

safe & alert

Good practice advice
on volunteers

working with vulnerable clients.



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Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Mark Godfrey at Children's Country Holiday Fund; Pat Levison at Invicta Community Care NHS Trust; Jane McVeigh at Contact the Elderly; Sandra Gill at Dorset Health Care NHS Trust and Irene Pratt at Friends of the Practice Dorset Health Care Trust; and Elaine Sheppard at The Family Support Group of Kensington and Chelsea Volunteer Bureau, for their contributions and help on the case studies.

We are also grateful to Ursula Jost and Fraser Dyer at Spiral Associates, Sue Gordon, Mary Kells, Penny Mendoca, Suzanne Rauprich, Dr Veronica Reading and Peter Tihani.

First published in 1997 by The National Centre for Volunteering,
Carriage Row, 183 Eversholt Street, London NW1 1BU
Tel: 0171 388 9888
Registered Charity Number 265866

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ISBN 1 897708 92 0

Designed by Ideology
Printed by Haynes Cannon Ltd

Introduction

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The 'Safe and Alert' Project was a response to the growing concern of both the public and practitioners about the involvement of volunteers working with vulnerable clients.

Several high profile cases in recent years have highlighted how things can go wrong, and with the spread of volunteering in all areas, especially Community Care, it is important to establish the best and safest practice.

This workbook is aimed at people who manage volunteers working with vulnerable clients or are thinking of doing so. It sets out the policies and procedures that should help you minimise potential risk to your clients and react swiftly if things do go wrong. Clearly vulnerability is subjective and not always easy to identify. In this context the main focus tends to be on children, some older people and some people with disabilities.

The background to Safe and Alert has been the provision by the previous Conservative government for the establishment of a criminal records agency (see page 13). While it is not clear when (or if) this Agency will come into operation, one of the main contentions of the Safe and Alert campaign has been that criminal record checks alone will not be sufficient to protect vulnerable clients. We hope that this workbook will help you to achieve the good practice that will minimise risk.

A factsheet summarising the main good practice points is also available. Call the National Centre for Volunteering on 0171 388 9888 for details or to request a publications and training catalogue.

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Section 1

Are volunteers for you?

Increasingly volunteers are being seen as a valuable resource working with vulnerable clients in a variety of settings. They can bring new perspectives, skills and approaches to enhance services and make them more effective. However, with this involvement comes a degree of risk which projects need to identify and minimise.

Why do you want to involve volunteers?

This is the first question for any project. The answer lies in being clear about what benefits you expect volunteers to bring to the service you are providing to clients, knowing what risks there might be and how much volunteers cost. If you are going to involve volunteers you will want to feel sure that the benefits outweigh the cost - and be able to communicate this clearly to others in your organisation.

Staff may have some concerns about the wisdom of recruiting volunteers to work with clients. Is it worth all the effort, trouble, costs and worry? Even if you are clear in your own mind, if you do not address these matters, the negative attitudes that staff hold can create a situation that is unsupportive to volunteers.

Involving staff in assessing the benefits that volunteers bring to the organisation will help to win internal support for a volunteer programme. It's easy to assume that lack of funds is the only reason for involving volunteers. In fact, if given the time to consider and discuss the issue properly, most staff can see ways in which volunteers might add an extra dimension to the organisation. This can make all the difference between volunteers being perceived as a necessary evil ("if we could afford to pay staff to do this work we would"), or being seen as a unique and valuable asset to the organisation's services ("clients feel so positive about receiving visits from volunteers because they know volunteers are there out of choice").

Estimating potential for risks to clients and volunteers

If your work is with vulnerable clients, an assessment of the risks in involving volunteers will be a critical part of your consultation. Answering the following questions can help you gauge the extent to which either party may be at risk.

• Have you (or another organisation) involved volunteers to provide this service to clients before?

When you tackle any new task, there is always a greater degree of risk of something going wrong than when you carry out more familiar work. This isn't automatically a reason for abandoning a proposal to introduce voluntary work, but it should alert us to the need to be extra vigilant.

• Will the volunteer have substantial access to vulnerable clients?

For example, to what extent will they be working on a one-to-one basis? How closely supervised will volunteers be, and how close to hand will their supervisor be? Indeed, how experienced, skilled or knowledgeable is the supervisor? Will volunteers and clients meet in an isolated situation (alone in a room, off the premises, etc.)? How regularly will they meet, and for what length of time?

• To what extent are your clients vulnerable?

To what degree will clients be dependent or reliant on volunteers? How able are clients to assert their rights? To what extent can they monitor and feed back to you on a volunteer's behaviour?

• To what extent are volunteers at risk from clients?

Are volunteers working with clients who have a history of, or potential for, violence? To what degree could volunteers be manipulated by clients? Is there potential for false accusations to be made against volunteers?

If the client is under the care of a doctor, or other professional, they could be asked to give an opinion on the element of risk there may be to the volunteer.

If you consider volunteer involvement in your organisation is feasible, the rest of this workbook will help you to develop procedures you can put in place to minimise risks.

The case studies in Section 5 contain examples from various volunteer programmes of measures to minimise risks to clients.

Activity:

Consider one area of work where volunteers are working with clients.

- List all the potential risk situations that arise in the various activities this work involves.
- Which risks can you eliminate?
- What measures can you put in place to minimise the remaining risks?
- Consider whether any of these situations carry a greater risk when:
 - the volunteer is new
 - is very experienced

It is important to be aware that co-ordinating a well-run and effective volunteer programme can be more expensive and time-consuming than many people realise. As well as direct financial costs, there are hidden costs in managing volunteers such as: management time; time spent developing policies; time spent training volunteers - or training staff in volunteer management. All of these areas of expense should be included in a volunteer programme budget so that the organisation can clearly monitor the cost of volunteer involvement.

Section 2

Recruiting, interviewing and selecting your volunteers

Good recruitment practice will reduce risk to clients and volunteers. This starts with targeting the right people and runs through the selection process.

What will your volunteers do?

Once the decision has been made to involve volunteers in your programme, you should write up a voluntary work outline (the equivalent of a job description) detailing the kind of work in which they will be involved.

Writing a voluntary work outline for each area of work can help you to:

- identify what work is a priority
- assess the risks involved and minimise them
- consider the skills and experience necessary for the voluntary work
- target recruitment
- supervise the volunteers and provide clear and helpful feedback on their performance

Voluntary work outlines help volunteers to know:

- what your expectations are of them
- where their role begins and ends
- what risks they may be taking

Voluntary work outlines help clients to:

- know what they can expect from volunteers - and what not
- understand why volunteers are doing this work
- promote confidence about the basis on which volunteers are selected and considered suitable (skills / experience / attributes etc.)

Some basic points you might include in a voluntary work outline :

- title for the volunteer post
- work objectives for position: describe in broad terms what the work is and what you hope will be achieved by doing it
- the sort of activities the work involves

- how you will measure whether the work is being done successfully (you might mention here the sort of problems the volunteers will need to tackle)
- time commitment (hours, length, flexibility)
- where the work will take place
- who will supervise the volunteers
- what you will provide to make volunteering easy for the volunteers (out of pocket expenses, insurance, parking, use of organisational resources)
- what training and support you will offer volunteers and/or require them to undertake
- what policies and procedures volunteers will be required to comply with

Who makes a good volunteer for your project?

A clear definition of the skills, attitudes and experience you are looking for will provide you with some criteria with which to select volunteers at the interview stage. It will also encourage unsuitable volunteers to 'de-select' themselves out of the process before you have invested too much time and energy in processing their application.

Write up a person specification which clearly describes the skills, knowledge and experience that suitable volunteers will possess. Make a clear distinction between which of these are essential for the work, and which ones you consider desirable.

Sample person specifications are incorporated within the voluntary work outlines shown in Appendix A.

You can use elements of the person specification when recruiting. Phrases such as 'we need caring people' or 'all you need is enthusiasm' are often deeply misleading. If you're looking for particular skills, or have selection criteria which have been set up to protect your clients, say so. The following example illustrates how it is possible to show consideration for clients and volunteers safety, whilst maintaining equal opportunity.

'As long as you are over 18 years old we welcome volunteers from a variety of backgrounds and/or varying ages. Not everyone is suitable however, and we do have a selection process. You will need to provide references and complete our training programme, before starting a befriending relationship. You also need to make a commitment of a couple of hours a week...what all our volunteers have in common is that they respect confidentiality and respect lifestyles different to their own.' (The Befriending Network - volunteers supporting people with a life threatening illness at home)

Interviewing and selecting volunteers

"Lisa had applied to be a volunteer at the organisation where I was the volunteer co-ordinator. I rang her up to say that an opportunity had arisen that may interest her, and would she like to come in for a chat to discuss it further. At the time we arranged, I met Lisa in reception and took her to a seating area where there were a couple of sofas and a coffee machine. After I'd made us both a drink we sat down to talk. I'd never mentioned the word 'interview' and had worked hard to keep the process informal. But when I looked across at Lisa she was dressed to the nines and shaking like a leaf."

Sometimes, it's difficult to know who is more anxious about an interview - the volunteer or the person doing the interviewing! Some organisations have concerns about over-formalising their volunteer programmes, and in some contexts that is reasonable. Where the organisation is working with vulnerable people, however, the safety of the clients must come before how comfortable staff feel about putting themselves in the interviewer's chair.

Nonetheless, staff concerns should be addressed. Effective interviewing is about combining a well planned and executed process with a range of important skills. Staff who are expected to conduct interviews - whether for paid or unpaid workers - should be trained in these skills.

Anxiety on the part of both the candidate and the interviewer(s) can be somewhat alleviated by making sure both parties are properly prepared for what's going to take place. And that means planning.

In the case of Lisa, above, her anxiety about the 'interview' could have been reduced if the interviewer had taken time beforehand to explain exactly what was going to happen and even how she could prepare for it (e.g. bring a note of the questions she would like answered). Instead, her imagination was left to run riot over what "coming in for a chat" meant. The volunteer co-ordinator's well-intentioned attempt to be informal was too vague to be helpful.

Activity:

Think about your experience of being interviewed. What did you find helpful and unhelpful about the way interviews were conducted? What can you learn from this when considering interviewing volunteers?

An interview shouldn't be a one-way process with only the interviewer assessing the volunteers it's a chance for volunteers to weigh up the organisation too. Is this the right voluntary work for them? Is the organisation offering the sort of volunteering in which they are interested? Can they say 'no' easily if it's not what they expected?

As you prepare volunteers for the interview, think about how you might encourage them to make the interview work for them. But don't forget to prepare them by telling them more basic

information too - who they are going to meet; what you want to talk about; how long it will last; how formal or informal it will be; what other screening methods you will use and why these are important in protecting your clients.

Risk consideration

Where vulnerable clients are concerned, the selection process should not be left to one person. Involve at least one other colleague so that you have a second perspective on the candidate, and can back up your judgement at a later date if necessary. You might also need to get specialised advice on any particular areas for concern.

There is also the possibility that you get an intuitive feeling that a volunteer is not suitable but cannot really explain this in a rational way. If this happens, having another colleague present enables you to discuss those feelings.

Saying 'No' to unsuitable volunteers

You may come to the conclusion during an interview that the volunteer is not suitable for the position, will not fit into the work environment or cannot give the commitment you require. If this is the case it is best if you can lead volunteers to come to this conclusion on their own, by illustrating situations in which they are less likely to cope.

If that does not work, it is important to tell volunteers exactly why you think they are not suitable for the work. In some cases you might comment that they might try again later, when they have more time or are more experienced (but avoid using this to soften the blow if you don't mean it. Honesty is definitely the best policy!).

As an alternative to turning volunteers down flat, think about whether they would be suitable for other voluntary work in your organisation. If this is not possible, suggest some other ideas where

they could look for alternative voluntary work (e.g. a local volunteer bureau). This constructive approach to saying 'no' emphasises that although such volunteers are not suitable for your project, they still have something to offer elsewhere. You can never avoid the disappointment that rejecting volunteers will cause, but it is possible to handle it sensitively and positively.

Other selection tools to use

In addition to the interview, there are other methods of gathering information which can help to support the interview process. Examples are:

- Application forms
- References
- Criminal record checks
- Health checks

What to ask in the application form:

The basic information will include name, address, and telephone number. You may wish to ask about age: this needn't mean asking for their date of birth - which you may want to avoid doing for equal opportunities reasons - but could be a tick box asking applicants to confirm that they meet any age requirements you may have (e.g. "Are you over 18?")

The remaining questions should be designed to help applicants think through their own suitability and motivation for the position, and to give you useful answers to help you assess the same issues. Typical questions might cover:

- Why do you want to volunteer with us?
- What would you like to gain from your volunteering experience?
- Why is our organisation of particular interest to you?

- What previous voluntary work, employment and studies have you done which might help you in your voluntary work here?

- What previous experience do you have of working with (your client group e.g. children, disabled people, elderly etc.)?

- How many hours a week are you available to volunteer? For what length of time do you hope to volunteer with us?

- Any previous criminal convictions or cases pending? For what?

An example of an Equal Opportunities monitoring form is in Appendix B.

Taking up references for volunteers

Some people feel cynical about the value of references, saying that they are 'never bad'. However, references could contain hints about a problem with the applicant, and you can then follow these up with the referee (by phone) and the prospective volunteer.

You need to consider in what capacity your applicants' referees will have known them. This decision will need to reflect the degree of expertise you are looking for and how much responsibility (including potential for risking clients' safety) volunteers will have. However, becoming too prescriptive about referees may eliminate perfectly appropriate volunteers who don't have contacts in the capacity you've asked for. Lay down some simple guidelines on referees e.g. if possible, neither of them should be a personal friend or family member; they should be people who know you in a professional capacity; one of the referees should, preferably, be related to previous employment - we say preferably, because not all prospective volunteers will have been employed.

Always take up at least two references as a safeguard measure, and make a point of asking how long the referee has known the applicant.

Make it clear to referees that they are welcome to call you if they wish to clarify or discuss any aspect of the reference before writing it. Experience has shown that referees will often take up the offer to phone you if they don't know the applicant well or don't want to complete the reference for some other reason. A referee who doesn't know the applicant well can be a warning to you to explore the potential volunteer's background further - why hasn't the applicant given you the name of somebody who knows them better? There may be a very good, legitimate, reason. Or there might not. . .

Taking up references is not an alternative to the other selection and monitoring processes discussed in this book. However, it does provide you with a useful safeguard to help you confirm the suitability of prospective volunteers and to protect yourself from criticism in the event of a volunteer letting you down.

Examples of reference letters and forms are shown in Appendix C.

Criminal record checks

There are currently two main ways of finding out if a prospective volunteer has ever been convicted of a criminal offense - ask the volunteer, or ask the police to check for a criminal record. While the first option is open to everybody, police checks can only be requested by certain organisations (principally those working with children) and in some cases organisations are legally obliged to conduct them.

Where volunteers are working with vulnerable people, going into homes, or given unsupervised access to money or expensive equipment it is appropriate to ask about criminal convictions on the application form. Normally the question will

be phrased: "Do you have any unspent convictions", and it is good practice to add: "Any information given will be kept confidential, and will not necessarily exclude you from being considered for voluntary work." Offenders normally have the right not to reveal spent convictions. However, the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 requires them to reveal spent convictions where the voluntary work involves:

- access to young people under 18, or
- access to people connected with the provision of social services such as the young, people over the age of 65, people with a mental illness, the chronic sick or disabled people.

If volunteers are not working with people who are particularly vulnerable or in an isolated setting, the value of asking them to declare criminal convictions must be weighed against the possibility of deterring suitable people who are embarrassed about disclosing their offence.

And this brings us on to perhaps the most crucial point of all regarding volunteers with criminal convictions. Does it matter? Just because someone has offended does not automatically make them unsuitable for working with vulnerable people. Sadly, potentially good volunteers are being turned down because they declared minor or irrelevant offences that took place a long time ago. In deciding whether a prospective volunteer's criminal record is relevant the following points should be considered:

- the nature of the offense
- the nature of the voluntary work
- how long ago the offense was committed
- the frequency of offense and whether there is a pattern of related or similar offences

It is also worth remembering that potential abusers will not necessarily have been previously convicted of a related offense. Seeking safety through criminal record checks is a limited tool, and might even encourage a false sense of

security within organisations. Risks to clients ultimately need to be minimised through management practices and guidelines that diminish the opportunities for abuse to take place.

In April 1997 the Police Act was passed by Parliament. Included in it was the provision to establish a self-financing Criminal Records Agency. The Act was one of the last actions of the Conservative Government and, although it was supported by the Labour Party, it is not as yet clear when (or even if) the current Government will set up the Agency. The idea was to provide much easier access to criminal records, but a fee (probably between £5 and £10) would be payable for each check done. The basic check would produce a criminal records certificate showing all convictions and cautions. An enhanced check, which would be more expensive, would show convictions, cautions and non-conviction information.

Health checks

If volunteers are doing work which involves lifting clients, and one of your volunteers has a back problem, the health and safety of both the volunteer and client will be put at risk. Volunteers are also sometimes placed in situations where they may have to restrain service-users, and will need to have the physical strength to do this. Also, you may want to reassure yourself that volunteers are not going to pass out or have a fit when they have clients in their care, or pass on an infection to a client.

Any questions you ask prospective volunteers about their health must be strictly related to the work they will do and on a need-to-know basis only. As well as asking appropriate questions on the application form you can also raise health issues during the interview. This might include describing a common work situation (for example, pushing a wheelchair through gravel) and asking prospective volunteers how well they would cope with it.

The relevance of health issues varies enormously from one project to another, and if you are unsure of the extent to which you should explore them with your volunteers, seek advice from appropriate experts. Volunteer co-ordinators should not be put in the position of having to make medical judgments about prospective volunteers' health. Either you need to rely on information provided by volunteers themselves or, if health issues are critical, seek a doctor's reference.

Such references require the volunteer's doctor to confirm in writing that the volunteer's health will not prevent them from undertaking the voluntary work or pose a threat to your clients' well-being. You can expect to pay for this (although some practices may waive the fee), and you will have to give the doctor some indication of what the voluntary work involves. Enclosing a voluntary work outline may be appropriate, provided it is brief and gives some indication of both the physical demands of the job and the potential risks that a volunteer's health could pose to clients. Do not expect doctors to divulge medical information about their patients - a confirmation of the volunteer's suitability is usually enough.

This health issue runs two ways - do any of the clients that volunteers work with have a condition which may put the volunteers' safety at risk? Some organisations conduct health checks on prospective clients in order to minimise such risks. Volunteers should also be made aware of any special health needs that a client has and given training in how to deal with it (e.g. incontinence, epilepsy, medication, disabilities, mental health problems, asthma, diabetes, HIV/AIDS).

It should be stressed that all information you receive about a potential volunteer, including references, criminal record and health checks should be treated in the strictest confidence.

Summary

- You can make a significant contribution to protecting your clients' safety through the way you recruit and select your volunteers.
- Assess potential risks at the outset and set up procedures and guidelines that will eliminate or minimise them.
- Be clear on why you are involving volunteers and take time to write up their roles in voluntary work outlines.
- Consider the skills and attributes that your volunteers need to have, and set out to recruit people who possess them by implementing targeted recruitment campaigns.
- Take time to plan and structure volunteer interviews that ask the right questions to help you determine whether prospective volunteers are suitable for working with your service-users.
- Back up your interview with other selection processes such as application forms, references, health checks and criminal record checks.

Section 3

Safe and effective management

Not all risks can be completely eliminated. The training and supervision that you provide is crucial to minimising the potential for things to go wrong.

Induction and training offer excellent opportunities to equip volunteers with the necessary information, skills, attitudes and confidence to do their work well.

They also provide you with a further opportunity to assess whether prospective volunteers are appropriate for working with your clients. By continuing your screening process through the induction and training period, you and your colleagues - as well as the volunteers themselves - can assess over a longer period of time, and in a more realistic way, whether they are able and willing to do the required work. It is often only at the end of the introductory training period, and after an additional interview, that some organisations offer their volunteers a firm place. With this in mind, it might be appropriate to make the initial acceptance of a volunteer provisional (e.g. for one month, or other appropriate period).

What to include in induction and training

The aim of the induction is to ensure that every volunteer:

- has an overview of the organisation and knows about its purpose, values, services and structure
- is informed about the volunteer programme, its policies and guidelines

A well-planned induction will help volunteers to understand the contribution or difference they can make to your organisation. The volunteer work outline detailed in Section 2 will help you here.

Training aims to prepare your volunteers for a specific job in terms of:

- providing the necessary information to do the work
- practising the skills needed for the work
- changing or forming attitudes that are important for the work being undertaken

An example of volunteer training programmes is in Appendix F.

What's the minimum a volunteer needs to know?

Not all volunteering required substantial induction or training - it depends on the degree of responsibility the volunteers will have and on the complexity of the work itself. We suggest the following list as being things that should be covered with all volunteers.

1. Do they know what their voluntary work involves?
2. Do they know how they are to do this work?
3. Do they know how they will be supervised?

Some organisations clarify 2 and 3 in writing in the form of an agreement, point one is covered by the voluntary work outline. Such an agreement provides a means of reinforcing your expectation that crucial guidelines and procedures will be followed by the volunteer, and that their work will be supervised in order to safeguard clients.

Choosing affordable training programmes

Having decided the information and training you are going to give your volunteers, consider next:

- What do they need to know before starting the voluntary work?
- What can they learn after they have begun their voluntary work?

Knowing the areas in which you want to train volunteers is one thing. Making the learning relevant, fun, practical, diverse, affordable and effective is quite another. You may choose to bring in external consultants to help you, or use your own internal resources. Organisations such as the National Centre for Volunteering, and National Association of Volunteer Bureaux also run 'Train the Trainer' courses.

Matching volunteers to clients

In situations where volunteers are working with clients on a one-to-one basis, such as befriending programmes, matching the right volunteer to the client is crucial to the success of the programme.

There are two elements to a good match:

1. That the skills, interests and experience of the volunteer are right to meet the needs of the client.
2. That there is a good match of personalities, so that the volunteer and client will get on well together.

As well as ensuring that volunteers are carefully selected for such programmes, clients should also be screened and selected to ensure that they are appropriate for the particular service that the volunteer programme provides. Here are some tips from experienced matchmakers:

- When recruiting clients, directly or through referrals, be clear about what type of person is suitable for your programme.

- Communicate clearly what your volunteers do and don't do for clients. Also explain to clients what your expectations are of them in terms of, for example, attending meetings, or filling out forms.

- Take time to inform yourself about clients' suitability for your programme, including taking into account their specific needs, interests and personality. Consider meeting them if appropriate, ask referral agencies to fill out a referral form and/or talk with them - or other professionals who know the client - to get their advice.

- Discuss with the client whether they have any reservations about their potential volunteer, or if they can think of any characteristics they would or wouldn't like the volunteer to have.

- Consider whether the client requires any induction or training, and cover any necessary points in a set of guidelines or during a conversation.

- When making the final match between volunteer and client ask yourself whether the volunteer has the required skills, experience and interest to work with the particular client.

Activity:

Do you match clients with particular volunteers? If so, how can you get to know them and learn about their specific needs and personalities?

Supervising volunteers

When things go wrong, it can be very easy to blame the volunteer. However, the fact that they have not met expectations may not be a reflection of their skills or motivation, but on the ability to

supervise and support them properly. Failure to convey expectations, set boundaries, give clear directions, formulate priorities or monitor performance are all guaranteed ways of setting volunteers up to fail. Supervision is a good way to ensure that any shortcomings are addressed before problems arise.

Organisations structure volunteer supervision in different ways depending on the type of work the volunteer is doing and on the available resources. The key word is structure - however you choose to manage and support volunteers, it is vital to be absolutely clear on who has responsibility for each aspect of the volunteer's supervision. This should be communicated clearly to volunteers and other people involved. You will also find it worthwhile to arrange training for staff in supervision skills.

We also recommend that records of supervision are kept, as they form a useful basis for any investigation that takes place in the event of problems later on.

Monitoring and giving feedback

Monitoring involves looking out for specific indications of how well volunteers are progressing, or for warning signs of potential problems. It is not simply about being on the lookout for potential problems. Monitor the volunteers successes too. If you see that volunteers are doing well, tell them. Failure to notice or give feedback on good work can be very discouraging and de-motivating.

The key to effective monitoring is to be alert. You will be more proficient in guarding the safety of your clients and volunteers if you detect early warnings that there is a problem developing, and do something about it before it becomes a major difficulty.

Who does the monitoring?

Monitoring does not need to be done exclusively by one person. However, someone should take

overall responsibility for the monitoring process. For example, in some organisations the volunteer co-ordinator will be in charge of ensuring that monitoring takes place, but will obviously require input from the staff who actually supervise the volunteers.

The clearer you are about what you are monitoring, the more other people can be involved in helping with it. This doesn't mean only other staff members - the volunteers themselves can provide you with reports and you can get feedback from clients or their relatives, other professionals with whom you liaise, or other volunteers.

Monitoring can be either proactive or reactive:

Proactive monitoring calls for planned action, and can include:

- Phone conversations with the volunteer (and perhaps also with clients or other staff/volunteers if appropriate)
- One-to-one meetings with the volunteer / with clients
- Meetings with volunteers and clients together
- Support group meetings
- Staff meetings
- Reports completed by volunteers
- Questionnaires to volunteers, clients, partner agencies etc.

Reactive monitoring requires you to stay alert and observe successes and irregularities. No matter how well you set up formal monitoring processes, they can never be 100% effective. Informal monitoring allows you to look out for any signals that slip through your proactive procedures.

Both methods are useful for motivating volunteers and safeguarding clients.

Giving feedback

Giving positive feedback will help to encourage and build confidence in volunteers, while

corrective feedback will discourage ineffective or unacceptable behaviour, and hopefully prevent serious problems occurring.

Feedback is a two-way process. Not only are you discussing with volunteers how well they are achieving the agreed work, but you will receive feedback from them on how well you are providing the necessary support and resources.

Failing to give constructive feedback can lead to major problems later on. Often constructive feedback is not given because supervisors do not feel comfortable with tackling the subject.

Constructive feedback should be:

1. Well-timed - as soon as possible after the event
2. Specific and descriptive - backed up with specific examples.
3. Balanced
4. Fact-based - containing only what you know for certain.
5. Realistic - only address behaviour over which the volunteer has control and can change.
6. Understood - check that the recipient has understood what you've said.

The list above is only a very brief summary and further information on giving and receiving feedback is contained in the Centre's publications on volunteer management, and covered on our management of volunteers training courses.

Activity:

Think about some feedback you have recently received from a supervisor. What comes to your mind first :

- the memory of a reprimand?
- or the memory of receiving praise?

How did this make you feel? How can you use your experience to help you give good feedback to volunteers?

It is also important to establish consistent patterns of supervision from the start. If a volunteer breaks a guideline, it is not enough to dismiss it as being a one-off or too petty to mention to the volunteer. It is better to have fewer guidelines and to monitor them vigilantly. What sort of message will volunteers receive if you train them in important guidelines, then turn a blind eye when they breach them?

There are good reasons why we might hesitate to give negative feedback to volunteers, but overlooking a minor problem can lead to a more serious one.

Summary

- Training and briefing volunteers adequately before they begin their work can make a significant contribution towards making them effective in the work they do.
- Have clear priorities on what information to give to your volunteers.
- Any training you give will need to be useful for the volunteers and affordable for your organisation.
- Make sure you have a clear idea of who has supervisory responsibility for each volunteer.
- Monitor volunteers' performance and take the time to give useful and constructive feedback.
- Remain vigilant - keep your ears and eyes open for any indications that either your volunteers or your clients are experiencing a problem.
- When difficulties arise with a volunteer's work, address them quickly while there is still time for the volunteer to correct their behaviour.

Section 4

Developing procedures and responses to accidents, complaints or allegations of abuse

Imagine you have done everything possible to protect your clients and volunteers from experiencing any harm or abuse. You have put procedures in place to recruit, select, and induct volunteers. You have assessed potential risks, considered what might go wrong, and prepared your volunteers by giving them guidelines and training.

You will also have been closely monitoring your volunteer programme so that you can catch any early signs of a potential problem and take corrective action before the situation develops further. Good practice in recruitment, selection and management will significantly reduce the prospect of any harm coming to you, your clients, or your volunteers.

Yet no matter how much you plan, you can never completely eliminate the possibility of something going wrong. This section outlines procedures that can be put in place as a response to accidents, complaints, or allegations of abuse.

How suspicious should you be?

Every organisation needs to think about ways of raising the level of everyone's awareness without creating an environment of constant anxiety.

A good basic rule of thumb is that if you become aware of anything which causes you to feel uncomfortable you should talk to a senior person in the organisation about it. You should be alert to any incidents or activities which take place, where you feel that clients or volunteers are putting themselves in a vulnerable position.

If you are concerned, then the one thing you must **not** do is nothing.

Supervision sessions with volunteers are a good chance to assess how things are going. You should also maintain regular contact with the

client and their family/carers (as described in Section 3), however long the volunteer has been with your organisation. Check that there is no changed behaviour or unease which might indicate abuse.

Learn to trust your judgement - and don't be afraid of being accused of overreacting.

People have worries about reporting their suspicions because they think their judgement will be perceived as unsound if their concerns are proved unfounded. Organisations may wish to consider whether they should implement a 'no blame' policy which sets out that no one will be discriminated against at any point in the future if they have reported any incident, suspicion, or concern they have about any aspect of behaviour.

Everyone in the organisation has a responsibility to be aware and alert to signs that all is not well with a client.

Recognition is not always easy or straightforward. However, in some cases of sexual or physical abuse there may be visible indicators either in the form of injuries or significant behavioural changes.

Communication with clients

Good communication with clients and their carers is essential. Key questions you should consider include:

- Who should a client contact if they have an accident, are dissatisfied, or experience abuse or neglect by a volunteer?
- Who can the client contact in the first instance?
- Who can they contact next if they feel they are not being listened to?

Make it as easy and inviting as possible for the client to express dissatisfaction or to report a problem. As well as giving them your name, you may want to suggest to the client other people they might feel comfortable talking to, such as a doctor, teacher, or case worker. Some organisations have an independent quality assessor who rings clients to ask how satisfied they are with the service they are receiving from the volunteer.

All organisations should have a formal complaints procedure. If you don't already know what the complaint procedure is in your organisation or group, find out now.

An example of a complaints procedure is shown in Appendix G.

Who should volunteers report an accident or incident of abuse to?

Volunteers need to know who they should contact if an emergency occurs. The following list may help you decide who the appropriate person in your organisation is.

1. If the client has an accident who should the volunteer report it to?
2. If a volunteer is abused by a client, who should be told first?
3. If the volunteer is badly treated or abused by their staff supervisor, who can they contact?
4. What are the grievance procedures for volunteers in your organisation?
5. If a client reports an incident of abuse (whether they or someone else is the victim) who should the volunteer report it to?

Many organisations use the same grievance procedures for paid staff and volunteers. An example is in Appendix G.

What to do if you hear about an accident, complaint or allegation of abuse

There are two general rules for responding to an emergency:

- record what you are told
- act on it

There is no one simple set of rules to follow in responding to these situations. However, the following list has been devised containing things that most workers agreed were sensible.

Do's and Don't checklist

Do:

- stay calm
- listen and hear
- give time to the person to say what they want
- reassure that they have done the right thing in telling
- record in writing what was said as soon as possible
- report to someone in a senior position in the organisation
- record your report
- suspend visits by the volunteer to that client.

Don't:

- do not panic
- do not promise to keep secrets
- do not inquire into details of abuse
- do not make the client repeat the story unnecessarily

In no circumstances should any individual member of staff or volunteer attempt to deal with the problem alone, and anyone who receives a complaint or allegation should report it to a senior colleague and ensure that it is taken seriously.

It is good practice, even in smaller organisations, to nominate one person responsible for dealing with all allegations and suspicions of abuse and for everyone in the organisation to

know how to contact them quickly, with clear lines of communication.

Acting on accidents, complaints or allegations

The action you take will depend on the type of incident. For example, the action you take in the event of an accident, such as someone breaking a leg, is different from that when someone reports sexual abuse.

If an accident is reported to you:

Develop a procedure that answers some of the following questions:

- Is everybody OK?
- Do you have an accident reporting form?
- Who should be informed or handle the report?
- What contact details or telephone numbers do you need to have to hand?
- Do you know what procedures and paperwork your insurance company requires you to complete?

If an adult client claims to have been abused by the volunteer you need to be clear:

- what guidelines you need to follow
- who you report the incident to and consult with first
- who else you need to inform
- at which stage and under what circumstances you contact the police
- how you will investigate the allegation
- what disciplinary procedures you have for dealing with volunteers who abuse or neglect clients (an example of a disciplinary code is in Appendix G.)

If a child reports an incident of abuse you need to be clear:

- what guidelines you follow when you are first told about abuse by a child
- what are the do's and don'ts? Example guidelines are in Appendix H

- which individual in your organisation is responsible for dealing with any allegations
- who you contact if that person is not there.

Further action may mean:

- clarifying or getting more information about the allegation
- where there is any initial doubt, consulting with a statutory agency to test out concerns
- making a formal referral to social services or the Police.

Keeping such a record will also help to protect your organisation and yourself.

Examples of Disciplinary Procedures and specimen guidelines for acting on reports of abuse are in Appendix H.

How to record allegations

An accurate note should be made of the date and time of the incident or disclosure, the parties who were involved, and of any action taken within the organisation to investigate the matter.

It may contain:

- what happened
- when and where it happened
- who was involved
- who else was present
- who has been informed
- any actions taken so far

Your record should be clear and factual since any information you have may be valuable to professionals investigating the incident and may at some time in the future be used as evidence in court. This kind of information should always be kept in a secure place and shared only with those who need to know.

Confidentiality and records

A system of report and referral within the organisation will help you to log and review all incidents where concern has been expressed. You can build up a body of knowledge/evidence to use as a basis for action, consultation or report to your management board, social services or Police.

We recommend that every organisation nominates someone to be responsible for processing all checks (health, criminal record, etc), keeping the records in confidence, and reporting the outcome of enquiries to the right person. This person can be a trustee, director, personnel officer, senior project employee, or other suitable person. They need to ensure that every applicant is checked to the level laid down by the organisation, and maintain these enquiries in a secure system.

Past worker's records and unsuccessful applications should also be kept secure and for as long as the management committee determine. It follows that such records should be confidentially destroyed by the nominated person after this stipulated time. If you use a computer system, you need to remember the data protection legislation, and use a secure password system.

If you do have to deal with an emergency, debrief the situation afterwards and examine your procedures to see if they were adequate.

Don't leave your response procedures gathering dust in the back of a filing cabinet once you've written them - keep them alive in people's minds through training, and by reviewing them regularly.

Drivers

If volunteers are required to transport clients in their own cars you need to make regular checks of driving licences and motor vehicle insurance.

Medical risks

If volunteers will be required to lift clients, they need to be trained in lifting techniques. Every organisation should also issue clear guidance to volunteers on their policies for administering medication to clients, and volunteers need to be clear about what they can and cannot do.

Financial risks

Volunteers need to know the policy on handling client's money and realise the importance of handling finances correctly. Organisations need to make regular checks to cover themselves in the event of fraud or abuse.

Activity:

Consider various possible scenarios and determine the most suitable contact person for each of them:

- If a client has an accident, who should the volunteer report it to and do they need to use an accident reporting form?
- If a volunteer is abused by a client, who should be told first?
- If the volunteer is badly treated or abused by their staff supervisor, who can they contact?
- What are the grievance procedures for volunteers who have a complaint in your organisation?
- If a client reports an incident of abuse (whether s/he or someone else is the victim) who should the volunteer report it to?

Self Assessment Questions:

1. If an adult client claims to have been abused by a volunteer:

- What guidelines do you need to follow? (for example, listen, reassure and record, discuss and agree on next action, etc.)
- Who do you report the incident to and consult with first?
- Who else do you need to inform?
- At which stage, and under what circumstances, do you contact the police?
- How will you investigate the allegation?
What disciplinary procedures do you have for dealing with volunteers who abuse or neglect clients?

2. If a child reports an incident of abuse to you:

- Is someone in the organisation knowledgeable about child protection issues or do you have an outside source for first contact and advice?
- What guidelines do you follow when you are first told by a child about abuse?
- What are the do's and don't's?
- Which individual in your organisation is responsible for dealing with any allegations? Who do you contact if that person is not there?

There are no definitive answers to these questions - the important thing is to know what the right answers are for **your** organisation, and to put procedures in place where they don't exist at present, or are weak. This workbook sets out our recommendations for good practice and should enable you to be *Safe and Alert*.

The four case studies in the next section are from organisations who have adopted good practice

procedures in recruiting and screening their volunteers.

Summary

- The possibility of accidents, abuse or neglect taking place cannot be completely eliminated.
- If you are aware of anything which causes you to feel uncomfortable, you should talk to someone about it.
- If an accident, complaint or allegation of abuse is reported to you, you should record what you are told, and act on it.
- Writing set procedures will not only help you think through the issues in more detail, but will help others in your organisation to be clear on what to do if the worst does happen.

Section 5

Case Studies

CASE 1

Children's Country Holidays Fund (CCHF)

Characteristics:

In this programme a large number of volunteers are required for a short period of time during the summer only.

Purpose:

The Children's Country Holidays Fund has, since 1884, provided summer holidays for socially disadvantaged London children between the ages of 5-12. Generally, children aged 5-8 stay with families and those over 8 join a residential camp.

Background:

A major review of the scheme's practices and procedures has recently been undertaken to ensure that the children are protected from any harm. The organisation suspended its programme for a year in order to do this. As a result of the review, existing volunteers had to go through newly developed interviewing, selection and training procedures (described below) if they wanted to continue volunteering with the scheme.

Management of the Children's Country Holidays Fund:

The scheme is run by a Director and a team of staff. Most of the direct work with children is done by the volunteers, who are managed by a volunteer co-ordinator.

What volunteers do:

Volunteers undertake a range of activities, including having children to stay in their house, supervising the children at camp, accompanying children on their journeys to and from holidays, and fund-raising. For this particular case study we will look at how "train marshals" - volunteers who accompany the children to and from their holidays - are recruited, selected and supervised. The organisation currently has about 80 train marshals that accompany 200 children on their journey. Each train marshal has to commit to working a minimum of three days a year.

Profile of volunteers:

About 70% of the volunteers are over 50 years old and are long term volunteers. More recent recruits are younger and many of them are students.

Practices and procedures in managing the project

Recruitment

Job Design:

A recent change in the role of train marshals is that children now have to be accompanied by at least two marshals (one male, one female). New, more detailed, job descriptions were written, and include information about selection criteria (see Appendix A). On their return journeys the children are not matched with the same train marshals.

Referral of children:

Children are recommended to CCHF by statutory and voluntary welfare organisations, including Head Teachers, Social Services Departments, Education Welfare Services, Health Visitors and Doctors.

Recruitment methods:

Recently, CCHF successfully targeted students with an interest in social welfare by placing leaflets and information sheets in colleges.

Information pack:

People interested in volunteering with CCHF are sent an information pack containing a general information sheet, a newsletter, an application form and a Police Check and Social Services clearance form.

Selection of volunteers

Application form:

Potential volunteers complete an application form, which includes the names of two referees, as well as the Police Check and Social Services Clearance form.

Police and Social Services check:

CCHF is a member of VOCS (Voluntary Organisations Consultancy Service) and arranges police checks through them.

References:

Letters are written to the two referees, enclosing the job description, selection criteria and a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Interviews:

Applicants are interviewed for at least one hour by two trained staff or volunteer interviewers. A one-day in house interviewing course has to be attended before qualifying as an interviewer. Interviewers ask questions to get information on the following key indicators:

1. Accountability to the organisation and team work capability
2. Motivation to do the job
3. Understanding of the job
4. Understanding of boundaries
5. Child Protection.

The letter inviting prospective volunteers to the interview also informs them that no reasons will be given if they are not invited to undertake the training (the next stage in the selection process).

Training and placing

Training:

Attendance at a one day training session is compulsory for all marshals. The training is facilitated by a child care professional, together with the staff member in charge of the train marshals. The course covers child protection issues as well as the role, responsibilities and conduct of a train marshal - a role-play is used to explore the latter. A certificate is sent to volunteers who successfully complete the course.

Placement:

After training, volunteers receive an acceptance letter together with a policy document. They are also asked to complete and return an availability

form. Draft schedules are distributed to marshals at a social evening in June, and are confirmed in writing seven days before the first journey takes place.

Supervision

Lead train marshal:

Train marshals are given ongoing supervision and support throughout the day by a lead train marshal, an experienced volunteer who has undertaken extensive training with CCHF.

Whistle blowing:

Train marshals are encouraged to report any inappropriate behaviour they see being made towards the children (like hugging, kissing, swearing or shouting) by their fellow train marshals.

Report:

Each train marshal has to fill out a report at the end of the day.

Questionnaire to children and their parents:

A questionnaire is sent to all children, and to their parents, asking for their feedback on various aspects of the children's holidays.

CASE 2

Contact the Elderly

Characteristics:

Contact the Elderly is a very straight forward programme where volunteers do a clearly defined and uncomplicated task. Clients who need personal care or require physical lifting are not accepted, as this would require volunteers to be trained. Risk within this scheme is relatively limited because most of the activity is undertaken within a group (other than volunteers and clients being alone together in the car), and events are limited to once a month. What risk does exist is minimised through careful selection of team leaders.

Purpose:

On one Sunday afternoon a month, Contact the Elderly volunteers provide companionship for frail, elderly people who live alone.

Background:

The organisation was founded in 1965 and has grown into a national charity with over 160 groups throughout the UK.

Management of Contact The Elderly:

There is a small London office where staff are responsible for the overall co-ordination of the scheme and for central services such as public relations, advertising, registration of volunteers, insurance, newsletter etc. There are regional development officers based around the country with responsibility for supporting group leaders (who are volunteers) or to help new groups to start up.

What volunteers do:

Volunteers either drive an elderly person to join a group for tea once a month, or they invite a group of elderly people to their home once a year.

Profile of volunteers:

Out of an estimated 2200 volunteers, over 500 have been with Contact the Elderly for over 10

years and many of them for over 21 years.

Practices and procedures in managing the project

Recruitment

Job design:

For each of the three volunteer roles (the driver, the host and the group leader) there is an information sheet, one of which is included in Appendix A. The drivers usually collect the same one or two people each month, and are responsible for finding their own replacement from within the drivers group on occasions when they are unable to do it.

Referral of clients:

Elderly people are referred to the scheme by GP's, district nurses, health visitors, Age Concern, relatives as well as self-referrals. The volunteers in charge of first contacting the clients will write to them and make arrangements to call round at a pre-arranged time to tell them more about the group. They also have a checklist that helps them in finding out more about the elderly person. The requirements for an elderly person to become part of the group is that they must be able to walk short distances with no more than an arm to lean on, and that they do not need any personal care or physical lifting. Those who benefit most are people who are virtually house bound, live alone and find great difficulty in getting around unaided.

Recruitment method:

The London office places adverts in Floodlight (a directory of courses and evening classes), The London Evening Standard and The Guardian. They also broadcast community announcements on television, and organise articles in women's journals. On a regional level, advertisements and articles are placed in the local press, open meetings are organised, companies are contacted and information stands put up in shopping centres.

Recruitment message:

The text from Contact The Elderly's press advertisements is as follows:

CONTACT THE ELDERLY

For elderly people who live alone, Sundays can be very lonely.

One Sunday afternoon each month, Contact The Elderly volunteers provide companionship for many frail, elderly people who live alone.

Throughout the UK, small groups of volunteer drivers take elderly people on regular visits to hosts' homes. Groups visit a different home each month throughout the year in the company of friends, old and new.

Can you give a few hours of your time?

Either once a month on a Sunday afternoon to drive an elderly person to join a group for tea.

Or once a year on a Sunday afternoon to invite a group of elderly people to your home.

We offer a simple act of friendship, bringing people of all ages together once a month on a Sunday afternoon

For more information, please ring Freephone 0800 716 543

Selection

Information pack:

Potential volunteers receive a letter from the regional office together with information sheets about the scheme and the role they are interested in. An application form is also enclosed.

Application form:

The application form asks if the applicant has any unspent convictions, and requests the names of two referees. The information from the form is also

used by the head office to arrange insurance for the volunteers, and for the newsletter mailing list.

References:

The London office sends a standard letter and forms to two referees, enclosing a SAE.

Interview & induction:

The group leader will contact the new volunteers and meet with them.

Supervision

The group leader is in charge of organising the drivers and hosts, and for giving them any necessary support and encouragement. Group leaders are advised to aim for six drivers, six helpers, up to 12 elderly people and up to 12 hosts. Group leaders are, in turn, supported by the regional development officers. Each volunteer receives a bi-annual newsletter.

CASE 3

Family Support Group

Characteristics:

This project is very specifically targeted in the work that it does, and volunteers are engaged in a very demanding role. They work alone, often with more than one person. As a result, the project is heavily structured.

Purpose:

The Family Support Group Project provides trained volunteers who give short-term emotional and practical help to families requiring additional support beyond the remit of health and social services.

Background:

The scheme was developed, and is currently managed by, the Kensington and Chelsea Volunteer Bureau. There are plans to enable the project to shortly become independent.

Management of the Family Support Group:

The project is run by a part time co-ordinator. A family social worker acts as an adviser, and participates in interviewing, training sessions and in support group meetings. The co-ordinator is managed by the Director of the Volunteer Bureau.

What volunteers do:

Volunteers provide emotional and practical support on a one-to-one basis, but not in a formal counselling role. Volunteers usually visit families once a week offering practical assistance with the children, general encouragement and help with linking in to other sources of support in the community. The relationship between volunteer and family is time limited, generally up to six months.

Profile of volunteers:

The project's volunteers are currently women from a variety of social and ethnic backgrounds.

Methods of minimising risks:

Risk:

Volunteers can be alone with a parent or child for a substantial amount of time, so there is potential for abuse to take place (whether sexual, emotional or physical).

Means of reducing risk:

- very structured selection, training, monitoring and feedback procedures
- work is clearly defined and a family contract signed by family, volunteer and referring agency
- work with one family is time limited; volunteers are not allowed to continue contact with family after the end of the contract
- volunteers are not allowed to give their personal phone number or to socialise with family members outside of formal volunteering
- volunteer co-ordinator supervises maximum 12 volunteers at any one time

Risk:

A volunteer gives a family bad advice e.g. telling family that housing could be improved.

Means of reducing risk:

- boundaries of work are clearly defined and reviewed, names of agencies that deal with specific issues are available to volunteers.
- Volunteers are trained to encourage families to contact the relevant agencies directly.

Risk:

Breach of confidentiality, such as volunteers talking about clients with their friends, or even in support groups meetings.

Means of reducing risk:

- clearly written guidelines on confidentiality are distributed and reviewed with the volunteers
- families are also given written guidelines on confidentiality
- volunteers can discuss issues about clients at support group meetings, but only in general terms and without using names, addresses or other specific details.

- volunteers are not necessarily informed if a family member is, for example, HIV positive. However HIV issues are discussed under health and safety during training.

Risk:

Volunteers give inadequate supervision to children, especially where there are several children around at the same time.

Means of reducing risk:

- when selecting and matching volunteers consideration is given to the experience of the volunteer in terms of working with children.
- volunteers are advised not to be left alone with children too soon after starting to visit a family.

Risk:

Potential that ex-partner of a single parent could turn up and be violent.

Means of reducing risk:

- volunteer is informed about the situation
- volunteer is advised to be extra vigilant when going out with children and/or parent
- select a volunteer that is able to deal with this risk
- volunteer lets somebody know where they are going and for how long
- all volunteers are given the phone number of a 24 hours duty officer in Social Services

Practices and procedures in managing the volunteer programme

Recruitment

Job design:

A job description and person specification is written up for volunteers (see Appendix A). The co-ordinator meets with each family to determine the specific work to be undertaken. Families receive project guidelines so that they clearly understand the role of the volunteer

Referrals of families:

Referrals are made by Social Services, health

visitors and other voluntary agencies. Some families refer themselves. The co-ordinator visits referring agencies to tell them about the project and advise on which families would be suitable for referral. Referring agencies fill out a referral form.

Methods of recruitment:

Adverts are placed in The Big Issue and The Guardian. Posters are displayed in nurseries, colleges, ethnic community groups, libraries, churches, and social services premises. A significant percentage of volunteers are recruited by the Volunteer Bureau.

Recruitment Message:

"FAMILY BEFRIENDERS"

*Volunteers needed to offer practical and emotional support to families. If you have 2-3 hours a week spare and a friendly, flexible approach we can offer you a rewarding opportunity and professional training.
Call. . ."*

Selection

Registration form:

This is filled in before or during first interview

First Interview (one hour):

This is conducted by the co-ordinator. Volunteers are given a comprehensive induction pack.

Second interview (30-45 mins.):

This is a more formal interview and is conducted by the co-ordinator and the family social worker. This interview includes discussing the volunteer's reactions to some common case scenarios (for example: "a mother asks you to pick up a neighbour's child from the nursery. What would you say?")

References:

A standard letter is sent to two referees, with a SAE enclosed.

Police checks:

The police are asked to check if prospective

volunteers have any criminal convictions. The check is requested via the Kids' Club Network.

Health check:

Applicants are asked during the first interview whether there are any health issues the co-ordinator needs to know about.

Training and Placement

Training:

Group training sessions:

Initial training takes place over three evenings, and is facilitated by the co-ordinator and the family social worker.

Third interview (30 mins.):

After the training, volunteers have a final interview with the two trainers. One of the questions asked is "What aspect of the work would you find most interesting?" The answer to this question is very useful when it comes to matching them with clients.

Matching:

Only after the training and interview has taken place will volunteers be matched to a family. Volunteers are advised at the first interview that it can take up to five months for a suitable family to be matched to them. Volunteers are matched to families on the basis of their specific capabilities and interests, as well as their personality. Before making the final match between volunteer and client, the co-ordinator calls the volunteers to check whether they are happy to take the particular client on. There is no probationary period, but there is a formal review after three months involving the family, the volunteer, the co-ordinator and the referral agency.

Supervision

First meeting with family:

Before meeting the family for the first time, the volunteer meets with the co-ordinator to discuss the work and to sign a volunteer agreement. The

co-ordinator and referral agency are present at the first meeting between the volunteer and the family, and they all sign a 'family contract'. This details the help offered by the volunteer; what it is hoped will be achieved through the volunteer's involvement with the family; when, how often and for how long will the volunteer visit the family.

Phone calls:

Over the first month the co-ordinator calls the volunteer every week to check everything is going well. The co-ordinator also rings the family from time to time.

Monthly meeting:

The volunteer and co-ordinator meet for an hour every month.

Support group meeting:

About every six weeks all of the project's volunteers meet together with the co-ordinator and family social worker for an evening, where they share and review their experiences. The evening usually starts with a game or an icebreaker.

Review after three months:

A review meeting with the co-ordinator, family, volunteer and referring agency takes place after the first three months.

Review after six months:

The same parties meet together just before the end of the six month contract for a final review. After this, the volunteer and family will only meet again a couple of times before ending the relationship. Volunteers are not allowed to contact the family after the end of the contract. In exceptional circumstances, the contract could be extended for another time limited period.

CASE 4

Friends of the Practice in Dorchester

Characteristics:

This scheme takes place in a rural setting, and is a good example of a volunteer programme which is firmly embedded in the wider work of paid professionals. In this case, clients and volunteers are carefully selected and matched, while the ongoing monitoring is conducted in an informal and caring way.

Purpose:

To provide care for GP's patients, not from trained doctors or nurses, but from people living nearby. Volunteers work with Primary Health Care Team to visit, help and befriend clients in their own homes.

Background:

A pilot scheme was set up in 1993 by the Dorset Health Care NHS Trust. A part time co-ordinator was appointed and placed at the Cornwall Road Medical Practice in Dorchester. The scheme was modelled after a similar one which has run successfully in Bournemouth for many years. The pilot in Dorchester was also successful and the project has now been expanded to include all six practices in town, all of which continue to be served by the same part time co-ordinator.

Management of the Friends of the Practice:

The scheme is run by the co-ordinator who, in turn, is managed by the Community and Voluntary Liaison Co-ordinator of Dorset Health Care NHS Trust. The co-ordinator regularly attends practice meetings and is a welcome addition to the practice team.

What volunteers do:

Over 50 volunteers give help to patients by visiting them, keeping them company, walking dogs, preparing meals, providing family support, shopping, running errands, driving to doctor's appointments and giving carers time off. The majority of volunteers are linked up with a practice patient on a long term basis. Volunteers also

provide one-off transport requests (for appointments only).

Profile of the volunteers:

About half of the volunteers are over 50 years old, many of them are also patients of one of the practices.

Practices and procedures in managing the project

Recruitment

Job design:

There is a general description of the volunteers' role in writing. The co-ordinator meets with clients to introduce them to the scheme, ensure that they understand the role of volunteers and to match them to an appropriate volunteer.

Referral of clients:

Clients are referred to the scheme by the GPs or during practice meetings. Patients or their carers are always consulted before a referral is made.

Methods of recruitment:

Leaflets and posters are placed in the surgeries' waiting rooms, as well as in libraries, job centres or volunteer bureaux. Adverts are placed in parish magazines, and press releases are sent to local papers. About 65% of the volunteers are recruited from the surgery waiting room

Selection

Selection procedures follow a policy set down by Dorset Health Care NHS Trust.

Meeting with volunteer:

The co-ordinator usually has an initial meeting with prospective volunteers in their home for about half an hour. She introduces the scheme, and finds out about the volunteers' interests, experience, and outlook on life; their family commitments; availability; and suitability in terms of maintaining confidence, compassion and a non-judgmental attitude.

Application form:

Included in the volunteer application form are some questions about health, as well as a request for the names of two referees. Applicants are also asked to sign the form to confirm their understanding of being bound by the Health And Safety At Work Act, of confidentiality, of not receiving any payment and of their names and addresses being retained on a computer database.

References:

Letters are sent to two referees with a SAE

Police checks:

A check for criminal convictions is undertaken.

Matching

The co-ordinator meets both clients and volunteers, and aims to match them on the basis of the client's needs, the volunteer's skills and interests and both parties' personalities. It is not always possible to make an immediate match and some volunteers have to wait for several weeks before a suitable client is found. On three occasions the matching has not been successful, but the co-ordinator later found out that in each case the volunteer and the client already knew each other.

Once a suitable match is made, both the volunteer and the client are contacted by phone and a date for the first visit is set up. The co-ordinator only informs the volunteer about the health condition of the patient on a need to know basis.

Supervision***First visit:***

The co-ordinator usually accompanies volunteers on their first visit.

Phone calls:

After a few weeks the co-ordinator phones volunteers to find out how they are getting on. Although the co-ordinator does not call clients directly, she does receive feedback from other

practice members who have contact with the client.

Coffee mornings:

Volunteers are invited to a social gathering during the summer and to another at Christmas.

Newsletter:

This is sent to volunteers twice a year.

CASE 5

Invicta Community Care NHS Trust

Adult Mental Health Services - Befriending Scheme

Characteristics:

This is a pioneering project where volunteers befriend people with mental health problems. This may involve the volunteer being alone with a client for substantial periods of time, so risk to volunteers is minimized by:

- not accepting patients with a history of violence
- client screening conducted by a community psychiatric nurse
- volunteers being given easy access to a range of specialists should they need advice or support

On the other hand, risk to clients is minimised through set procedures for screening, training, matching and monitoring volunteers. These are described below.

The volunteers in this programme have a clearly defined role which is distinct from the work of paid staff.

Purpose:

To enhance the quality of life in the community for people experiencing mental health problems by the introduction of trained volunteers who will offer "friendship" and flexible support. The value of the volunteer is in being ordinary. Befriending is not a case of "doing" but more of "being". Professionals are there to deal with therapy and treatment. The aim of the scheme is to build relationships that will prove therapeutic in their own right.

Background:

The Maidstone Scheme is one of four similar pilot projects in England. It is supported by the Department of Health and the National Centre for Volunteering with money and advice for three years. A steering group was set up in 1995 to explore the project's feasibility and develop guidelines for it. Members of the steering group included a number of experts in the field including

the Director of Adult Services, a couple of managers of special care community teams, and the Voluntary Services Manager. The first volunteer applied in February 1996 and was matched with a client six months later. There are currently 10 volunteers in the scheme.

Management of the scheme:

Overall management responsibility for the scheme lies with the Voluntary Services Manager, who is responsible for all volunteer projects within the Maidstone Priority Care NHS Trust. A Community Psychiatric Nurse is linked to the project and leads training sessions, is involved in matching volunteers to clients, and is available to give volunteers professional advice and support.

What volunteers do:

Volunteers meet with clients for social interaction, such as going to the cinema, having a meal, playing card games at home, watching a video etc.

Profile of the volunteers:

Currently all volunteers are employed people, who fit their volunteering around their work hours.

Practices and procedures in managing the project

Recruitment of clients and volunteers

Job design:

The recruitment leaflet contains a general description of the voluntary work. There are no further written job descriptions as the volunteer and client are encouraged to write an informal one together at their first or second meeting. A typical description might read: Tracy will ring Ruth every week on Tuesday to discuss plans to meet.

Referral of clients:

People who are interested in having a befriender are referred by Community Psychiatric Nurses, social services, or perhaps a GP. People with long term mental illness who live alone are targeted. No one with a tendency to violence will be accepted.

Befriending people who were in the hospital but about to go home was not successful, because the clients were still too ill.

Recruitment method:

Multi-purpose leaflets to attract referrers as well as recruit befrienders are placed at GP's and at the local Volunteer Bureau. Companies may be approached in the future as befriending work is suitable for employees, as it can be fitted around office hours.

Selection of volunteers

Interview:

Prospective volunteers meet with the Voluntary Services Manager for about half an hour to talk about the scheme and the applicant's interest in becoming a befriender.

Application form:

This is filled out after the interview. It requires potential volunteers to list any criminal convictions they have, and to give two referees. No police checks are undertaken, and no health questions are asked on the form as there is no 'personal care' involved in the voluntary work.

References:

Referees are sent a standard letter with a stamped addressed envelope enclosed.

Training and matching

Training:

Volunteers attend four consecutive training sessions, which are held one evening a week. One session is led by the Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN), two are led by a volunteer and one by the Voluntary Services Manager (VSM) who attends all sessions.

Matching:

The matching of a volunteer to a client is done by two people - the Community Psychiatric Nurse and the Voluntary Services Manager. The VSM has not met the client at this point. The CPN is

involved, not only for their knowledge of the client, but also because he has met the volunteer during the training programme. On some occasions, the person who has referred the client to the scheme will also meet the volunteer. Getting the right match between client and volunteer is crucial to the success of the scheme.

Trial Period:

There is a trial period of one month.

Supervision

First meeting:

The first meeting between the befriender and the client takes is held at a place of the client's choosing. The Voluntary Services Manager and the referrer are present as well. This meeting is intended to be short and sweet! At the end of the meeting arrangements are made for the volunteer to contact the client. Volunteers are advised to give their telephone number only after having met a few times. Volunteers are encouraged to talk about mutual expectations, particularly regarding time and frequency of contact, and to write these expectations down in case the client tries to be manipulative.

Contact card:

Each volunteer is given a card (the size of a credit card) that lists all the names and telephone numbers of people that the volunteer may contact, including the client, the key worker, the GP, the Community Psychiatric Nurse, the client's contact person and the Voluntary Services Manager. Volunteers are advised on which person to turn to depending on the matter they need advice or help on.

Expense form:

The expense forms sent in by the volunteers, not only allow for reimbursement of expenses, but also help to keep the Voluntary Services Manager updated on the activities the volunteer and client are undertaking together.

Phone calls:

The Voluntary Services Manager keeps monthly contact with the volunteers, or more frequently if needed. The VSM also calls the client occasionally as well as getting feedback from the keyworker.

Social events:

About every three months the befrienders are invited to a cheese and wine get together to share their experiences. The befrienders also get invited to social events for all volunteers working with INVICTA Community Care Trust.

Review meetings:

Review meetings take place about every six months with the client, the befriended, the referrer as well as the VSM.

Grievance/complaint/disciplinary procedures:

The same procedures are used for volunteers as with staff. If there is a dispute or misunderstanding the Voluntary Services Manager needs to be consulted at all stages.

Insurance:

Volunteers are covered by the organisation's employer liability insurance.

Section 6: Appendices

Appendix A

Sample person specifications and voluntary work outlines

Children's Country Holiday Fund*

Role of Train Marshall

Purpose:

As part of a team, escort children to and from their country holiday destination by train, within the policies, codes of practice and quality standards of CCHF.

Support structure:

We recognise that helping to escort children can be a very demanding and responsible job, requiring people with skills and personal qualities to work directly with children. We therefore aim to ensure that you are properly supported and receive appropriate training to build on your skills and experience.

You will be supported in your role as a Train Marshal by an experienced Lead Train Marshall (LTM) and the Travel Administrator.

The Lead Train Marshall is an experienced volunteer who has undertaken extensive training with CCHF. The LTM will provide you with ongoing supervision and support throughout each Travel Day. Whatever difficulties you have, you will be able to discuss and share them with the LTM. You will also work as a member of a support team.

To assist you in your role, we expect you to carry out CCHF's child care policies, codes of practice and procedures. These have been developed to help our volunteers achieve a high standard of practice and deliver a quality service to children.

Training:

We offer a range of training opportunities to support you in the role of Train Marshall. This includes working for CCHF as part of a team, accountability to CCHF for implementing the Charity's child care policies, communicating with

children and families, codes of practice and procedures, child protection awareness, promoting a service which is anti-discriminatory, administrative processes and recruitment and selection of volunteers.

*Reproduced with the kind permission of the Children's Country Holiday Fund

Children's Country Holidays Fund

Train Marshal - selection criteria (person specification)

Expertise and knowledge

1. Can understand, accept and comply with CCHF's child care policy and codes of practice and procedures.
2. An understanding of and sensitivity to the impact on families and children from deprivation and discrimination.

Direct work with children

3. Understanding of your role as a CCHF volunteer and how this affects the relationship between you and CCHF children.
4. Able to establish and maintain appropriate boundaries when working with children.
5. Able to communicate with children and their parents from different social, race and ethnic groups.

Interaction with other parties

6. Able to communicate and negotiate with other individuals in the interest of CCHF children.

Teamwork

7. Able to work as part of a team and be accountable to a Lead Train Marshal and CCHF for carrying out the tasks of a Train Marshal to the standard required by CCHF.

Task management

8. Good organisational skills, able to prioritise work and meet deadlines.
9. Punctuality. Understand the importance of being at a meeting point at the set time.
10. Effective verbal and written communication skills.

11. A commitment to attendance at training programmes.

Personal qualities

12. Can demonstrate the motivation and suitability to work with children.

Children's Country Holiday Fund

Train Marshall - Job description

1. On arrival at the station, report to the Lead Train Marshall (LTM) for instruction on travel arrangements.
2. To take responsibility for tasks delegated by the LTM.
3. To escort children and ensure the safety, welfare and security of all children at all times.
4. Under the guidance of the LTM, talk to the parents and the children at the station, assuring them that the child will be travelling safely.
5. The LTM will be co-ordinating the journey plans, liaise with the LTM and only follow instructions given by the LTM.
6. Communicate with the children during the journey.
7. On arrival back at the London station, ensure that all the children and their luggage are taken back to the station organiser's desk before the children are handed over to their parents/guardians.
8. To contribute to CCHF's commitment to offer enjoyable and safe holidays for children, which reflect their needs and are provided in a non-discriminatory way.
9. To undertake training appropriate to the role of a Train Marshall.
10. Have knowledge and understanding of CCHF's child care policies and codes of practice, including grievance and complaints procedures.

Contact the Elderly*

Information Sheet 3

Volunteer as a driver

If you would like to enjoy the company of others on a Sunday afternoon, why not join Contact the Elderly as a volunteer driver. This involves picking up 1-2 elderly people from their home one Sunday afternoon a month and taking them to a host family for afternoon tea.

Groups usually arrive at the host's home around 3.30pm and the return journey usually starts between 5.30- 6.00pm. A different host is visited each month but most are within three quarters of an hour's drive from where the elderly people live.

Contact the Elderly groups have 3-6 regular drivers. Occasionally relief drivers help out. Each driver usually collects the same person/people each month. We hope that over time you have the opportunity to get to know them well and your fellow volunteers.

A clean driving licence and safety belts are required. We do not pay petrol expenses. If you have a 2 door car you may be asked to collect one elderly person, because many of our elderly guests would be unable to climb into the back seat. You may find it helpful to have a volunteer helper to accompany you. You are welcome to ask a friend or partner to join you as part of the team.

Groups usually meet on the same Sunday each month. Your Group leader may give you dates in advance. S/he will contact you before the outing to confirm where you will be visiting for tea. S/he is also the person you should contact if you are unable to help on a specific outing - please try to give as much notice as possible, so that other arrangements can be made. S/he will ask you to confirm arrangements for each outing with your elderly person/people, and it is helpful if you can then telephone your Group Leader to let him/her

know that those you are due to collect will definitely be present. The numbers can then be confirmed with the host so that she knows how many people to cater for.

We hope that through your contact with one of our groups you will find enjoyment and enrichment. We find that just a few hours can make all the difference to everyone involved.

*Reproduced with the kind permission of Contact the Elderly

Volunteer job description and person specification

Family Support Group, Kensington and Chelsea Volunteer Bureau*

Key activities:

- to undertake work with families as set out in a family contract signed by family, volunteer and referring agency.
- to attend introductory and on-going training
- to attend monthly supervision and to participate in 6 weekly support groups
- to liaise with the Co-ordinator and where applicable with the referrer.

Accountability

- to the Kensington and Chelsea Volunteer Bureau through the FSG Co-ordinator

Support for volunteers

- support will be provided by the Co-ordinator, the FSG Family Consultant and the FSG support group and in some cases by other professionals already involved with the family

Person specification

In order to provide support to families, it is essential that volunteers:

- can demonstrate personal warmth, common sense and maturity
- will be flexible in responding to a variety of family situations and are able to get on well with both adults and children
- understand and adhere to FSG boundaries in their relationships with families
- have an appreciation of different values and lifestyles

- are able to work within a developing equal opportunities policy

- adhere to the Bureau's strict policy on confidentiality

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Appendix B

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

Sample monitoring form

Your monitoring form should always say why you require this information. If you don't, people may become suspicious and concerned about what you may do with the information. Explain that the statistical evidence from your monitoring form will be used to combat discrimination and help you in your Equal Opportunities procedures. A sample form may look like this:

1. Disability

Do you consider yourself to have a disability? Yes/No

Are you registered disabled? Yes/No

2. Gender

Are You: Male ☐ Female ☐

3. Race

Do you consider yourself to be: Black ☐ White ☐ Other ☐

What is your ethnic origin? African ☐ Caribbean ☐ Asian ☐

Indian ☐ British/European ☐

South East Asian ☐ Other ☐ (please state).....

4. Sexuality

How do you regard yourself? Heterosexual ☐ Gay ☐ Lesbian ☐

Bisexual ☐ Other ☐ (please state)

Rather not say ☐

5. Where did you hear about us?

.....

6. Was there anything in the information we have sent you (eg. application form) which you feel discriminated against you in any way? (please state)

.....

Thank you for completing this form.

Appendix C

Reference Request

Kensington and Chelsea Volunteer Bureau Family Support Group

Private and Confidential

Reference request

To:

Re:

1. Personal information

a) How long have you known this person?

b) In what capacity

c) In there any particular kind of work that you believe might cause the applicant physical or emotional distress?

2. Confidentiality

a) Is this person discreet?

b) Are they aware that some information about people is sensitive and private and are they able to respect that?

3. Commitment

Will this person complete any task they have agreed to undertake?

4. Trustworthiness

Can this person be trusted with the property of individuals or the Kensington and Chelsea Volunteer Bureau?

5. Any other comments?

signed

Date

If you would like to telephone me for any reason regarding this application please do not hesitate to do so on 0000 000 0000

(signature)

Family Support Group Co-ordinator

Sample letter asking for references

Kensington and Chelsea Volunteer Bureau

Reference for (name)

(name) has offered to become a volunteer with our Family Support Group and supplied your name as a referee.

The Family Support Group offers friendly support and some practical assistance to families with children who are going through a difficult period. The volunteer work varies according to the needs of individual families, but volunteers are always providing a listening ear and encouragement and sometimes helping with the children or taking them out.

As Family Support volunteers are likely to be working with vulnerable people on a one to one basis, they must be trustworthy, reliable and stable.

Your cooperation in completing and returning the enclosed confidential reference as soon as possible would be much appreciated. If in addition you would like to talk to me you can telephone me on the above number in complete confidence.

Yours sincerely

(name)

Family Support Group Co-ordinator

Newcastle City Health Trust

Voluntary Services

Volunteer reference form

Reference for

Name

Address

How long have you known this person?

--

In what relationship (ie friend or employer)?

--

Is he/she honest and reliable?

--

To the best of your knowledge has this person got a criminal record?

--

What special qualities do you consider this person to have to make them suitable for work with the Newcastle City NHS Trust?

--

Please use the space below for any further comments you wish to make

--

Signed Date

Newcastle City Health NHS Trust

Dear (name)

Re: (name)

The above named person has approached St Nicholas hospital and offered to help us in a voluntary capacity. Your name was given as someone who could provide a reference.

The qualities required by our volunteers include a caring attitude, honesty, patience, understanding and reliability. In providing a reference, could you please take these points into consideration?

Please complete the attached form and return it to me in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope.

Thank you so much for your cooperation in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Voluntary Services Coordinator

encs.

Appendix D

Checklist: What to include in your induction/training programme?

About your organisation:

- purpose
- structure (e.g. organisational chart)
- history and values
- future plans
- your services to clients/users

About your volunteer programme:

- what volunteers are doing
- general policies, procedures and benefits that apply to volunteers

Introduction to people:

- meeting some resource people, supervisor or co-ordinator, peers and other volunteers

About the voluntary work:

- specific roles, responsibilities and expectations regarding the work - including what boundaries the volunteers should not cross and what they should do in difficult or unexpected situations
- compulsory guidelines or procedures that volunteers must adhere to, such as health and safety, confidentiality, codes of conduct or record-keeping.
- specifics about your particular client group, and what unique or important
- information your new volunteers need (which might include addressing any fears or uneasiness that volunteers have)
- specific skills needed to work with the client group
- tools and resources available to support the volunteers in fulfilling their role
- working conditions / environment
- methods of reporting back and communicating with supervisor / co-ordinator
- how you will give feedback to volunteers on their performance

Appendix E

Volunteer Training Programme

Invicta Community Care NHS Trust* Adult Mental Health Services - Befriending Scheme

Volunteers Training Preparation Course

Aims:

1. To enable volunteers to gain understanding and confidence in the role of befriending.
2. To provide participants with a basic understanding of 'what is mental Health/mental ill health?'

Objectives:

1. To examine the distinction between mental health and mental ill health
2. To assist participants in recognising that the client is a member of the community who is experiencing difficulties which may prevent full participation in and enjoyment of life.
3. To give participants opportunities to examine their attitudes to those with mental health difficulties.
4. Following completion of the course to allow for the positive application of what has been achieved in an individual befriending role.

Structure:

The content of the preparation course covers input from a representative from a Community Mental Health Team, Social Services, Voluntary Services and an experienced volunteer befriended. Training sessions will take place in Priority House, room 301 on the following dates from 7.00pm to 9.00pm.

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 24 Sept | Mental health/services, safety, where to go with problems, where to get information |
| 1st Oct. | Communication skills, verbal and non-verbal. |
| 8th Oct. | Active listening, boundaries. |
| 15th Oct. | Volunteering - the role of the befriender, rights and responsibilities of volunteers |

The course is designed to be informative in a relaxed atmosphere and to be mutually beneficial to the group.

Refreshments will be served.

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Kensington and Chelsea Volunteer Bureau*

Family Support Group Training Programme

Session 1:

Introductions and ground rules. Aims for training.
Why volunteer?
The Family Support Group - aims and objectives,
the role of the volunteer, the referral process.
Thinking about boundaries.

Session 2:

Introductions
Confidentiality
What kind of support do we offer?
Thinking about families and family needs.

Session 3:

Introductions
Looking at values. Equal opportunities and
challenging stereotypes
The implications of volunteering with the FSG
Real life scenarios
Discussion of additional training needs.

Additional meetings (not obligatory)

Disability Awareness Training session

Social event, to include a panel of volunteers
talking about their work.

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Appendix F

Complaints procedure

Kensington and Chelsea Volunteer Bureau*

A Purpose of the procedure

1. The procedure is to enable people using services to be heard when they feel things have gone wrong.
2. It is important for Kensington and Chelsea Volunteer Bureau to be aware of areas of dissatisfaction and to correct any short comings.

B Principles

1. People making complaints have the right to be treated equally and not to suffer discrimination.
2. People making a complaint are entitled to seek external assistance to advocate on their behalf.
3. Complaints are to be treated seriously and dealt with in good time.
4. Complaints are to be treated with an open mind, and will be investigated without prejudice.
5. People making complaints have the right to confidentiality. If requested, names will not be disclosed in investigating complaints. However, anonymous complaints will not be investigated.
6. Abusive and offensive complaints are not classed as 'complaints' and will not be accepted as complaints.
7. The overall level of complaints is to be recorded and monitored.

C The procedure

1. If you have a complaint about any service which you wish to be handled formally, you should write to:

(NAME)
(ADDRESS)
(POSTCODE)

2. The Director will decide from the nature of the complaint, who is the most appropriate person to deal with your complaint. Your complaint will be acknowledged within forty eight hours.

3. Your complaint will be investigated and you will receive a reply from the appropriate person within fourteen days.

4. If you are not satisfied with the reply, write to the Chair of the Management Committee within fourteen days.

5. The Chair of the Management Committee will write to you within fourteen days. The Chair of the Management Committee will inform the Management Committee about your complaint at the next meeting of the Management Committee. You will receive their reply within fourteen days of that meeting. This reply will be final and no further correspondence will be entered into about your complaint.

6. Formal complaints about the Director should be addressed to the Chair of the Management Committee, at the address given. These will be dealt with in the same way as under 5, above.

7. Formal complaints about the Director should be addressed to the Chair of the Management Committee. Formal complaints about the Chair of the Management Committee should be addressed to the Vice Chair.

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Appendix G

Disciplinary Procedures

Kensington and Chelsea Volunteer Bureau*

i. Misconduct

Misconduct may be constituted by the following:

- a. Bad time-keeping or attendance
- b. Insubordination
- c. Persistent failure to perform work to the standards acceptable to the organisation
- d. Disregard of safety or fire procedures
- e. Conduct likely to bring the organisation into disrepute
- f. Any action or behaviour deemed by the organisation to constitute misconduct.

ii. Gross misconduct

Gross misconduct may be constituted by the following:

- a. Any act or omission with intent to defraud the organisation
- b. Gross insubordination or violent behaviour towards the organisation's employees, volunteers or visitors.
- c. Unauthorised possession of the organisation's or other employees or volunteer's property
- d. Any breach of confidentiality
- e. Drunkenness or drinking alcohol up to eight hours before driving, or whilst in charge of a vehicle belonging to the organisation, or non-compliance with the drink/driving laws.
- f. Possession of illegal drugs while on the organisation's business.
- g. Any action or behaviour deemed by the organisation to constitute gross misconduct.

iii. Disciplinary codes

The disciplinary code is seen primarily as a way of improving performance and conduct rather than a punitive measure.

- a. If after investigation/interview, your behaviour is found to be unsatisfactory, a verbal warning will

be given in the first instance of misconduct. This will be given by your immediate superior and will be recorded on your personal file for the following 12 months. It will be removed following satisfactory review of job performance.

b. A written warning will be given if no improvement has been made within a reasonable amount of time after the verbal warning or in the first instance, if the misconduct is serious. It will detail ways in which standards are not being reached and stating the period of time which is being given to enable necessary improvement to take place. This will be given by your immediate superior and recorded on your personal file for the following 12 months. It will be removed following a satisfactory review of job performance.

c. A final written warning will be given if improvement has not taken place within the stated time. It will detail the improvements required, the space of time given in which to achieve this and inform that failure will result in dismissal. This warning will be given by the next level of management in the presence of your immediate superior, and recorded on your personal file for the following 12 months. It will be removed following a satisfactory review of job performance.

d. At all stages of the disciplinary procedure, excluding verbal warning, you are entitled to be accompanied by a friend or colleague and to have a written copy of the warning issued. At all stages of the procedure you are entitled to state your case and if dissatisfied, use the appeals procedure outlined below. The volunteer coordinator will attend all interviews at which written warnings may be issued, and will be responsible for recording the disciplinary action taken on your personal file, and for ensuring that job performance is reviewed within the following 12 months. Similarly, the volunteer coordinator will attend all appeal interviews (see below.)

e. Disciplinary action may begin at any stage of this procedure, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct or of the history of warnings of a similar nature. Suspension may be considered in order to allow full investigation of a case.

f. In a case of gross misconduct instant dismissal will result.

iv. Appeals procedure

a. If you are dissatisfied with any disciplinary action against you, an appeal in writing should be made to the person who conducted the interview within 3 working days. An appeals interview will be arranged for you, within 7 days, with the next level of management. In all instances the decision of an appeals interview will be final, subject to a final written warning or dismissal being confirmed by the Director.

b. In cases where a final written warning or dismissal is issued or upheld by the Director, you may appeal to the Management Committee within three days of the Director's decision. The Management Committee will appoint two representatives to hear the appeal, whose decision will be final. The appeal will be arranged within two weeks.

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Kensington and Chelsea Volunteer Bureau

Appendix H

Guidelines for responding to a report of abuse from a child

Do's and Don't's

If a young person tells you that they are being/ have been abused:

Do

- Treat any allegation extremely seriously and act at all times towards the young person as if you believe their allegation.
- Tell the young person they were right to tell you.
- Acknowledge that the young person has been courageous to tell you.
- Reassure the young person that they are not to blame.
- Be honest about your own position, whom you will have to tell and why.
- Keep the young person fully informed about what you are doing/ what's happening at every stage.
- Give the young person information about other confidential sources of help (phonelines etc.)

Don't

- Don't make promises you can't keep
- Don't interrogate the young person with questions. It isn't our role to carry out an investigation - that is up to Social Services or the Police.
- Don't cast doubt on what the young person tells you. It has taken a great deal of courage for them to tell.

- Don't say anything which may make the young person feel responsible for the abuse (eg 'why haven't you told anyone before?')

- Don't communicate feelings of anger without stating that it is the abuser you feel angry towards; the young person may think you are angry with them.

- Don't panic. When confronted with the reality of abuse there is often a feeling of needed to 'act immediately'. Action taken too hastily can be counter-productive. Tell your designated worker.

Source: Child protection procedures, policy and guidelines for Sefton Youth Service.

Safe and Alert is an awareness
raising campaign run by the
National Centre for
Volunteering and funded by
the Department of Health.



**Promoting, developing,
supporting volunteering in
England**

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£7.50 October 1997