

VOLUNTARY ACTION SHETLAND - SHETLAND BEFRIENDING SCHEME

CODE OF CONDUCT: VOLUNTEERS

In line with Voluntary Action Shetland's Health and Safety Policy, the role of the volunteer is vital to the success of the scheme and to the support that can be provided to the service users. It is for this reason that we have high expectations of those who will become volunteers for the scheme.

All volunteers are required to provide support within the policies and procedures of the scheme and to promote the principles and values by which we deliver the service. Failure to do so may result in volunteers being asked to leave.

This code of conduct outlines the policies and procedures relating to:

- Commitment
- Expenses for Volunteers
- Payment of Expenses
- Handling of Service Users Money
- Accountability
- Holidays
- Sickness
- Gifts
- Insurance
- Volunteers using their car whilst volunteering
- Grievance Procedure
- Code of Conduct for Volunteers

Commitment

The volunteers will be required to give a minimum commitment of 6 months to the scheme once they have been matched and the match will be closely monitored by scheme staff (see monitoring and evaluation).

Expenses for Volunteers

A budget has been set for volunteers to use whilst out meeting with the service user to cover the costs of activities and travel. It will be the responsibility of the volunteer to stay within that limit in order to prevent them from being out of pocket.

Should it be the case where there is a specialist activity the service user would really like to take part in, and it would benefit the relationship, extra funding may be made available from the budget. The volunteer should contact scheme staff to obtain confirmation of additional funds before carrying out the specialist activity.

Payment of Expenses

Expenses are to be claimed monthly on the monitoring form and sent to the scheme each month. Receipts are to be included for all expenses in order to ensure a full claim. In order to have a true costing of expenditure (for example, when the service makes future funding applications), it is essential that the scheme has this information.

If a volunteer is in doubt about a particular expenditure, they must query it with scheme staff at the main office.

It is important for volunteers to remember that the emphasis of befriending is about developing a relationship rather than spending money. However, part of befriending could well be to introduce the service user to new activities and then obviously expenditure becomes a necessity.

Guidance will be provided to all new volunteers at initial training about how to complete the monthly monitoring form to record meetings and claim for expenses.

Handling of Service Users Money

The volunteer must **not** be responsible for any of the service users money, ATM cards or card pin numbers whilst out with the service user. Should there be a request for the volunteer to take care of any wallets, purses, cards, etc from either the service user, or the parents/guardians (if applicable) the volunteer must refuse and leave such belongings in the care of the service user at all times. Such a request is to be recorded by the volunteer in their monthly monitoring forms.

Accountability

Each volunteer is introduced to a service user through the scheme. Each party therefore needs to be accountable: the volunteer befriends to the scheme, the scheme itself and the Project Co-ordinator to the line manager, the line manager to the management board, and the management board to its funders. All have a responsibility to provide the best possible service to the service users. It is therefore essential that a monthly monitoring form is completed and returned to the office by each matched volunteer.

Holidays

Volunteers should let the service user and if applicable their family and/or legal representative know if they will miss meetings due to holidays. Volunteers should also inform the scheme when they are away on holiday.

Sickness

If a volunteer is unable to make a meeting, the service user and if applicable their family and/or legal representative must be informed directly as soon as the volunteer is aware of being unable to attend. This should be at least **4 hours**, where possible, before the meeting is scheduled to begin.

Gifts

It is not good practice for a volunteer to encourage the giving and receiving of gifts from the service user. It is not advisable for volunteers to purchase gifts for their match either, as it could be counterproductive. Rather than buying gifts, doing a special activity is more appropriate.

Insurance

All accredited volunteers with Shetland Befriending Scheme are covered by wh&r McCartney Insurance brokers for the following:

- Employers liability, public and products liability
- Professional liability, management liability, entity defence

Volunteers are to report any incidents that occur whilst undertaking befriending activities. Volunteers must contact the office as soon as possible after the incident with all relevant information (e.g. time, place, circumstances, names and address of any witness).

Using their Car whilst Volunteering

All volunteers are required to phone their car insurance to let them know they are undertaking voluntary work that will require the use of their car and that they will be taking a passenger out. Dependant on the area the volunteer is supporting it will either be a young person aged between 7-15years or an adult aged 16+ years who will be the passenger in the car.

If premiums are affected, volunteers are to contact the Project Co-ordinator to discuss further.

Please note that the Shetland Befriending Scheme cannot be held responsible should the volunteer's car be damaged whilst they are out befriending. Volunteers must ensure they have suitable insurance cover in the event of an accident or any damage to their vehicle.

Grievance Procedure

Where a volunteer wishes to bring a grievance against an individual they should direct this grievance to the Project Co-ordinator.

The Co-ordinator will then investigate the grievance through discussions with the relevant parties.

The Project Co-ordinator at the earliest opportunity will inform the individual who is the subject of a grievance procedure of this.

The Co-ordinator will then make a decision on the outcome of the grievance, which will be sent to all involved parties in writing. If the Co-ordinator cannot make a decision they will seek the advice from Executive Officer of Voluntary Action Shetland.

In the event of a grievance being taken out against a member of scheme staff, this should be addressed to the Executive Officer of Voluntary Action Shetland in the first instance and dealt with in line with their Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures.

The Executive officer of VAS reserves the right to make the final decision.

Code of Conduct for Volunteers

Whilst matched to a service user, we expect volunteers to:

- Protect the rights and promote the interests of the service user
- Respect their right to make decisions for themselves
- Be honest and trustworthy, being a positive role model in their lives
- Be reliable and dependable – ensuring that any arrangements made are honoured but in the event that this is not possible, to explain why
- Adhere to the policies and procedures of the Shetland Befriending Scheme
- Volunteers will not smoke, vape or use alcohol or illicit drugs whilst they are on outings with the service user
- Ensure that they protect the confidentiality of the service user within the requirements of the Scheme's confidentiality policy
- Ensure that when they are with the service user and taking part in activities the Scheme's risk assessment policies are followed and raising with scheme staff any additional risks identified
- Ensure that they do not abuse, neglect or harm the service user

- Ensure that they do not invite the service user into their home without prior permission of the scheme staff
- Ensure that they do not exploit the service user in any way
- Ensure that they do not lend money or give gifts to the service user or borrow money or accept gifts from them
- Avoid developing an intimate or inappropriate relationship with the service user
- Report to scheme staff any accidents or incidents that occur during a meeting with the service user
- Report immediately to the scheme staff any concerns regarding the match with the service user or anything that might compromise their ability to carry out their role in a competent and safe manner
- Inform scheme staff if they wish to end their match with the service user and to do this in a planned way to ensure that both parties can be supported
- Take part in regular support and supervision sessions with the scheme staff

Everyone has to be accountable for the roles that people have within the scheme and for promoting the best service possible.

Failure to comply with the approach outlined in this document may result in action being taken under the inappropriate conduct procedure.

The scheme wishes to develop a positive and supportive relationship with all those involved and will value the input and views of volunteers working with the Scheme.

As volunteers have one to one contact with a service user they are in a unique position to recommend changes in the way that the service functions to ensure that the scheme provides the best possible opportunities for the service user and volunteers alike. The scheme will value volunteer's views on any aspect of the service and wish to promote an open and accessible service to all.