



South Asian Sexual Health

SASH VOLUNTEER POLICY

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 1.1 This Volunteer Policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in SASH. It applies to volunteers, staff, trustees and service-users of our organisation.
- 1.2 This policy has been developed by staff and trustees to demonstrate the commitment of SASH to involving volunteers successfully in our work. This policy will be kept under review to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of SASH and its volunteers.

2. VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 SASH is committed to working with volunteers to meet its objectives. We recognise the many positive reasons for involving volunteers in our work. By involving volunteers, we can reach a wider range of people, increase our capacity and better reflect the varied communities in the UK that we represent. Involving and supporting volunteers gives us a better understanding of the issues involved, enabling us to better advise other organisations and model good practice in volunteer management. A diverse range of volunteers supporting the work of the organisation increases our skills as a staff team; we learn from their skills and experience, and from supporting them.
- 2.2 We value diversity in our volunteers and are committed to treating all our volunteers equitably and fairly.
- 2.3 We believe that volunteering is enjoyable and can change and enrich the lives of individuals. Successful volunteer involvement takes account of individuals' motivations, aspirations and fulfilment
- 2.4 We are committed to involving volunteers at every level of the organisation in valuable and interesting roles. We will endeavour to match volunteers' skills, knowledge, experience and motivations in a way that best meets the organisation's and volunteers' needs
- 2.5 We respect volunteers in both listening to and learning from what they have to say
- 2.6 We value the importance of maintaining a balanced, effective and mutually beneficial staff-volunteer partnership.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 A SASH volunteer is someone who, of their own free will, and without expectation of financial compensation beyond the reimbursement of expenses, performs a task at the request of and on behalf of SASH.



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- 3.2 SASH distinguishes volunteering from paid employment and work experience placements. We do not intend volunteering to be a substitute for paid employment. We will engage volunteers to best effect to complement the work of paid staff.
- 3.3 Volunteering is an exchange relationship, of benefit to both parties. It is 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 or to carry out the tasks provided.
- 3.4 Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly, and without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the organisation.

4. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

- 4.1 SASH values diversity and is committed to implementing equality of opportunity. We believe that volunteering should be open to all, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, relationship status, race, religion or belief, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability or union membership. The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criteria being the individual's willingness and suitability to carry out agreed tasks.
- 4.2 There is no age limit on volunteering, and we recognise the valuable contribution made by younger and older volunteers. We will ensure that volunteer roles are appropriate to the volunteer's age. Reviews will assess an older volunteer's continued capacity to undertake tasks.
- 4.3 All volunteers will have a clear and concise written role description outlining their tasks, prepared by their supervisor. The underlying principle is the identification of a real need for a task to be undertaken. Role descriptions will be discussed with the volunteer and every effort will be made to provide flexibility.
- 4.4 Volunteer opportunities will be advertised via www.do-it.org.uk, at brokerage appointments, and occasionally in our e-bulletins or local press, as appropriate.
- 4.5 To ensure the safer recruitment and selection of volunteers, SASH will;
 - Comply fully with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Code of Practice where it refers to the recruitment of volunteers.
 - Conduct a risk assessment for each volunteer role, and will only request a DBS Disclosure where the risk assessment indicates that one is both proportionate and relevant to the volunteer role concerned.
 - For roles involving substantial access to children and young people and/or vulnerable adults, or access to sensitive or confidential information, ask prospective volunteers to declare any previous criminal convictions on their application form.
 - Seek and obtain 2 satisfactory independent references.



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- Hold an interview with the prospective volunteer
- Agree a trial period with the volunteer at the start of their volunteering, if applicable

4.6 SASH recognises that a significant percentage of the population has a criminal record, especially men, but that many ex-offenders have short “criminal careers” or are successfully rehabilitated and become good citizens. We believe that volunteering is an excellent way for ex-offenders to rebuild their lives and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

SASH is committed to involving ex-offenders as volunteers wherever possible. A criminal offence will not usually automatically disbar anyone from volunteering, and each applicant’s case will be considered individually. However, it is likely that applicants with convictions for serious violent or sexual crimes will not be considered suitable for roles involving young people or vulnerable adults, and those convicted of fraud or theft for roles involving access to money or financial information.

We have a duty to minimise risks to the organisation and to protect our more vulnerable clients

We will consider a number of factors when recruiting ex-offenders as volunteers. These will include;

- The nature and seriousness of their offence(s)
- The relevance of this offence in relation to the volunteering opportunity
- The circumstances under which the offence was committed, and any change to the prospective volunteer’s circumstances since the offence(s)
- Any patterns of offending and the recency of the offence(s)
- The age at which the offence was committed
- The candidate’s attitude towards their offence(s) now

We will conduct a formal risk assessment of the volunteer role, and will weigh up the factors above when making a decision about whether to offer ex-offenders a volunteering role at SASH.

Decisions on whether to involve ex-offenders will be made jointly by the potential volunteer’s line manager and the Chief Executive together, using all available information including; application forms, interviews, DBS disclosures and risk assessments. If a decision is made not to involve an ex-offender as a volunteer on the grounds of their offending, they will be advised of this by the line manager. As with all unsuitable candidates, we will aim to support ex-offenders into volunteering elsewhere/in other roles via our brokerage service.

4.7 Information about DBS Disclosures will be stored securely, and may only be accessed by AnyOrg’s Chief Executive and the volunteer’s named supervisor. Disclosures will only be discussed by individuals involved in the recruitment and line management of volunteers on a need-to-know basis. Applicants will be made aware who these people are, and that they will be involved in the decision-making process.



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- 4.8 A prospective volunteer whose application is unsuccessful may request feedback on his/her application. If it is requested, clear and honest feedback will be provided.
- 4.9 All volunteers starting with AnyOrg will complete our confidential Volunteer Record Form, which includes emergency contacts, medical information, and diversity monitoring.

5. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1 New volunteers are made to feel welcome and, as part of their induction, will be provided with materials which include the aims and objectives of the organisation, plus an introduction to relevant policies such as this *Volunteer Policy*.
- 5.2 The volunteer's supervisor will be responsible for introducing a new volunteer to staff and other volunteers, and for explaining the building layout, including fire exits, kitchen and toilet facilities.
- 5.3 We recognise that, for many volunteers, training and personal development is a significant reason for their volunteering. The development of training and support for volunteers is a high priority for the organisation, in order to provide them with the necessary information and skills to carry out their tasks. Supervisors will encourage volunteers to complete the *Volunteer Plan and Training Record Form*. Budgets will be allocated for volunteers' training.
- 5.4 Training on 'working with volunteers' will be available for staff and volunteers involved in volunteer management from the Volunteer Centre team as required.

6. SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION

- 6.1 Each volunteer has a designated supervisor to guide and advise them in their tasks. Volunteers will be advised who to approach for support, and will have regular access to that person.
- 6.2 The volunteer's supervisor is responsible for their effective deployment and the development of their day-to-day voluntary activities.
- 6.3 Supervisors will provide regular supervision for volunteers in order to discuss their progress, assess performance, and identify potential training needs.
- 6.4 We believe that the views of staff, volunteers and service users are vital in the development and improvement of the organisation's services and our volunteering programme. Volunteers' views will be sought through a variety of mechanisms, including individual supervision sessions and meetings. Whenever there are 6 or more office-based volunteers, we will convene and facilitate a regular Volunteers' Forum.



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- 6.5 Volunteers are encouraged to claim out-of-pocket expenses for travel by public transport, and lunch, subject to the production of valid receipts. Lunch expenses will be reimbursed up to the value of £5 when the volunteer is volunteering during a time when they would normally have a meal. Childcare/dependents' care expenses will only be reimbursed when funding is available for this at up to £7 per hour. If using a private car or bicycle, mileage rates will be paid according to guidance provided by the Inland Revenue. Subsistence rates apply for necessary volunteering outside of London, and will be reimbursed at the same level as paid staff.

The payment of volunteer expenses does not affect a volunteer's benefits, although volunteers claiming benefits should advise the Benefits Agency that they are volunteering. Volunteers must complete a *SASH Expense Claim Form* and must attach valid receipts. AnyOrg is unable to reimburse expenses if receipts are missing. We recognise the importance of reimbursing volunteers' expenses promptly, and will pay claims of up to £20 in cash, normally on the same day that the volunteering takes place. Claims over £20 will be reimbursed by cheque. All claims should be submitted promptly by volunteers. Claims must be submitted within a month of the expenditure.

- 6.5 Volunteers will be invited to participate in meetings, team building events, award ceremonies, and parties as appropriate.
- 6.6 We will guarantee to provide a reference after 3 months of consistent volunteering, and will offer in-house certification for volunteering completed. Volunteers will be encouraged to work towards recognised accreditation, such as the ASDAN Certificate in Community Volunteering depending on the availability of funds
- 6.7 We recognise that volunteers may cease their involvement at any time. Exit interviews are offered to ascertain why a volunteer is leaving, share any learning points, and establish whether they may want to be involved again in the future.
- 6.8 We aim to treat all volunteers fairly, equitably and consistently. Volunteers are encouraged to raise any problems at the earliest opportunity with their supervisor, so that they may be resolved promptly and informally. The volunteer's supervisor is initially responsible for handling problems regarding the volunteer's conduct or complaints. They will seek to ensure that the volunteer's views are heard, noted, and acted upon swiftly. They will aim for a positive and amicable solution to any problem, using *SASH Problem Solving Procedure for Volunteers*.
- 6.9 We will seek to recognise volunteers' achievements and contributions in a variety of ways. This will include saying thank you in person, mentioning volunteers in documents such as Strategic Plans, Monitoring Reports and our Annual Report, at public events and award ceremonies, and during Volunteers' Week.



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7. INSURANCE, HEALTH & SAFETY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- 7.1 Our insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them.
- 7.2 The organisation does not insure the personal possessions of volunteers or staff against loss or damage.
- 7.3 Personal information recorded about volunteers is stored and maintained with appropriate safeguards for confidentiality. Records, such as supervision notes and personal data, will be kept in lockable filing cabinets, and any electronic records are only accessible via password on a need-to-know basis. Volunteers are informed of their rights, under data protection legislation, to have access to their personal records.
- 7.4 The organisation advises volunteers of the need for confidentiality where they have access to sensitive information about the organisation and its clients which is not public knowledge.

8. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1 SASH recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- feel motivated by their volunteering and enjoy it
- be treated fairly, equitably and with respect by others, and to be free from discrimination
- be reimbursed out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the course of volunteering
- be given a clear written description of their volunteer role and not to be expected to carry out tasks that they are not skilled or supported/trained to do
- have the chance to review their role description with their named supervisor
- perform meaningful and appropriate tasks – volunteering should complement paid work rather than replace it
- receive an induction, when commencing volunteering, and other training and support appropriate to their role
- have regular access to a supervisor who can offer advice, support and formal supervision
- be listened to and consulted about issues affecting them
- have access to a problem solving procedure and to belong to a trade union
- work in a safe, healthy environment and be insured when volunteering
- feel valued and be acknowledged for their contributions

8.2 In return SASH expects volunteers to:

- work within the aims, objectives and policies of the organisation



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- be honest and trustworthy
- treat other people fairly, equitably and with respect
- be reliable, punctual and meet agreed commitments
- raise any problems or difficulties at the earliest opportunity with their supervisor
- complete volunteering tasks to the best of their ability
- make the most of training, meetings and supervision opportunities
- submit claims for reimbursement of expenses to an authorised member of staff, as agreed, providing relevant receipts to support these claims
- take responsibility for their personal belongings while volunteering on or off site. SASH cannot be held responsible for any damage or loss of personal possessions
- inform the relevant agencies that they are volunteering with SASH if they are in receipt of benefits, and choose to do so. SASH will provide information and support to do this if needed
- inform us if they wish to stop volunteering

For young volunteers

We expect volunteers to keep in touch and reply to emails, texts and phone calls promptly.

We appreciate that some volunteers will have academic commitments but we expect them to do their best to find a balance between volunteering and study time. Universities and employers will want to see varied extra curricular activities, such as volunteering alongside academic grades. Volunteering should be treated as a preparation for employment, showing the ability to multi task and commit to something over a period of time.

Volunteers should arrive on time and respect the time commitment that is needed. If they know they are going to be late or cannot attend due to sickness for example, they should call the supervisor as soon as possible.

If volunteers are having any problems or not enjoying the placement or have any issues they should let the supervisor know as soon as possible so that the issues can be sorted out.