

## Volunteering Policy

### 1. Introduction

Dyslexia Scotland is a voluntary organisation representing the needs and interests of dyslexic people in Scotland. Our mission statement is to inspire and enable dyslexic people, regardless of their age and abilities, to reach their potential in education, employment and life.

Dyslexia Scotland is committed to involving volunteers directly within the organisation to:

- Contribute to the delivery of our services
- Form our Board of Directors and Members Representative Council
- Make sure we are responsive to the needs of our users
- Provide different skills and perspectives
- Offer opportunities for participation by people who might otherwise be excluded.

This volunteering policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers. The national volunteer handbook or branch handbook gives further details about the support and procedures in place for volunteers.

### 2. Principles

Dyslexia Scotland came into existence through the commitment and dedication of volunteers and historically the organisation has had volunteer involvement through all levels, from the President, Ambassadors and Board of Directors to volunteers helping at one-off events.

Dyslexia Scotland:

- Recognises that voluntary work brings benefits to volunteers themselves, to service users and to paid staff;
- Will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to the organisation's work;
- Will not introduce volunteers to replace paid staff; volunteers will complement the work of the organisation
- Expects that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work;

- Recognises that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training for them to do their work effectively;
- Will endeavour to identify and cover the costs of involving volunteers;
- Recognises that the management of volunteers requires designated responsibilities within specific posts. A named contact from the staff team will provide advice and support to volunteers;
- Will endeavour to involve volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities and ensure our volunteering opportunities are as accessible as possible.

### 3. Recruitment

Dyslexia Scotland is committed to ensuring volunteering opportunities are open to everyone, in line with Dyslexia Scotland's Equal Opportunities Policy.

People interested in becoming volunteers with Dyslexia Scotland will be invited for an informal talk with the appropriate contact person. They will be given an information pack including general information about the organisation and specific information on the volunteer role in which they are interested. Volunteer Board Members will be given a role description as well as a role specific induction and information pack by the Chief Executive.

Volunteers will be asked to complete a simple registration form appropriate to the role that they are applying for and to supply two references. Where applicants are not placed in the role applied for, they will be provided with feedback and given the opportunity to discuss alternative volunteering roles within Dyslexia Scotland and/or other volunteer involving organisations.

Some volunteers with Dyslexia Scotland are likely to come into contact with vulnerable people and/or be in a position of trust. They will therefore be asked to provide information about any criminal convictions via a self disclosure statement on the registration form that is completed prior to starting your volunteering. For roles which involve sustained and direct contact with young people or adults at risk, volunteers will be required to become a member of the PVG Scheme, which will be arranged by Dyslexia Scotland.

This information will be dealt with in the strictest confidence and will not necessarily prejudice the person being accepted for voluntary work.

There should be no restrictions for EU citizens volunteering with us. For non-EU citizens, we would recommend that people who wish to volunteer, in addition to the central purpose of their stay in the UK, should check their own visa and entry clearance

conditions. Depending on your particular situation, a copy of your entry visa/passport may be requested by your named contact person.

#### **4. Volunteer Agreements and Role Description**

Volunteers will receive a role description and a volunteer agreement – this is not a contract of employment - containing full information about their chosen area of work and a clear idea of their responsibilities and the volunteer's responsibilities to them.

#### **5. Induction and Training**

Volunteers will be given induction and training appropriate for the specific tasks to be undertaken. Induction will include information about Dyslexia Scotland (brief history, structure and current services), Health and Safety information and basic dyslexia awareness training. Additional external training will be provided, if necessary, and if finances are available. Additional training needs should be discussed with the volunteer's named contact person.

Volunteers will carry out their role on a trial basis of three months to ensure both the volunteer and Dyslexia Scotland are happy with the defined role.

#### **6. Support**

Volunteers will be assigned a named contact person who will provide regular support; although day to day support or information may be provided by another staff member, if appropriate. Support sessions will provide the opportunity for ongoing dialogue about the development of the volunteering role and any advice and guidance, as needed.

#### **7. The Volunteer's Voice**

Volunteers will be consulted on decisions which affect them. Dyslexia Scotland is committed to developing consultation and representational procedures for volunteers.

#### **8. Records**

Minimum details will be kept on volunteers. This will include the registration form, references, volunteer role details, emergency contact, correspondence and any other relevant information, in accordance with the Dyslexia Scotland confidentiality policy.

Information of a confidential nature should not be disclosed to anyone outside Dyslexia Scotland, without the prior permission and consent of the individual concerned.

## **9. Expenses**

Dyslexia Scotland recognises that volunteers will come from all economic backgrounds and that volunteering should be accessible to all. Dyslexia Scotland will ensure that there is a clear and accessible system to enable volunteers to claim out of pocket expenses.

Volunteers can re-claim travel expenses on public transport, or, where there is no alternative to public transport, using the mileage rate of 45p per mile. Volunteers must seek approval from their named contact before making a purchase or journey on behalf of the organisation.

Volunteers must keep receipts for all expenses (except mileage) and complete the expenses claim form. Volunteer expenses can be reimbursed as often as the volunteer prefers, but should not be left for more than two months, unless by prior arrangement.

There is no restriction on the hours that you can volunteer with us, or the out-of-pocket expenses that you can claim. However, if you are job-seeking, it is always a good idea to inform the Department of Work and Pensions (or Local Job Centre) about your volunteering.

## **10. Insurance**

Volunteers will be covered by insurance while carrying out the agreed volunteer role.

## **11. Health and Safety**

Dyslexia Scotland will take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure volunteers' health, safety and welfare while volunteering, in accordance with the Dyslexia Scotland Health and Safety policy.

## **12. Equal Opportunities**

Volunteers and staff will work in accordance with the Dyslexia Scotland Equal Opportunities policy and will prevent discrimination on any grounds.

### **13. Problem-solving and Complaints**

Dyslexia Scotland has a policy to help deal with grievances that volunteers may have. In line with this policy, volunteers have the right to discuss any concerns they may have with their named contact at any time. If a volunteer has a complaint about another volunteer or a staff member, they should in the first instance talk to the person concerned to try to resolve the matter informally.

If informal resolution is not possible, the volunteer should speak to their named contact person and the Internal Complaint Policy and procedures would be followed.

If either the volunteer or the named contact feel that the volunteer placement is not beneficial to either party, it may be more positive for the volunteer placement to end or for the volunteer to undertake a different volunteer role within the organisation. If further attempts to resolve any issues are unsuccessful, Dyslexia Scotland may end the volunteer placement. Information about other organisations that provide volunteering opportunities can be supplied, on request.

### **14. Endings**

When volunteers move on from their role at Dyslexia Scotland, they will be asked to provide feedback on the volunteering experience by way of an exit survey. Volunteers will also be given the opportunity to discuss their responses to the survey more fully with their named contact person.

Where they have been volunteering for at least six months, volunteers can request a reference from their named contact person. A reference for a shorter period of volunteering may be considered at the discretion of the Volunteers Manager.

### **15. Monitoring and Evaluation**

Dyslexia Scotland will monitor and evaluate its use of volunteers with reference to this Volunteer Policy.

This policy will be reviewed every two years.