



## Document Control

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## **1.0 POLICY STATEMENT:**

Sunbeam House Services (SHS) recognises that in order to achieve our goals we need to involve volunteers in our organisation. As an organisation working in the voluntary and community sector it is essential that we present a model of good practice in volunteer management.

We regard volunteers as a valuable resource and encourage them to get involved at all levels of the organisation and within all appropriate activities. We aim to train, support and supervise our volunteers to the best of our abilities, and to act quickly and fairly if difficulties arise.

The relationship between the volunteer, staff and services users must be on the basis of respect and equality and in a manner which promotes independence.

## **2.0 PURPOSE**

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on all aspects of volunteering with SHS. It does not constitute a binding contract. It supplements other SHS policies and procedures, the volunteer handbook as well as our mission statement and our value base.

## **3.0 SCOPE**

These procedures apply to all volunteers who undertake tasks as a volunteer within SHS.

The Community Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for overseeing that this policy is implemented efficiently and effectively. All SHS employees are expected to facilitate and assist this process.

## **4.0 VOLUNTEER CATEGORIES**

### **4.1 GENERAL VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers may have specific skills that they wish to share with our service users and/or organisation. Sunbeam House Services seeks to involve volunteers by creating “**Volunteer Requirements**” across all of our locations and then resourcing to find suitable volunteers to fill these requirements. It is best practice within SHS that all volunteers are issued with a “**Role Description**” that will accurately encompass the volunteer’s responsibilities and duties, timeframe and supports. Central to the role description is the understanding that all volunteers carry out agreed duties on the basis of dignity and respect and equality and in a manner which promotes independence for all SHS service users.

In addition to this, a “**Volunteer Agreement**” is signed upon application. This agreement is binding in good faith only.

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**4.2 THIRD LEVEL STUDENT AND TRANSITION YEAR PLACEMENT VOLUNTEERS**

Sunbeam House Services welcome all student placement requests. The HR Department co ordinate the application of all student placement requests.

**4.3 EMPLOYER SUPPORTED VOLUNTEERS**

Employer Supported Volunteers are individuals or groups of volunteers from our corporate partners or community groups or organisations such like third level institutions, who offer their time and services to provide learning opportunities and engage in collaborative activities with our organisation and service users.

**4.4 FRIENDS IN DEED BEFRIENDING VOLUNTEERS**

A unique aspect of volunteering in SHS is our befriending service **“Friends In Deed”**. This is our specialist befriending service established in 2004, with the aim to match potential volunteers with a service user in SHS of similar interests, age, location and hobbies. This is aimed at creating sustained friendships and promoting community participation and inclusion and to make a real difference in a person’s life. The volunteer coordinator in SHS facilitates and oversees this process. Please note that there is a specific individual **“Role Description”** for **“Friends in Deed”** in SHS which compliments this policy.

**4.5 REQUEST FOR VOLUNTEER SUPPORT**

Location/ Departmental managers and staff are encouraged to fill in the **“Request for volunteer assistance”** form, as this document is the main avenue to request volunteer involvement and forms the basis of creating a volunteer role description, it is very important in resourcing the right volunteer for the right SHS location. Please ensure that the primary contact person for the volunteer role is correct to assist in this process and any additional information about the role or person specification is included.

**4.6 VOLUNTEER INDUCTION/HANDOVER TO LOCATIONS AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

After a volunteer has been placed in a role, it is understood that the volunteer coordinator after initially establishing the supports will begin to step away as the primary point of contact for the volunteer. Usually 3 informal visits take place but this can be extended if necessary. After that, the location/department Manager /Keyworker or nominated volunteer supervisor at the SHS location will be the main point of contact for the volunteer in terms of the day to day volunteer activities they are involved in. The Volunteer Co-ordinator is always available for support, should any serious issues arise. However, the volunteer coordinator will actively be involved in training and support of the volunteer on an on-going basis.

**5.0 GENERAL PROVISIONS**

**5.1 ELIGIBILITY**

Sunbeam House Services will consider applications from individuals to become a volunteer. Individuals must, however, be able to demonstrate a commitment to the aims of the organisation and will only be placed if their needs as volunteers match

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the needs of the organisation. They must also satisfy our application & safeguarding and protection requirements in terms of references of character and Garda Vetting. No person who has a conflict of interest with any aspect of the organisation will be accepted as a volunteer.

**5.2 RELATIONSHIPS WITH SHS EMPLOYEES**

Volunteers are appointed to enhance the capacity of SHS employees, not as a substitute for them. Clear roles are outlined to differentiate between SHS employees and volunteers and to foster mutually beneficial and complementary relationships.

**5.3 WORKING CONDITIONS**

Volunteers are treated as full members of the SHS team as far as possible. Volunteers are provided with appropriate work sites and have access to the space, equipment and facilities necessary to volunteer effectively and comfortably. Volunteers will have access to appropriate information to enable a volunteer to carry out their agreed functions within the organisation. This at times may be limited due to the nature of the sensitive person based services that we provide.

**5.4 VOLUNTEER CONTACT TIMES**

Times of volunteering are negotiated between the location/department Manager, Community Volunteer Coordinator and the volunteer and are as flexible as the tasks allow. Voluntary time commitment is never expected to match that of SHS employees working time.

**5.5 UNSCHEDULED ABSENCES**

Unscheduled absences can create organisational problems. When expecting to be absent, volunteers should inform the relevant SHS employee and/or community volunteer co-ordinator as soon as possible, so that alternative arrangements can be made.

**5.6 CODE OF CONDUCT, STANDARDS AND BEHAVIOUR**

Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a manner that abides by the policies and procedures of the organisation and adhere to its ethos and values ( information available in volunteer induction pack). ([Hyper Link to Volunteer Handbook here](#))

**5.7 REPRESENTATION OF SUNBEAM HOUSE SERVICES**

Volunteers must seek prior approval from the community volunteer coordinator in conjunction with the Managing Director of SHS before undertaking anything that might directly or indirectly affect the organisation. This includes, but is not limited to, providing statements/comments to media, joint initiatives with other bodies, and agreements involving contractual or financial obligations.

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**5.8 CONFIDENTIALITY**

Sunbeam House Services respects the volunteer’s right to privacy and confidentiality. In turn, volunteers are responsible for maintaining full confidentiality of all privileged information to which they are exposed while volunteering with SHS.

**5.9 RECORDS**

A system of records is maintained on all volunteers, including dates and times of service, duties performed, volunteer reviews, references received, Garda Vetting etc. Volunteer records are accorded the same confidentiality as employee records and stored in secure locations in accordance with Data Protection provisions.

**5.10 SERVICE AT THE DISCRETION OF SUNBEAM HOUSE SERVICES**

Any voluntary service is at the discretion of Sunbeam House Services. Sunbeam House Services may, at any time, and for whatever reason, decide to terminate a volunteer’s relationship with the organisation. Similarly, volunteers may at any time, and for whatever reason, decide to terminate their relationships with Sunbeam House Services. Notice of such decisions should be communicated at the earliest opportunity.

**6.0 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES:**

**6.1 VOLUNTEER ROLE DESCRIPTIONS AND AGREEMENTS**

Volunteers require a clear and accurate description of the tasks and responsibilities they are expected to undertake within SHS. Prior to any volunteer assignment or resourcing effort, a role description must be developed for each voluntary opportunity. This must include a title of the volunteering role, starting and finishing dates (if applicable), hours and place of work, name of supervisor and tasks to be undertaken. If appropriate, a brief “**Person Specification**” may also be drawn up. This can outline personal qualities, skills and experience required to fill the volunteer requirement. The role description may be amended in joint agreement with the volunteer and community volunteer coordinator. A copy of the final “**Volunteer Role Description**” must be given to the volunteer before commencing their volunteer duties in SHS, as it will be used in supervision and support sessions. Role descriptions must define a time limit (no longer than one year) for voluntary involvement, after which time they are reviewed, and updated, if appropriate. The role description is vital in identifying clear boundaries between volunteers and employees and ensures that a volunteer does not go beyond their agreed role or scope.

**6.2 VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT**

In addition to a role description, there must also be a “**Volunteer Agreement**” in place between the volunteer and Sunbeam House Services. This is part of the application process and is not considered a contract of any description and it is binding in good faith only. This covers issues like probation (3 months), support reviews, suitability, confidentiality and allows for the Role Description to change in time or for the volunteer’s involvement to cease if the need for volunteer involvement changes. The volunteer agreement also insures that volunteers are performing their duties in line with the policies and ethos and values of SHS.

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### **6.3 VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES REVIEW**

Both the Role Description and Volunteer Agreement can be updated and changed to reflect both the level of volunteer involvement and the variety of duties being performed. Both of these documents are prepared in collaboration with the volunteer and will state that volunteers establish and maintain relationships with service users that are based on dignity, respect and equality and that promote their independence.

### **6.4 VOLUNTEER APPLICATIONS**

Volunteers are also sought on a pro-active basis by Sunbeam House Services using publicity avenues that are suitable for the roles that need to be filled. Potential volunteers may also apply speculatively or come via the volunteer placement service provided by the local Volunteer Centre, or other such services. Volunteers may also come forward via the various forums we have set up in SHS for our Family and Friends and Staff teams respectively. Volunteers are recruited in accordance with Sunbeam House Services' equal opportunities policy. All volunteers are required to complete an application form and return it to the community volunteer coordinator. All returned applications are then processed by the volunteer coordinator. If a Volunteer is moving from one volunteering role to another within SHS it is not necessary that they complete the application process again however a meeting will be scheduled with the volunteer.

### **3.3 INTERVIEWS**

If necessary, applications are short listed and suitable candidates are invited to attend an interview meeting with the community volunteer coordinator to ascertain their interest in and suitability for the role. Written records of all interview meetings are retained on volunteers file. Where possible, a location /Departmental manager or SHS delegated employee may also interview the potential volunteer. All unsuccessful candidates are thanked for applying and encouraged to reapply for other volunteering opportunities, either current or in the future.

### **3.4 SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS**

SHS are responsible for taking appropriate actions to safeguard and protect vulnerable adults that avail of our services. Volunteers are required to provide a minimum of two nominated referees as part of the application process. The address and telephone number of referees must be provided and the e mail address where possible. Volunteers are always informed in advance of the intention to make these checks. If they refuse permission and cannot provide an acceptable reason, they will not be placed.

### **6.5 DECLARATION OF HEALTH – MEDICAL CERTIFICATION**

If the role requires it, health checks may also be undertaken. In line with health and safety legislation, volunteers need to fully declare and make SHS aware of any medical/health conditions that they have and any prescribed medication that might

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affect their ability to perform their volunteering duties. It must be clear that this is in no way a barrier to getting involved with SHS as a volunteer.

Any potential volunteer who indicates that they are under the care of a physician for either physical or psychological treatment may be asked to present a certificate from the physician as to their ability to satisfactorily and safely perform their volunteer duties. Volunteers under a course of treatment which might affect their volunteer work will not be accepted without written verification of suitability from their physician.

Any volunteer who, after acceptance and assignment of a voluntary role then enters a course of treatment which might adversely impact upon the performance of their volunteer duties should consult with the volunteer coordinator to ensure they have notified and informed SHS of their circumstances.

#### **6.6 INITIAL GARDA VETTING & RE-VETTING**

Garda vetting is also a legal requirement when volunteering within SHS and volunteers will be asked to complete an application of same. Having Garda vetting from another voluntary organisation or registered charity in Ireland does not exclude a volunteer from having to go through this process again. This is best practise for engaging in any activity through a service like SHS which supports vulnerable adults.

Garda vetting will only cover the Republic and Northern Ireland. Volunteers who have spent time living or working overseas will be required to obtain police clearance from the local police authority of where they previously resided. In the case of volunteers applying to SHS from non-English speaking countries, they will have to arrange for this to be transcribed into English at their own expense.

If a volunteer is moving from one voluntary role to another in SHS and they have been involved with SHS as a volunteer for 5 years, they will be re-vetted and will have to complete a new application for the Garda Vetting Unit. Similarly, if a former staff member wishes to get involved with SHS in a voluntary capacity, they will also be asked to resubmit an application to the Garda Central Vetting Unit via Sunbeam House Services.

Family and friends of service users who wish to get involved in volunteering with SHS will also be asked to complete an application to the Garda Vetting Unit. Once again this is best practise within SHS and is all aimed at establishing the necessary safeguards for working with vulnerable adults.

No volunteer will be placed in any SHS location until Garda Vetting has returned and agreed for placement by the location manager or Senior manager. In the case of volunteers engaging in activities with a service user in an unsupervised role, this will only be approved with the consent of the Senior Manager and once all necessary risk factors have been assessed, documented and deemed to be acceptable. ([Hyper Link to full SHS Policy on Garda Vetting](#)).

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#### **6.7 PHOTOGRAPHIC IDENTIFICATION**

Volunteers will be asked to produce photographic evidence of their true identity for validation purposes. Passport or Irish driver's license will only suffice. This will be copied and stored in compliance with Data Protection.

#### **6.8 APPOINTMENT**

Appointments are made only after the role description and volunteer agreement has been agreed, all necessary checks have proved acceptable and all necessary risk factors have been addressed. No placements are made unless the requirements of the volunteer and the volunteer's supervisor (usually the Manager of that location) can be met. The relevant Senior Services Manager (SSM) and Human Resources Manager will have the final say on the appointment of any volunteers.

Where family or friends of service users are being placed in voluntary roles, it is best practise that they be placed in separate locations to the service users that they are related to. However, appeals for this will be dealt with on a case by case basis and the SSM will have the final decision on such a placement.

#### **6.9 PROBATION**

All placements are subject to an initial trial period of three month. At the end of this period, the community volunteer coordinator and the relevant staff members (Keyworker/CSM) meet with the volunteer to discuss the volunteer's suitability for their role. At this point, volunteers may continue in their current role, be reassigned to a more suitable role, or be asked to leave and where possible re-directed to the local volunteer centre for further reassignment.

### **7.0 TRAINING AND SUPPORT:**

#### **7.1 INDUCTION**

All volunteers receive induction training when they begin volunteering with Sunbeam House Services. This consists of a general introduction to the organisation, as well as a specific orientation to the location where they are to be based and on the purposes and requirements of their volunteering role.

#### **7.2 VOLUNTEER ROLE TRAINING AND SUPPORT**

Volunteers receive initial and on-going training and support to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their tasks well. The training must be appropriate for the demands of the position and the capabilities of the volunteer. Existing and newly developed training programmes that are offered to SHS employees will also be offered to volunteers where it is deemed relevant and/or necessary to their role as a volunteer within SHS. It is the responsibility of the volunteer coordinator to keep records of training and support sessions both attended and requested by volunteers. If a volunteer strongly feels they require training in a particular area, they will be supported by SHS to have their training needs met if it is deemed necessary and practical.

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## **8.0 SUPERVISION:**

### **8.1 LINES OF COMMUNICATION/OPEN DIALOGUE**

Lines of communication/open dialogue should operate in both directions and should exist formally and informally. Volunteers must have access to all appropriate information, memos, materials and meetings relevant to their assignments. Volunteers must be consulted on all decisions that would substantially affect their volunteering conditions and agreements.

### **8.2 SUPERVISORS**

Each volunteer must have a clearly identified location based supervisor who is responsible for the day-to-day management of that volunteer. All SHS employees will receive mentoring and guidance on how to involve volunteers effectively in the work of the organisation. The Community Volunteer Coordinator will also offer all SHS volunteers supervision when required and will act in an advisory capacity to all staff acting as volunteer supervisors.

### **8.3 SUPERVISION SESSIONS**

Volunteers receive regular constructive feedback of their volunteer work, based on their role descriptions. Evaluation review sessions take place at least twice yearly between the volunteer and his or her supervisor and the volunteer coordinator. These review the performance of the volunteer, suggest any changes, seek suggestions from the volunteer on means of enhancing the volunteer's relationship with SHS, convey appreciation and recognition of positive contributions made to the volunteer and ascertain the continued interest of the volunteer in serving in his or her role. The sessions also serve as an opportunity to plan future tasks.

### **8.4 CORRECTIVE ACTION**

If appropriate, corrective action may be taken following evaluation review sessions. Examples include the organisation of training for an identified training need, the reassignment of a volunteer, or cessation of a volunteer relationship with the organisation.

### **8.5 CESSATION OF THE VOLUNTEER RELATIONSHIP WITH SHS**

Volunteers who do not adhere to the organisation's policies, ethos and values or who fail to perform their volunteer assignments satisfactorily as per their "**Role Description**" and "**Volunteer Agreement**" may be subject to cessation of volunteer agreement. No volunteer's involvement will be terminated in writing until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible termination with their supervisor. Grounds for termination include, but are not limited to, the following: gross misconduct, being under the influence of intoxicants (drugs, alcohol, prescribed drugs), theft, misuse of company equipment and materials, abuse of clients and co-workers, breaches of confidentiality and failure to perform duties in a manner that promotes dignity, respect, equality and independence.

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#### **8.6 CONCERNS AND GRIEVANCES**

If volunteers are not satisfied that issues relating to their volunteering are being handled appropriately, they are entitled to have their concerns reviewed by Sunbeam House Services. The community volunteer coordinator will discuss the issue as soon as is practical after receiving a written complaint, and take appropriate action. The Human Resources Manager makes the ultimate decision. If Volunteers are not satisfied that issues raised have been dealt with effectively by the Community Volunteer Coordinator or if they have a grievance regarding their Community Volunteer Coordinator they are entitled to deal directly with the Human Resources Manager.

#### **8.7 EXIT INTERVIEWS**

Whenever possible, exit interviews are held with any volunteers who are leaving the organisation, either because they have reached the end of their project, or are leaving for some other reason. Interviews should ascertain why the volunteer is leaving, how they found the volunteering experience and what suggestions they offer to improve the way the organisation operates.

### **9.0 VOLUNTEER SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION:**

#### **9.1 SUPPORT**

The community volunteer coordinator endeavours to provide the support necessary to encourage and empower volunteers to make a meaningful contribution and gain significant benefits from their volunteering. Support forms part of the regular supervision sessions and gives volunteers a safe setting in which to express themselves and discuss how they feel about volunteering. The community volunteer coordinator will always try to be available to volunteers who require support in other areas that are affecting their performance. Where a volunteer is operating solely in a specific location a key person at that location will be nominated as the support contact person for that volunteer so as to deal with day to day issues that may arise.

#### **9.2 VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION**

Volunteers provide a unique and valued service to Sunbeam House Services, the benefits of which are difficult to quantify. It is essential that their efforts are recognised and rewarded. Sunbeam House Services staff are responsible for thanking all volunteers informally on a regular basis for the valuable contribution that they make to the organisation. The community volunteer coordinator is responsible for ensuring that more formalised recognition takes place at key times.

#### **9.3 OUT OF POCKET EXPENSES**

Volunteers give their time and skills free of charge, so it is essential that Sunbeam House Services offers to reimburse any **major** out-of-pocket expenses they may incur in the course of undertaking voluntary work for the organisation. The costs of volunteering should never be allowed to discourage those on low incomes. Current rates and procedures for claiming expenses are agreed by the community volunteer coordinator and volunteers on a case by case basis.

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**9.4 INSURANCE**

Insurance is provided by Sunbeam House Services Public Liability policy to cover all volunteers working on behalf and at the direction of the organisation as long as they are appointed under this policy. Any volunteer that is not recruited under this policy is not covered by Sunbeam House Services insurance and Sunbeam House Services will not cover any costs that are incurred or accept any responsibility for any damage or injury incurred.

**9.5 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Volunteers are encouraged to develop their skills while involved with the organisation and are assisted into assuming additional and greater responsibilities over time, if they desire this.

**10.0 MONITORING, AUDITING AND RISK ASSESSMENT**

**10.1 MONITORING/ AUDITS**

The community volunteer coordinator monitors and evaluates volunteer involvement in the organisation on a regular basis and seeks to make on-going improvements. SHS employees are encouraged to assist with any audits of the volunteer function as deemed appropriate.

**10.1 RISK ASSESSMENT**

The community volunteer coordinator in consultation with location manager will conduct risk assessments with volunteers to forecast risks, hazards in advance and to take pro active steps to address where identified. Conducting risk assessments will help promote and ensure the safety, health and welfare of all parties involved.

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