ✓ ensure that their conduct does not conflict with the standards expected by the Volunteering Policy
- ✓ not make public statements or write articles for publication in the name of SensationALL without first obtaining the permission of the charity
- ✓ co-operate with all SensationALL employees in maintaining harmonious inter-personal relations
- ✓ be reliable; giving as much notice as possible if not available or running late
- ✓ carry out the agreed project, task or role satisfactorily
- ✓ give constructive feedback if appropriate and ask for support if they need it
- ✓ be accountable and accept constructive comments
- ✓ take part in training relevant to their work as a volunteer

## 1. Defining the volunteer relationship

1.0 A volunteer is someone who regularly carries out tasks on behalf of the SensationALL without expectation of payment. Volunteers do not replace the work of existing or future paid staff but increase the capacity and reach of the charity.

1.1 SensationALL Board are accountable for providing the structure, organisation, direction and day-to-day management of volunteer opportunities. 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 give a certain amount of time or to complete a certain

task within a given timeframe. Likewise, SensationALL cannot be compelled to provide regular work, payment, or other benefit for any activity undertaken.

1.1.1 Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability.

1.2 Each volunteer or volunteer group will have a designated employee or volunteer to guide and advise them in their tasks. Volunteers will be told who to approach for support and have regular access to that person.

## **2. Recruitment and Selection**

2.1 Volunteers are expected to register their interest on the SensationALL website.

2.2 Volunteering opportunities may be advertised in relevant publications and websites such as Volunteer Scotland. Recruitment materials will present a positive image of volunteering which reflects the ethos of SensationALL. Any written materials produced for recruitment will use language that is clear and concise. Individuals may approach SensationALL unsolicited.

2.3 SensationALL is firmly committed to diversity in all areas of its work. It recognises that it has much to gain from diverse cultures and perspectives, and that diversity will make the organisation more effective in meeting the needs of all its stakeholders. Furthermore, SensationALL believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, disability, marital status, age, religion, community background, transexuality or political beliefs. The acceptance of a volunteer is based solely on the individual's suitability to do the specified task.

2.4 Young volunteers aged 14 and above are welcome provided they are able to make a useful contribution and are undertaking suitable tasks where there is no legal minimum age; there are no contradictory health and safety issues; they are supervised and not left alone whilst on shift. Written parental consent must be obtained by the charity before any person under 16 years begins a volunteering role.

2.5 SensationALL does not specify an upper age limit for volunteers, recognising the valuable contribution of knowledge and experience that can be made by older volunteers. However, SensationALL would be irresponsible if it permitted volunteers to contribute beyond a point where volunteering is detrimental to their own or other people's health and safety and would not allow someone to do so. If it is necessary SensationALL would look for other appropriate positions before asking someone to leave.

2.6 Potential volunteers will be invited in to meet the Volunteer Coordinator for an informal interview and site visit. At this meeting, suitable roles will be discussed and agreed. All employees and volunteers over 16 years are required to participate in the Disclosure Scotland (PVG) criminal records check if they are working with service users. SensationALL will identify this requirement as part of the recruitment and induction process. If there are costs incurred this will be met by SensationALL.

2.7 The contribution of clients and relatives as volunteers is recognised and valued, providing that there is no conflict of interest. The Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for considering if there is a conflict, in consultation with the charity.

2.8 Future employees of SensationAll are not be able to volunteer if this would pose a direct conflict of interest between paid and voluntary involvement. Any employee in one area of the organisation's work who wishes to act in a voluntary capacity in another area of work must first seek permission of the Board. Any voluntary role should be clearly defined and separate from their paid role.

2.9 If a potential volunteer has a criminal record, references will be taken and referees can be questioned where necessary to aid the decision-making process.

The following factors should also be considered:

- whether the conviction is relevant to the volunteering opportunity
- the severity of the offence
- length of time since the offence occurred
- circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation offered by the applicant
- whether the behaviour that constituted the offence is still a cause for concern
- whether the context behind that behaviour is still a cause for concern
- whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour
- whether the applicant's circumstances have changed
- the applicant's attitude to the offence. Is it one of remorse? Do they take responsibility for it and recognise the harm caused?

The decision to appoint a volunteer with a criminal conviction should be made in consultation with the management team. If there is doubt or indecision, then the Board may be consulted for further advice. A record will be kept of what decision was reached and the reasons for it.

2.10 An individual being considered for a Trustee role will be invited for an informal meeting or interview with the Chairperson to explore suitability and motivation. This discussion may take place over the telephone.

### **3. Management and Communication**

3.1 All volunteers must communicate with the Volunteer Coordinator to confirm availability and shifts. When working onsite within groups volunteers will be supervised by the Service Team.

3.2 SensationALL is committed to implementing and improving standards and best practice for the management of voluntary activity and to maintaining good relations with its volunteers.

3.3 The needs of SensationALL service users are paramount and staff must be satisfied that a proposed volunteering activity will be beneficial to that service and ensure there is no potential conflict of interest between the needs of the client and the volunteer.

3.4 A volunteer may act as a trainer, supervisor or leader providing it has been confirmed that the volunteer has the necessary skills or qualifications required.

3.5 Volunteers' personal information will be stored by SensationALL in accordance with data protection legislation and SensationALL Data Protection Policy and Procedures.

3.6 If a volunteer creates original work (e.g. poster designing, writing a document) in the course of their volunteering then copyright may need to be assigned to SensationALL. If work produced by a volunteer is of a sensitive nature, or would be financially costly to SensationALL to lose, those managing the volunteer are responsible for making sure copyright has been legally assigned to SensationALL.

3.7 Volunteers must not speak on behalf of SensationALL without the permission of the charity

3.8 SensationALL supports a two-way dialogue between employees and volunteers. Volunteers will be consulted about decisions that would substantially affect the performance of their tasks.

3.9 Volunteers may cease their involvement at any time. If necessary, exit interviews can be arranged to ascertain why a volunteer is leaving, share any learning points and to establish whether they might want to be involved again at some time in the future.

3.10 Trustees or SensationALL managers may give a reference for a volunteer at their discretion. References must be factual not subjective, it should describe the volunteer's role, skills they brought and learned, time they committed and achievements. Where the volunteer's services were terminated due to poor performance or conduct, and particularly where the volunteer's name was referred to the Secretary of State under Care Standards legislation, employees should seek advice from a Human Resources Consultant before a reference is provided.

3.11 The nature of volunteer work means that personal relationships will sometimes develop between volunteers and SensationALL staff. Examples may include members of the same family working or volunteering together and social contact at a level which influences the volunteering role, including romantic relationships. It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that any personal relationships do not have an adverse effect on the work of SensationALL. This is particularly important where there is a supervision relationship or there is a risk of accusations of favouritism.

3.12 To ensure that volunteer positions are effective and well-managed, the supervision of volunteers should be included in the appraisal process for SensationALL staff who supervise them.

\* Is this still part of the staff appraisal process?

## 4. Training and Development

4.1 New volunteers must receive an Volunteer Induction before or on their first shift at SensationALL.

4.2 SensationALL places a high priority on the training of volunteers in order to provide them with the necessary information and skills they require to carry out their tasks effectively as well as offering some personal development. The Volunteer Coordinator will ensure that training opportunities are communicated to all active volunteers.

## 5. Support and Recognition

5.1 SensationALL recognises that although volunteers do not seek reward they do appreciate recognition. All future staff and volunteers who are responsible for volunteers are encouraged, to ensure appropriate thanks are given to volunteers (verbal or written), bearing in mind that financial gifts can never be made to volunteers.

5.2 When necessary SensationALL may ask volunteers to provide testimonials or feedback for the purpose of future recruitment, improvement of processes or as evidence for funding organisations. Volunteer input is valued by the charity and will be actively sought.

5.3 Long service or outstanding achievement awards may be given to Volunteers internally to recognise their dedication to the charity.

## 6. Expenses

6.1 Volunteers may claim reimbursement of agreed necessary and reasonable out-of pocket expenses, subject to the production of receipts. Each claim for expenses should be made on the relevant form with receipts attached. Examples of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses include travel to and from the volunteering role and equipment purchased for volunteering.

6.2 Mileage rates are a minimum of 40p per mile driven on SensationALL business.

6.3 If a volunteer is unemployed and receiving Job Seeker's Allowance they should be reminded to approach their Job Centre and Benefits Office before starting to tell them of any voluntary work. The Job Seekers Allowance should not be affected, provided that the volunteer can show they are still actively seeking paid employment, that they can be contacted if a job opportunity arises, and that they are willing and able to attend interviews.

6.4 A volunteer in receipt of benefits should be advised to talk to their local Benefits Agency before volunteering, although they should be fully entitled to volunteer.

## 7. Insurance

7.1 All volunteers will be covered by SensationALL for public liability, personal accident and personal loss or damage insurance where their loss or damage is occasioned by negligence.

7.2 Volunteers are not be permitted to drive SensationALL vehicles when available.

## 8. Health and Safety

8.1 SensationALL has a duty of care towards all staff and volunteers regarding risks to their health and safety. Health and safety policies will be brought to the volunteer's attention during induction and relevant safety information and issues will be discussed.

8.2 The volunteer has a corresponding duty to take reasonable care of him/herself and those around him/her. It is vital that all volunteers declare any personal circumstances, disabilities or issues that may lead to a health and safety risk whilst volunteering.

8.3 Whilst on shift it is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to highlight any health and safety hazards and follow SensationALL procedures if action is required.

8.4 SensationALL is committed to safe working practices for all staff and volunteers and risk assessments are in place which will be available to volunteers at any time.

## 9. Grievances

9.1 A volunteer wishing to raise a concern or grievance should first refer this to the Volunteer Coordinator either verbally or in writing. Should the issue remain unresolved or if it concerns the Volunteer Coordinator then the volunteer may raise it formally with the Service team lead or CEO.

9.2 SensationALL has a complaints policy available to all staff and volunteers at any time.

9.2 When difficulties arise over the conduct of the volunteer, every effort will be made by the SensationALL staff to bring about the required improvement through informal discussion or other assistance. If the problem is considered to be sufficiently serious, then the volunteer will be asked to attend a formal meeting to discuss the situation. In the exceptional circumstance that if the matter cannot be resolved, the volunteer may be asked to cease their role.

10.2 Issues that may result in the use of the formal procedure might include:

- Breaking confidentiality
- Breaching a policy laid down by SensationALL
- Not following guidelines and procedures prescribed by SensationALL.
- Unsatisfactory standard of behaviour or conduct
- Misuse of charity funds or property
- Any act or omission deemed likely to bring SensationALL into disrepute
- Serious misconduct, including any act or omission contributing to or leading to harm, adverse effect or a serious hazard to the welfare or interest of vulnerable children and adults, other volunteers, employees of SensationALL, or others. This includes but is not limited to, verbal or physical abuse, assault, bullying, discrimination, victimisation, or harassment.