



The FAN Charity Policies

Volunteer Policy

Introduction

This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers and is relevant to staff, volunteers and trustees within the FAN Charity. It aims to create a common understanding and to clarify roles and responsibilities to ensure the highest standards are maintained in relation to the management of volunteers. The volunteer handbook and related policies give further details about the support and procedures in place for volunteers.

Our commitments

We recognise volunteers as an integral part of the FAN Charity. Their contribution supports our mission and strategic aims, and complements the role of paid staff. We aim to encourage and support volunteer involvement to ensure that volunteering benefits the FAN Charity, its participants and the volunteers themselves. Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers. Volunteers will not be used to replace staff. We are committed to offering a flexible range of opportunities and to encouraging a diversity of people to volunteer with us, including those from under-represented groups such as youth, people with a disability, older people and people from black and minority ethnic communities.

We recognise that there are costs associated with volunteer involvement and will seek to ensure adequate financial and staffing resources are available for the development and support of volunteering. We recognise that people have a right to participate in the life of their communities through volunteering and can contribute in many ways. We recognise our responsibility to organise volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

Who is a volunteer? Volunteers are individuals who undertake activity on behalf of our organisation, unpaid and of their own free choice.

The Welsh Government Volunteering Policy(2015) defines volunteering as

- activity which is undertaken freely, by choice
- is undertaken to be of public/ community benefit
- is not undertaken for financial gain

Trustees are volunteers with responsibility for governance of the FAN Charity.

Facilitators are volunteers who facilitate FAN Groups – FAN Group Facilitators are the focus of this policy

In addition to facilitating weekly FAN Groups, they may be involved:

- in community engagement to raise awareness of our work
- in one off events and promotional activities

Volunteers are valued for:

- bringing additional skills and new perspectives to the FAN Charity
- enabling us to be more responsive and flexible in our approach
- championing our cause within the wider community
- enhancing the quality of our work and of participant experience
- promoting the wellbeing of users of services, local communities and themselves.

Roles and responsibilities

A designated staff member, The FAN Manager has responsibility for the development and co-ordination of voluntary activity within the FAN Charity, including volunteering policies and procedures and the welfare of volunteers.

All volunteers will have a designated staff member for guidance, support and supervision. Staff responsibilities for volunteers will be explicitly referred to in their job/role description.

The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, for the volunteer to attend or to undertake particular tasks or for the FAN Charity to provide continuing opportunities for voluntary involvement, provision of training or benefits. However, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged –both of what the FAN Charity expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the FAN Charity.

The FAN Charity expects volunteers:

- to be reliable and honest
- to carry out tasks within agreed guidelines
- to uphold the FAN Charity's values and comply with organisational policies
- to make the most of opportunities given, eg training
 - to contribute positively to the aims of the FAN Charity and avoid bringing the FAN Charity into disrepute

Volunteers can expect:

- to have clear information about what is and is not expected of them
- to receive adequate support and training

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- to be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment
- to be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner
- to have opportunities for personal development
- to be recognised and appreciated
- to be able to say 'no' to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable
- to know what to do if something goes wrong

Recruitment and selection

Equal opportunities principles will be adhered to in recruiting volunteers. Opportunities will be widely promoted, in English and in Welsh, so as to attract interest from different sectors of the community. Positive action to target recruitment may be used where appropriate. Online application is encouraged but non-digital methods of application are also available. Information will be made available to those enquiring about volunteering, including written role descriptions which set out the nature and purpose of the volunteering role, key tasks, skills required and benefits. A risk assessment will be undertaken on all volunteer roles. Recruitment will usually involve an application form, informal interview and the taking of references. Where applicants are not able to be placed in their preferred role, they will be provided with feedback and given the opportunity to discuss alternative volunteering roles, or signposted to the local volunteer centre or the www.volunteering-wales.net website.

Induction and training.

Volunteers will be given induction and training appropriate to the specific tasks to be undertaken.

Support and supervision

Volunteers will be offered support and guidance as appropriate and this is discussed during induction. Arrangements vary according to the volunteer and the role undertaken, and may include telephone support, in person or at group meetings.

Recognition

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, to share their views and opinions with the FAN Charity's wider staff and trustees at Facilitator Get Togethers.

Formal recognition of the contribution of volunteers is expressed in a range of ways including annual reports, website articles, social media, award celebrations and certificates.

Dealing with problems

The FAN Charity aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. It seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly. We will attempt to deal with any problems informally and at the earliest opportunity. All volunteers will have a named person to whom they can turn in the case of any difficulty. Volunteers will be made aware of the FAN Charity's Settling Differences, Dealing with Complaints Policy and how to use it. Where informal resolution is not possible, this will be adhered to.

Expenses

Volunteers will be given clear information about what expenses can be claimed and how to make a claim.

Moving on

When volunteers move on from volunteering with us they will be asked to provide feedback on the volunteering experience by way of an exit questionnaire. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss their responses to the questionnaire more fully. Volunteers who have remained with the FAN Charity for at least 3 months will have the right to request a reference. Volunteers will be supported to move on to other options.