Volunteering Policy and Procedures

Printed copies must not be considered the definitive version

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1. **Purpose and Scope**
   In February 2008 the Patients and Quality Division of the Scottish Government Health Department circulated revised Guidance to Health Boards on Volunteering. 

2. **Policy Aims**
   - To be clear about what constitutes volunteering in NHS Dumfries and Galloway and to ensure that all volunteers are treated fairly and consistently whilst having access to appropriate support and assistance and to ensure effective leadership for volunteering is in place.

   - To plan for continuous improvement in volunteering management and to establish and demonstrate effective review of local strategy whilst creating a positive and consistent environment for volunteering.

   - To develop a robust infrastructure for volunteering by working in partnership with organisations that have relevant expertise, e.g. Local Volunteer Centres and other relevant bodies to identify how sharing ideas and people can add value to the process.

   - To measure the impact of volunteering and sharing learning.

   Maintaining the Investing in Volunteers Standard demands that the whole organisation values, manages and supports volunteers and their contributions.
3. Responsibilities and Organisational Arrangements
In this organisation the nominated Director with responsibility for Volunteering is the Executive Nurse Director.

There is a long history of volunteer involvement in NHS Dumfries and Galloway and volunteers contribute in a variety of ways - as volunteers recruited directly or indirectly through voluntary organisations that provide help within hospitals or in the community or, as volunteers in specific voluntary sector projects that the board part funds and/or supports.

The Volunteering Policy and accompanying procedures are intended primarily for the use of NHS Dumfries and Galloway employees and volunteers. A commitment to the principles contained within them would also be expected from voluntary organisations whose volunteers provide help within NHS Dumfries and Galloway. However, NHS Dumfries and Galloway respects the independence of these voluntary organisations and recognises that they are responsible for the management of volunteers working on specific projects, as agreed within NHS Dumfries and Galloway's management.

Other services involving volunteers and organisations commissioned by NHS Dumfries and Galloway to carry out work, which involves volunteers, should have a volunteering policy, which adopts similar commitments to those outlined in this policy and procedures statement.

3.1 Definition
A volunteer is:
“A person who gives freely and willingly of their time to help improve the health and wellbeing of patients, users, (and their families and carers) of the NHS in Scotland”

*Strategy for Volunteering in the NHS in Scotland CEL 10 (2008)*

3.2 Principles
In issuing this Volunteering Policy, the organisation:
• Formally acknowledges and supports the role of volunteers
• Sets out the principles governing the involvement of volunteers and provide a set of procedures to ensure good working practice
• Defines the roles, rights and responsibilities of the organisation and of its volunteers
• Encourages and enables, rather than limits, the involvement of volunteers

The Volunteering Policy and accompanying procedures are intended primarily for use by NHS Dumfries and Galloway employees and NHS Dumfries and Galloway managed volunteers. A commitment to the principles contained in it is also expected from voluntary organisations whose volunteers provide help within the organisation. However, the organisation respects the independence of these voluntary organisations and recognises that they will remain responsible for the management of volunteers working on specific NHS projects, as agreed with the organisation's management.
4. **Monitoring**  
NHS Dumfries and Galloway is committed to an ongoing process of monitoring and evaluation of this policy in consultation with all relevant parties.

5. **Equality and Diversity**  
NHS Dumfries and Galloway is committed to equality and diversity in respect of the nine protected characteristics defined by age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion/belief, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, and sexual orientation. A rapid equality impact assessment has been carried out on this policy.

6. **DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET**

1. **Document Status**

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4. Associated documents

*E.g. national legislation, guidance or standards*

5. Action Plan for Implementation

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APPENDIX 1

The Role and Value of Volunteering
NHS Dumfries and Galloway recognises, values and supports the important part volunteers play in the life and work of the organisation. Volunteers are individuals who choose freely to commit their time and energy to support the work of the organisation without receiving any financial benefit beyond reimbursement of out of pocket expenses. Volunteers aim to benefit patients, users of service, carers, the organisation and the wider community in which they live.
The scope for volunteer involvement is wide and includes work carried out by volunteers in both NHS Dumfries and Galloway premises and in the community. Volunteering can contribute to raising individual self-esteem and self-confidence as well as to regeneration of local communities and to society as a whole. Wherever they are working, the organisation will ensure that volunteers are involved in a relevant and appropriate manner.

Relationship with NHS Dumfries and Galloway Employees
The organisation is committed to ensuring that:
• The standards and conduct of volunteers should be of the same high quality as that of employees.
• Steps are taken to ensure that staff at all levels, are clear about the role of volunteers and to foster good working relationships between staff and volunteers.
• Training and support is provided for those working alongside and managing volunteers.
• Volunteers are not asked to take on tasks formerly undertaken by employees or to work in ways which facilitate a decrease in paid employment.
• The work of Volunteers complements the work of employed staff and will not be used as a substitute for paid work.
• Volunteers are not asked to do the work of paid staff in times of industrial action, however they may continue with their regular duties.

Funding
NHS Dumfries and Galloway recognises that whilst developing effective volunteering relationships is an investment with significant benefits, there are many associated costs including staff time. The organisation is committed to identifying and covering the costs of involving volunteers – e.g. reimbursing volunteer’s out of pocket expenses, arranging volunteer’s recruitment, selection, training and insurance, and staff costs, including, where appropriate, designated posts to manage volunteers.

Recruitment and Selection
NHS Dumfries and Galloway will:
• Recruit volunteers from all sections of the community and in line with equal opportunities legislation.
• Make every reasonable effort to find placements for anyone that offers their time and energy. Where there is no suitable placement available, the volunteer will be informed of the reasons and directed, where applicable, to another agency such as the Local Volunteer Centre.
• Place volunteers in accordance with appropriate volunteer recruitment and selection procedures, however, volunteer placements will be defined by the needs of the organisation and its service users.
• Undertake appropriate Disclosure checking (including Protection for Vulnerable Groups (PVG) where necessary) for all volunteers in line with organisational policy.

Information and Training
NHS Dumfries and Galloway will:
• Ensure that volunteers receive the same general induction as employees. Specific induction to individual volunteering placements will include information relating to the area of healthcare with which they will interface.
• Provide volunteers with training in the specific tasks to be undertaken, and opportunities for learning and development.
• Ensure that volunteers are given the opportunity to contribute to organisational change and team development where appropriate and that procedures are in place to enable the views of volunteers to be represented.

Support and Supervision
Volunteers will be assigned a named contact person for supervision and support, and will be given clearly specified lines of accountability.

Expenses and Insurance
NHS Dumfries and Galloway will ensure that:
• There is a clear, consistent and accessible system for claiming out-of-pocket expenses.
• Volunteers are adequately covered by insurance whilst they carry out their agreed duties both on the organisation’s premises and in the community.
• Volunteers are given information on other legislation and policies e.g. Health and Safety, which may affect them and they will be treated in the same way as staff for liability purposes.

References
On the basis of their voluntary work, volunteers will have the right to request a reference from their named contact person.

Expectations on Volunteers
Volunteers are expected to:
• Participate in induction sessions and other core training dependent on the placement area. This will include consideration of the elements of mandatory training which may or may not be required to be undertaken.
• Comply with all NHS Dumfries and Galloway policies and procedures, particularly in relation to confidentiality, patient safety, health and safety and disclosure checks.
• Undertake their volunteering at agreed times.
• Inform the relevant member of staff if they are unable to attend, wherever possible in advance.
• Give advance warning if they are unable to continue volunteering.
• Raise any issues of concern relating to their voluntary work with the contact person.
• Respect the confidentiality of service users, staff and other volunteers and follow the organisations’ Code of Positive Behaviour.
• Be honest and reliable.
Encouraging Employer-supported Volunteering
NHS Dumfries and Galloway will support its employees that are involved in volunteering and will:
• Increase employees’ awareness of the opportunities for volunteering through advertising in news bulletins, pre-retirement courses etc.
• Nominate a staff member to support, promote and encourage the involvement of employees in volunteering.
• Acknowledge the value of employees’ volunteering activity, and the development opportunity it represents.

Maintain a relationship with the local volunteering sector
A strategic approach to the development of volunteering is taken and the work of the Local Volunteer Centre and Volunteer Action Dumfries and Galloway or equivalent agency in providing any direction in the volunteering sector will be recognised.
APPENDIX 2

Procedures for Involving Volunteers

1. **Introduction**
   1.1 These procedures are intended for use along with the policy statement. They give further details on recommended good practice for the involvement of volunteers within NHS Dumfries and Galloway.

2. **Preparation**
   2.1 Prior to recruiting volunteers, consultation and discussion should take place within teams, with employees and staff side organisations to ensure that there is a genuine benefit to patients in having a volunteer within a particular area and to develop a clear description of the role required. A contact person should be identified and the staff time and expenses determined to train, support and reimburse volunteers. The recruitment and selection procedures outlined below are intended to encourage rather than limit volunteering in the organisation and to ensure that volunteering selection procedures are in line with Equal Opportunities and Health and Safety policies, Disclosure checking and other good practice - to ensure the protection of patients, service users, paid staff and volunteers.

3. **Recruitment**
   3.1 In order to reach a wide section of the community, recruitment will be by a variety of means e.g. the local Volunteer Centre or other relevant agency, adverts in the local press, poster campaigns, leaflets, contact with schools, colleges, universities, churches, community groups by word of mouth. NHS Dumfries and Galloway will regularly review the ways in which potential volunteers can offer their help.
   3.2 NHS Dumfries and Galloway has an Equal Opportunities policy and will not discriminate on the grounds of race, disability, age, religion, gender or sexual orientation.
   3.3 NHS Dumfries and Galloway is committed to involving volunteers from diverse backgrounds. Through regular monitoring of our Equal Opportunities Policy, the Board will ensure that volunteers from all sections of the community are welcomed.
   3.4 People interested in voluntary work will be invited for an informal talk with their contact person and given an information pack and application form.

4. **Selection**
   4.1 All volunteers must complete a standard NHS Dumfries and Galloway application form. Two written references are required and will be followed up.
   4.2 As volunteers may be working with vulnerable people, they are asked to provide information on their application form about any criminal convictions that they may have.
   4.3 Disclosure or PVG Scotland will be required for volunteers. This applies to all volunteers working with children and to those who have substantial unsupervised access to patients on a sustained or regular basis.
   4.4 Prospective volunteers will be informed at interview if there are any specific health requirements necessary for the voluntary work.
4.5 All information received during the selection process is dealt with in strict confidence and will not necessarily prevent the person from becoming a volunteer.
4.6 Selection of a volunteer/volunteers will be the responsibility of the team leader/service manager of the area of the organisation in which the volunteering will be carried out. This will be supported by the Volunteering Service Co-ordinator.
4.7 Prospective volunteers who offer their services will have their offers dealt with as quickly as possible. Where there is no suitable placement available, the volunteer will be informed of the reasons and where applicable referred to another agency such as the Local Volunteer Centre.

5. **Records**
5.1 Records will be kept on volunteers including the application form, references, placement details, correspondence and any other relevant information. These will be kept for the purposes of security and Health and Safety. They will be kept secure with strictly limited access, for which the procedures will be explained to all volunteers during their induction period.

6. **Induction**
6.1 Organisational Induction sessions, as for employed staff, should be provided for all new volunteers and should include:
- Orientation to the area in which placed and general housekeeping, using the Local Induction checklist as a basis for induction
- The role of volunteers and the boundaries of that role including Code of Positive Behaviour & Healthy Understanding
- ID Badges
- The appropriate procedure to take in the event of an emergency or adverse incident
- The need for confidentiality
- System for payment of out of pocket expenses
- Health and Safety Policy Statement (and other relevant policies e.g. smoking, Drug and Alcohol)
- Appropriate Mandatory Training
- A named contact person
- Arrangements for training, support and supervision

7. **Placement**
7.1 Once a suitable volunteering placement has been identified, details about the frequency and length of commitment and nature of the voluntary activity should be determined and an established trial period agreed.
7.2 NHS Dumfries and Galloway reserves the right to ask volunteers to discontinue their volunteering without notice and will give the reason in writing if requested.

8. **Resolving Issues**
8.1 It is hoped that volunteers and NHS Dumfries and Galloway staff will work cooperatively and that all parties will benefit from any work undertaken.
8.2 Sometimes, however, difficulties may occur which cannot be resolved through normal support channels. In order to deal with such situations, both parties will be able to use the organisation’s Problem Solving Guidance and Procedures for Volunteers (appendices 4 & 5). The aim of which is to assist both parties to find a mutually acceptable way of overcoming difficulties.
9. **Support and Supervision**
9.1 Regular support/supervision should be available to each volunteer. The type and level of support will depend on the needs of the volunteer and the area of work they are involved in. A written record of support/supervision agreements should be kept within the volunteers’ personal file.
9.2 Each volunteer will have clearly identified contact person who is responsible for the day-to-day management and guidance of the volunteer and who will be able to offer advice, support and feedback on a regular basis. The staff of the ward or department in which the volunteer is placed will also be expected to provide support and supervision as appropriate.
9.3 Opportunities will also be provided through meetings, training and social events, to meet other volunteers for mutual support and to discuss issues of common interest.
9.4 Volunteering is a rapidly developing area of social and community involvement. Where there are designated posts and staff involved with volunteers, the organisation recognises the importance of networking with other volunteer managers and keeping abreast of good practice.

10. **Expenses**
10.1 All previously agreed out-of-pocket expenses, including subsistence and travel, can be claimed on production of receipts. The rate of reimbursement will be agreed in advance and will be reviewed periodically. A mileage allowance, within the tax-free rate, is paid for volunteers using their own cars, on completion of a Travel Expenses Claim Form.

11. **Volunteer Driving**
11.1 The following points must be checked before a volunteer uses his/her own car in the course of their voluntary work.
- Does the volunteer hold a valid driving licence for the particular vehicle being used? An annual check of the driving licence should be undertaken to ensure patient safety.
- Is such a use permissible within the terms of the volunteer’s motor insurance policy?
11.2 To ensure volunteers are covered for insurance, it is essential that their insurance company is aware that they intend to drive in a voluntary capacity.
NHS Dumfries and Galloway will note the insurance expiry date for its records and will ask the insurance company to send the details back to the organisation to ensure up-to-date records.

12. **Insurance**
NHS Dumfries and Galloway ensures that volunteers have appropriate cover in terms of Public Liability. The organisation will make volunteers aware of this cover.

13. **Monitoring and Evaluation**
13.1 Involvement of volunteers within NHS Dumfries and Galloway should be consistently monitored and evaluated with reference to this policy.

14. **Recognising the Contribution of Volunteers**
14.1 NHS Dumfries and Galloway will hold a “thank you” event for Volunteers annually, to recognise the contribution they make to the service.
Appendix 3

Dumfries and Galloway NHS Board

Problem Solving Guidance

Although volunteers are not covered by employment legislation and are unable to use employment legislation for unfair dismissal, it is bad practice to dismiss a volunteer without adequate reasons and without following due process...

The use of the terms “disciplinary” and “grievance” are more appropriate to employment situations and should be avoided in policies and procedures relating to volunteers. However, having clear guidance on what is and is not acceptable is very important to protect everyone.

Having a clear problem solving process allows volunteer managers to deal with issues and to take action in a timely way and allows volunteer managers to make sure that volunteers are treated fairly. The problem solving process should be covered with volunteers as part of the induction process along with any other relevant policies.

There are three areas where a problem solving process can be applied:

- Capability e.g. a volunteer’s ability to undertake the role
- Performance e.g. how well they are performing the role
- Conduct e.g. their behaviour when undertaking their volunteering

Taking action to deal with issues with a volunteer should not automatically mean formal procedures and dismissal (excluding cases of gross misconduct) and there are alternatives, that should be used prior to any formal procedures.

Informal Procedures

Informal procedures aim to resolve behaviour or performance that gives cause for concern as soon as possible. In some cases if the issue is more serious, for example gross misconduct, then the volunteer manager should immediately move to formal procedures.

Regular support and supervision sessions are key to consistent management and communication with volunteers. They provide a good opportunity for discussion around performance or conduct including any specific concerns/complaints raised by a volunteer or about the volunteer.

Volunteers may be unaware that their behaviours or conduct are giving cause for concern, particularly if guidance or policy has changed since they joined the organisation.
It can be very difficult to give volunteers negative feedback or raise issues, but a volunteer cannot be expected to improve or change the way they work if an issue hasn’t been brought to their attention.

When an issue arises, the volunteer manager should meet with the volunteer as soon as possible to establish the facts and agree with the volunteer an action plan including a timeframe for any improvements and follow up.

Additional support such as more training and supervision along with the opportunity to change their placement, if appropriate, should be discussed and written records of all discussions kept on file.

**Formal Procedures**

If it is not possible to resolve issues using informal procedures then the volunteer manager should use should use the organisation’s Problem Solving Procedures for Volunteering and any other associated policies which are relevant.

**Dismissal**

Asking a volunteer to leave can be one of the most challenging things that a volunteer manager has to do. Dismissal should occur where there is no satisfactory improvement in a volunteer’s performance following verbal and written warnings. The volunteer should be informed as soon as possible of the reasons for dismissal, the date on which their volunteering will terminate and their right of appeal.

If a volunteer has to leave as a result of these proceedings, the decision should be conveyed quickly during a face to face meeting if practical and followed up in writing and other members of staff and volunteers should be made aware of the situation as appropriate.

A volunteer may be dismissed with notice or without notice. Dismissal without notice is referred to as a summary dismissal and is immediate. Summary dismissal is the most serious disciplinary action that can be taken and is reserved for cases of what is termed “gross” misconduct.

**Alternative Options to Dismissal**

There are alternative options other than to dismiss a volunteer. Alternative options should be discussed that would still allow the volunteer manager to address a decline in a volunteer’s performance but also to try and find a way for the volunteer to continue to volunteer with the organisation.
Appendix 4
Dumfries and Galloway NHS Board

Problem Solving Procedures for Volunteers

NHS Dumfries and Galloway wants all volunteers to enjoy volunteering with us and feel supported. Volunteers are encouraged to raise any issues or difficulties they may encounter with their volunteer manager.

When a complaint or a problem is raised with the volunteer manager about a volunteer that cannot be sorted out using an informal approach, a more formal route to resolving issues could then be needed.

There are three areas where a problem solving process could be applied:
- Capability e.g. a volunteer’s ability to undertake the role
- Performance e.g. how well they are performing the role
- Conduct e.g. their behaviour when undertaking their volunteering

When an issue arises, the volunteer manager should meet with the volunteer to discuss the matter as soon as possible.
After discussions, an agreement should be made between the volunteer and the volunteer manager about what the next steps should be about resolving the issue. This should be in the form of a written ‘action plan’ and should include timescales and outcomes agreed by both.

Following the meeting, the volunteer manager may decide that no further action is required or an informal warning is sufficient.

There may be a decision that, if all informal processes have been exhausted and the issues have not been resolved that a formal problem solving procedure should begin.

Warnings
The different stages in warnings represent an increase in seriousness and aim to provide clarity to NHS Dumfries and Galloway and the volunteer on the actions they both need to take to resolve the issues and the next steps in the process.

Recorded Verbal Warning
If, despite informal discussions, the volunteer’s conduct or performance does not meet acceptable standards, they could be issued with a formal verbal warning by the volunteer manager. The volunteer should be informed of the reason for the warning, and that they have a right of appeal. A brief note of the warning should be placed on file but disregarded after 6 months, subject to satisfactory conduct and/or performance.

First written warning
This should state the reason for the warning and if there is no improvement within a defined/agreed time, a final written warning would be issued. A copy should be kept on file and disregarded after 12 months, subject to satisfactory conduct and/or performance.

**Final written warning**
Where the conduct or performance of the volunteer remains unsatisfactory, or the misconduct is sufficiently serious to necessitate only a single written warning, then a final written warning should be issued, making it clear that any recurrence or other serious misconduct may result in dismissal. A copy of the final written should be kept on file but disregarded after 24 months, subject to satisfactory conduct and/or performance.

**Dismissal**
If the outcome of a complaint/problem is that a volunteer should be dismissed from NHS Dumfries and Galloway, a meeting with the volunteer and volunteer manager should be arranged and the decision conveyed; this should then be followed up in writing. NHS Dumfries and Galloway staff members and volunteers with whom the volunteer worked should also be told.

On very rare occasions a volunteer may be dismissed with notice or without notice. Dismissal without notice is referred to as a summary dismissal and is immediate, without notice. Summary dismissal is the most serious disciplinary action that can be taken by NHS Dumfries and Galloway and is reserved for cases of what is termed “gross” misconduct.

**Gross Misconduct**
Any of the following types of behaviour would normally lead to summary dismissal from NHS Dumfries and Galloway and volunteer managers should follow this guidance.

If a volunteer is accused of an act of gross misconduct, the volunteer manager may ask the volunteer to withdraw temporarily from volunteering whilst there is an investigation depending on the nature of their volunteering. If, on completion of the investigation, the volunteer manager concludes that gross misconduct has occurred the volunteer will be dismissed with immediate effect and informed by letter. If it is concluded that gross misconduct has not taken place then the volunteer manager will issue the volunteer with a warning if this is appropriate.

- Wilful misconduct or deliberate failure to comply with NHS Dumfries and Galloway policies, procedures, regulations or practices such that the safety of the volunteer, third parties or other volunteers is jeopardised:
- Theft, fraud, deliberate falsification of records, deceit or other dishonesty equivalent to theft:
- Demanding, accepting or offering financial or other inducements either from/to other volunteers or any third party or staff member:
- Actual or threatened assault upon any fellow volunteer or other third party:
- Wilful disclosure of any confidential information relating to NHS Dumfries and Galloway to a third party:
• Wilful damage to and/or misuse of NHS Dumfries and Galloway’s property or premises, or gross negligence resulting in damage or loss of property to NHS Dumfries and Galloway:
• Serious incapability through alcohol or being under the influence of illegal drugs:
• Serious negligence which causes unacceptable loss, damage or injury.