



SUNBEAM HOUSE SERVICES

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

MISSION STATEMENT

*Sunbeam House Services provides a range of supports to adults with intellectual disabilities.
We aim to empower people with the necessary skills to live full and satisfying lives
as equal citizens of their local communities.*

Thank you for taking the first step towards volunteering with Sunbeam House Services (SHS). Please take time to read this Volunteer Handbook which we hope will answer some of your questions. We would welcome and appreciate your feedback on its content.

This handbook is part of a more detailed SHS Volunteering Policy, which we will make available to you. Other SHS policies related to the field of volunteering are available at www.sunbeam.ie/Publications/Policy Manual and include:

- Protection of Vulnerable Adults Policy
- Supervision in the Workplace Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Quality Enhancement Policy
- Media Contacts Policy
- Code of Conduct Standards & Behaviour Policy
- Trust in Care Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Social, Cultural & Religious Observance Policy
- Motor Policy.

What is Sunbeam House Services?

SHS is a voluntary organisation registered as a charity with the Revenue Commissioners, and providing a wide range of services to adults with intellectual disabilities. SHS is constituted as a company limited by guarantee, and is also a registered housing association. Referrals are made by the Health Service Executive. SHS is funded by the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Department of Education and voluntary donations.

What kinds of services are offered?

SHS delivers a wide range of services to over 450 adults diagnosed with an intellectual disability. Services are provided at approximately 40 locations throughout County Wicklow and south County Dublin. Training, employment, day and residential services are available, and these are run in conjunction with life-skills training. There is a strong emphasis on the concept of rights, responsibilities and advocacy. The organisation strives to offer services tailored to meet the individual choices and goals of clients in its care, and this is brought about through the 'Personal Outcomes' quality system.

Why does SHS need volunteers?

Volunteers make a huge difference in SHS and their fresh input of skills and experience benefits both service-users and staff, on an individual level and organisation-wide. The skills and experience which volunteers offer are instrumental when endeavouring to provide a high-quality service. The relationship between the volunteer, staff and services users must be on the basis of respect and equality and one that promotes independence.

What are the benefits to service-users as a result of volunteer input?

- An opportunity to meet new people and make new friends.
- A wider range of choices because of increased support.
- More one to one opportunities.
- A chance to learn new skills.
- Increased community participation.
- Increased confidence.
- Wider horizons.

What are the benefits to staff as a result of volunteer input?

- An extra pair of hands to share the load.
- More time to concentrate on clients' individual needs.
- Being inspired and encouraged by new people, ideas and insights.
- A wider range of options possible in daily timetable.
- Sharing of skills.

What are the benefits to the volunteer?

- Giving something back to others.
- Doing something enjoyable.
- Making use of gifts, skills and experience.
- An opportunity to contribute in a meaningful way to another person's quality of life.
- Personal growth and a sense of achievement.
- Learning new skills and/or developing new interests.
- Meeting new people and making new friends.
- Finding out more about a particular area of the organisation.
- Receiving training.
- Being an active citizen.
- Become a happier person and live longer (as indicated by research!).

What is the eligibility criteria for volunteers?

SHS welcomes volunteers aged 18 and above. Those under the age of 18 who are interested in volunteering should ask their school to contact the Human Resources Department at SHS.

Volunteers do not have to be experienced in any particular area in order to assist at SHS (although for certain activities, considerable experience and/or training is a pre-requisite). Of more importance is a genuine interest in people, a friendly disposition, a willingness to cooperate and learn as part of a team, and flexibility. Volunteers need to be conscientious and reliable.

Can parents and family members volunteer?

Yes parents and family members are very welcome to volunteer in SHS, but they will need to undergo the same resourcing and screening process as other volunteers in every regard, including Garda vetting, reference checks and interview. This is a legal requirement which we are obliged to carry out as an organisation caring for vulnerable adults. As a rule, parents and family members will not be placed on the same location as their relative.

What is the time commitment?

A more important question is: 'How much time do you have to give?'. Remember your other commitments (family, hobbies, employment), and try not to over-commit yourself. Are your circumstances likely to change in the near future? What periods of time can you commit to volunteering? Once you have answered these questions, you will have a clearer idea of how much time you would like to offer. SHS will try and fit in with the times which suit you, although this is not always possible. Some people may offer an afternoon a week, a day a month or an evening a fortnight. Others may offer to run a class in a particular subject once a week for ten weeks. Of course, it is expected that you would take time off for holidays, medical appointments or special events, but please give us as much prior notice as you can.

What are my responsibilities?

Before beginning your role with us, you will meet with the Volunteer Co-ordinator and/or Volunteer Liaison Officer, and the Client Services Manager and/or keyworker, where there will be an opportunity to discuss and agree on the responsibilities the volunteering position will include. These responsibilities will depend on the area you are placed in. A Volunteer Role Description will be drawn up, and volunteers will be asked to sign a Volunteer Agreement. The Volunteer Agreement is not a contract of any description and is binding in good faith only. It covers issues like

probation, appraisal (usually after 3 months), suitability and confidentiality, and it allows for the Role Description to change over time or for the volunteer's involvement to cease if the need for volunteer involvement changes.

It is important that you stick to the tasks that you have agreed to do in your volunteering role. You should not take it upon yourself to involve yourself in tasks or activities that are not your responsibility, or to do things in a different way without discussing this with someone in the organisation first. It may well be that there are better ways of doing things, or additional responsibilities you could undertake, but the people around you need to know what is going on and everything needs to be discussed first with the Client Services Manager and agreed before changes are made.

Note: Volunteers are asked to seek permission before making any statement to the media in regard to any Sunbeam House Services issue.

Do volunteers get paid?

All voluntary placements are unpaid, but SHS can provide 'out of pocket' expenses in agreement with the Volunteer Team for necessary expenses relating to the volunteering placement. Please discuss your individual expense needs with the Volunteer Team.

What are the volunteering opportunities in SHS?

These are many and varied, ranging from teaching, personal support, administration, DIY/decorating, fundraising, befriending etc. Examples of volunteering opportunities are listed on page 9. Whilst at times specific skills are sought by the organisation, skills which the volunteer can offer will also be utilised as much as possible. Everything that volunteers do is of value to SHS. Even if they are not directly involved with the service-users, their contribution has an effect on the care provided for service-users and their families.

Volunteers are welcome to try their hand at various types of volunteering within SHS to see what suits them best, and are also welcome to move to a different area of volunteering/different location during their time with us. Sometimes the Volunteer Team may need to make changes to particular rotas in order to accommodate an incoming group of trained volunteers, or move volunteers because of changing circumstances.

Will I be volunteering alongside other people or mostly on my own?

The vast majority of volunteering opportunities in SHS will involve assisting other people, both service-users and staff. Some practical tasks such as DIY, gardening and housework may have a less sociable aspect, although staff would be present and available at the location.

What is the volunteering process?

The volunteering process takes place in accordance with equal opportunities practice. SHS welcomes applications from the wider community. After a volunteer has contacted our Head Office, they will be sent an application form and a Garda vetting form. Even if you have been Garda vetted previously by another organisation, you will be required to go through the process again with us. This is a legal requirement which we are obliged to carry out as an organisation caring for vulnerable people, and applies to all volunteers, whether members of the community or direct family members of SHS service-users.

The volunteer should complete these forms and return them to Head Office. Once references are checked, the volunteer will be met for an informal interview by a member(s) of the Volunteer Team. The Client Services Manager or Keyworker may also be present at this meeting. Volunteers will be asked to bring a form of ID with them to this meeting, e.g. driving licence or passport. After the Garda vetting is received back and is clear from any concerning convictions, an induction session will be held and a start date selected. Forms are processed as speedily as possible, but it can take several weeks from time of enquiry to Garda checks and references being cleared, before a volunteer can start at SHS. Some volunteers may begin their role while waiting for Garda Vetting to be returned, but this is

only by agreement with the Client Services Manager, and the volunteer will be supervised by a staff member during this waiting period.

Both the Role Description and Volunteer Agreement can be updated and changed if agreed by all parties involved.

VOLUNTEER'S APPLICATION PROCESS

(Please be assured that your application form, reference checks, interview notes, appraisal forms and Garda Vetting Form will be stored in a locked and safe location in line with best practice. Emails are sent and received using our secure email server).

- Contact our offices for application pack. Adult volunteers should contact Eoin Buckley or Ruth Doran, Sunbeam House Services, Cedar Estate, Killarney Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow, Ireland. Tel: +353 1 2868451, Fax: +353 1 2760367, Email: info@sunbeam.ie, www.sunbeam.ie. College and transition year students should contact the HR Department at the address above.
- Receive pack, complete form and return to our offices.
- SHS checks your referees.
- SHS contacts you to arrange an interview.
- At interview, SHS verifies your photographic ID.
- SHS undertakes Garda Vetting procedure* (see below).
- If Garda vetting is received, you attend induction session.
- Start date arranged.

***Disclosure (Garda Vetting procedure)**

The Garda Vetting Unit provides a service that helps organisations identify prospective candidates who may be unsuitable for interacting with children or other vulnerable members of the community. This information will be derived from Garda and other relevant records, and its primary purpose is to help protect the vulnerable. As an organisation, we have a duty to ensure that all paid staff and volunteers are suited to be placed in this area. A Garda vetting procedure is in place in SHS to ensure this information is handled well and there is a legal requirement of confidentiality on all information throughout the whole process. **The Garda Vetting procedure must be in place before you can be offered a volunteer placement.**

Please note:-

- Police clearance certificates from the UK involve an administration fee, the cost of which must be covered by the volunteer.
- Police clearance from non-English speaking countries needs to be provided by transcript in English and this expense will need to be covered by the volunteer.

You will have a duty to inform SHS if you are convicted of any offence during the time you are volunteering with us. However, a prior conviction does not necessarily bar you from volunteering in SHS.

If you have any queries or concerns about this, we will be happy to explain in more detail.

References/Character Witness

Potential volunteers are asked to provide the names and addresses of two referees. One of them should know the applicant in a professional capacity, i.e. employer, teacher, religious leader. The other referee could be a friend, neighbour etc. Best practice would suggest that neither referee should be related to the applicant.

Medical Conditions

In line with Health & Safety legislation, volunteers need to make SHS aware of any medical conditions that they have which may effect their role with us, such as epilepsy or diabetes. Please be assured that having a medical condition is in no way a barrier to getting involved with SHS as a volunteer, but we do need to be aware of such conditions in

order to ensure both your own safety and that of our service-users. Sunbeam will treat this information in a confidential manner.

Interview

The interview is a two way process where we will discuss your application and your reasons, motivation and expectations regarding volunteering, and you will be able to ascertain where you might fit in with SHS, and whether you wish to proceed with your application. It may not always be possible to place volunteers in their preferred area.

STARTING YOUR VOLUNTEERING

Induction

There will be an induction session held in SHS, which all new volunteers must attend before commencing volunteering. This will not only enable all new volunteers to be given exactly the same information, but is also an opportunity for volunteers to meet together before starting with us.

Probationary Period

There is a three month probationary period during which time we aim to meet with all new volunteers.

Signing In

On arrival at the location, volunteers will sign a 'Signature List' to show they were present at the location. This will include name, date, time, and name of service-user being supported (if applicable).

Support/Supervision

The Volunteer Team and other staff at your location are committed to supporting you during your time with us. You will be met by the Volunteer Co-Ordinator/Volunteer Liaison Officer for approximately 3 informal review meetings to ensure you are satisfied with the role you are undertaking, and to discuss any issues or requests. As you become more at ease with your role, the Volunteer Team will begin to step away as the primary point of contact, but they will always be available should any difficulties arise or if you have any complaints. The Client Services Manager or keyworker will then be the main point of contact for you in terms of the day-to-day activities you are involved in. Additional support can be sought from any staff member or the staff counsellor, senior manager or social worker where necessary.

Training

As well as our induction sessions, additional training may be required depending on the role the volunteers wish to undertake. This training may run over several months. However, we recognise that volunteers hope to begin their involvement as soon as possible. Volunteers who have to wait for specialist training will be encouraged to become involved in other areas in the meantime.

Training will ensure you are able to handle the tasks expected of you before you start volunteering. You should never be put in a situation where you do not feel you have the skills or experience to cope.

Training is not run continuously - there have to be sufficient participants to run a course. It is important that volunteers attend all the training sessions before they commence involvement in special areas. Certain activities may also require attendance at group supervision meetings. This may sound quite complex when all you want to do is help, but once you have seen SHS and realise that some service-users have profound disabilities, you will understand that we are operating in a very sensitive area.

All training is optional for volunteers, but if you don't undertake training recommended for your volunteering role, it may mean you cannot undertake certain tasks within your role. For example, training in 'people lifting' is very

worthwhile as it includes details of back and neck structure, and explains how to lift objects as well as lifting people. This kind of training is necessary if your role involves pushing someone in a wheelchair or moving something from A to B. Regardless of training or not, volunteers are not permitted to lift heavy loads during any part of their role in SHS.

Volunteers interacting in a one-to-one situation with a service-user may be required to undertake medication training, depending on the needs of the service-user involved.

Whether you are voluntary or paid staff, the care offered must be of the high standard that families and service-users expect.

Individual Development

Volunteers are encouraged to involve themselves in more than one area of voluntary activity. If a volunteer does wish to stop one activity and start another because they have been doing it for a while or their health changes or for some other reason, that is not a problem as long as prior agreement is reached with the Volunteer Team.

Training will be provided for each area of volunteering and will be specific to the location or role that you undertake.

Commitment

We request that volunteers commit themselves to SHS for at least one year, although this is dependent on the activity they are involved in as some areas, such as running a class, may have a shorter time span.

The frequency of time given by a volunteer depends on the activity they are involved in, and discussion and agreement with the Volunteer Team. This is arranged before the volunteer starts in SHS. **If for some reason a volunteer cannot come in, they will need to give the Volunteer Team/staff in charge as much notice as possible.** Their presence or absence makes a difference. If a volunteer wants to alter their involvement or for some personal reason withdraw their involvement, even for a while, they will also need to let the Volunteer Team know.

Confidentiality

The importance of respecting the privacy of SHS service-users and their families cannot be emphasised enough. All information must be treated with the strictest confidence. It may be that you will hear or read details about people's private lives or health. Such information is completely confidential and should not be passed on to or talked about with anyone outside SHS, however well-meaning your intentions. Care must also be taken when using social network sites, email etc., not to disclose names or any personal details about people involved in SHS. Divulging personal and private information about service-users is not acceptable.

Teamwork

The Volunteer Team and the relevant Client Services Manager have overall responsibility for your involvement and welfare, and actively encourage dialogue.

Complaints & Grievance Procedure

SHS has a Complaints & Grievance Procedure, and all volunteers will be given a copy at induction.

What constitutes the dismissal of a volunteer?

SHS relies on its volunteers to make a good service better. The organisation appreciates and recognises the vast benefits which volunteers bring with them. Every effort will be made by SHS to understand, explain and agree with the volunteer regarding issues involving their role. However, there are some situations which may arise which will mean that the agreement between SHS and the volunteer will be discontinued. These may include:-

- Consistently poor time-keeping.
- Frequent absence without notice.
- Carelessness in carrying out role.
- Breach of confidentiality.
- Breach of health & safety rules.
- Being under the influence of alcohol/recreational drugs whilst carrying out role.
- Inappropriate behaviour.
- Deliberately bringing the organisation into disrepute.
- Consistent non-cooperation with management or fellow staff members.
- Repeated breaches of the organisation's policies.
- Not complying with the terms of the Volunteer Role Description and/or Volunteer Agreement.
- Refusal to follow reasonable instructions.
- Theft, including spending a client's money on self.
- Negligence.

Eating in SHS

Volunteers are offered the same options as staff in regard to meals, in that they either eat food provided to staff at the location, or bring their own food, or purchase food from the SHS canteen/outside venue.

Telephone Calls And Visitors

There is no difficulty with a volunteer making or receiving a phone call. These should be brief and necessary. It is particularly important not to use the phone in reception at Head Office Killarney Road for making or receiving calls, as this can block important incoming calls. Volunteers should check with the administrative staff or another member of staff about the best phone to use.

It is acceptable for a family member or friend of a volunteer to visit an SHS location while a volunteer is performing their role. However, it is preferred that this has been prearranged and approved by the CSM or staff team on duty. Any visitors, friends or family members who are meeting a volunteer should wait in the specified area, and we ask that visits such as these are for the shortest possible period of time. For security reasons unattended visitors are not allowed to go into any other part of SHS. Visitors attending at Head Office Killarney Road should present themselves to the receptionist and wait in the reception area.

Dress Code

Volunteers are asked to dress appropriately for the duties they are carrying out. Please be aware that wearing jewellery can cause risk of injury to yourself, service-users or staff colleagues, particularly if someone pulls at it or grabs it. To this end, we request that no jewellery be worn apart from a plain watch, plain finger rings and stud earrings. Please follow the direction of your Client Services Manager in this regard.

Interacting with Service-users

SHS service-users are adults and should be treated with dignity and respect. A volunteer may initially feel unsure on how to interact with service-users, and the best advice is to simply be yourself. It is perfectly appropriate to ask a question, talk about yourself, smile, tell a joke etc. However, like everyone else, service-users may not respond to you in the way you expect. Conversation is not always necessary, and simply spending time together is enjoyable for many service users. In time you will become more relaxed and able to build up friendly relationships.

When service-users are having a bad day, or become upset or angry, they may find it difficult to express these emotions or to explain the cause of them. Instead they may become withdrawn or act out of character. Volunteers are not expected to deal with a situation like this, and should request assistance from a staff member. It is recommended that volunteers avoid touching a service-user who is upset or angry, e.g. do not put a consoling arm around their shoulders or pat their back, as this may be misconstrued as an intrusion.

Service-users may find it difficult to recognise you when you meet them out of context, for example in a shopping centre, and this is to be expected and is not personal.

Volunteers who notice anything out of the ordinary in regard to service-users should let a staff member know as soon as possible.

A service-user may choose to enjoy a romantic relationship with another service-user, and such relationships between two consenting adults are supported by SHS. Some SHS service-users are married, and some are living together.

Driving

Volunteers should avoid giving lifts to service-users. In cases where the lift is necessary, a risk assessment should be carried out in advance, and this will be organised by the Client Services Manager. Volunteers who are using their own personal motor vehicles to carry SHS service-users will be covered under their own private car policy for such activities, as this is not considered a business arrangement. Volunteers will not receive any car expenses or petrol costs from SHS. Volunteers with a medical condition who will be transporting SHS service-users in their own motor vehicles must inform the Volunteer Co-ordinator/Volunteer Liaison Officer/Client Services Manager of this condition in advance. Volunteers who have points on their licence must inform SHS of this fact prior to transporting any SHS service-user. Volunteers who receive additional points on their licence during their role in SHS, whether in their own private time or not, must inform SHS of this fact. Please see the Volunteer Motor Policy for further details.

Smoking

To comply with The Tobacco Smoking (Prohibition) Regulations 2003, SHS has a policy of no smoking in any of its premises and in or around company vehicles. Volunteers who wish to smoke must do so outside the premises or away from the vehicle. Volunteers are not permitted to smoke when calling to homes where clients live independently, and clients should be asked not to smoke when volunteers are present in their home. When accompanying clients in the community or outside the unit, volunteers should not smoke in the presence of service-users who are unable to express an informed opinion on the matter.

Dignity at Work

We at SHS commit ourselves to working together with our staff and volunteers to maintain an environment that encourages and supports the right to dignity at work. SHS has a Dignity at Work Policy, which you will be given a copy of. This outlines the policies and procedures surrounding anti-bullying, harassment and sexual harassment. It also contains the complaints process and the Dignity at Work Charter.

Enjoyment

Volunteering should be something you enjoy doing and from which you get some feeling of fulfilment. Over time you should be able to develop your skills and your role so that you remain interested. If you find you are not enjoying what you do, then you might like to try a different role or meet with our Volunteer Team to discuss options.

Volunteering Opportunities

Here are some of the requests we have received from our staff for volunteers. Please ask for further information on any of these roles:-

Social outing support (trips to town/pub/concerts etc.)	Gardening & vegetable growing (maintaining house gardens &/or teaching vegetable growing)
Fundraising (raising funds through events or collections for general or specific purposes)	*Friends in Deed (see below – befriending a service-user based on shared interests, and enjoying activities together)

(Cont. next page)

Literacy instruction (National Adult Literacy Agency training available)	House-keeping/kitchen assistance (a much-needed skill)
I.T. instruction (basic level)	Sports instruction/assistance
Art tuition/assistance	Drama tuition/assistance
Event organisation/assistance	Personal Assistant (one to one care for a client)
Community access support (supporting a client to become more independent in the community)	Music tuition & therapy & musicians (in conjunction with music teacher Andy Smith)
Administration & record input (assisting staff)	Ski instructor/assistance
Knitting instruction/assistance	Dance tuition
Beauty therapy advice/demonstrations (a popular subject with female clients)	Haircutting/advice on hair care
Advocates (speak and act on behalf of others to help them achieve their goals)	Photography lessons/assistance (basic level)
Golf tuition/assistance/buddy	DIY (in conjunction with Maintenance Team)
Men's Shed (men from community coming together in a safe, friendly, inclusive environment to meet other men and undertake projects with an overall aim of promoting friendship, health and well-being).	Family & Friends Forum (to build on the local partnership with parents, families and friends; to give same people a forum to express concerns, views & ideas in regard to SHS, to lobby and promote at national & regional level for people with intellectual disabilities etc.)
Cooking and nutrition	Teaching English as a foreign language (to a client from abroad)
Cinema Club volunteers (supporting trips to cinema)	Facilitate a Creative Writing Workshop
Camera Club facilitator	Keep fit/yoga

Other opportunities are available which are not listed here. Please keep in mind that if you have a special skill/talent which you would like to teach or share with our service-users, and it is not listed above, we would be delighted to hear from you. We are always happy to support our service-users to try new and exciting ventures, and volunteers play a vital role in helping to achieve this.

***FRIENDS IN DEED**

One of the most popular requests received from SHS service-users is a request for a friend who lives in the community. Friends In Deed aims to promote such friendships, and thereby encourage social inclusion and community integration. We support community volunteers to be matched with an SHS service-user of similar age, interests and location. The Volunteer Co-ordinator facilitates the friendship match and induction of the Friends In Deed volunteer. The Volunteer Co-ordinator initially supports the friendship for a period of time, but gradually steps away from the friendship to allow the keyworker/Client Services Manager/parent or guardian take over this role. As with general volunteers, the Volunteer Co-ordinator is always available for support and guidance.

So far we have 120 established friendship matches from South Dublin as far as Wexford Town. For some people it is just to have a friend at the end of the phone, for others it is for social and recreational support. We are always looking for new people to get involved.

Activities undertaken

The aim of Friends in Deed is that the newly established friendship would be as natural as any other friendship. Shared interests may include football matches, shopping, lunch in a coffee shop, a concert, a walk or a trip to the cinema. Activities out and about in the community are what Friends in Deed is all about. Whilst bringing a friend to your own home may be a natural part of friendship, bringing your Friend in Deed to your own home is discouraged for safety reasons. This is not only to protect our service-users, but also to protect volunteers and the people that they live with. Volunteers are Garda vetted as this is best practice when interacting with vulnerable adults, but we cannot Garda vet everybody who may be in the homestead of a volunteer. If there is a particular occasion when you

would like to bring your Friend in Deed to your home, please discuss this in advance with the relevant Client Services manager, parent or guardian.

Costs

Because the nature of the friendship will involve attending activities together, expenses like parking, lunch and coffee can be reimbursed via the petty cash of the location the service-user attends. This has to be pre-agreed with the Client Services Manager or staff team on duty at the time, and receipts must be supplied on return to the location. There is an agreed rate of €4 for lunch and €8 for dinner, but a lunch over the weekend is also considered €8.

Useful Contact Details:-

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Volunteer Co-ordinator
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Once again, thank you for taking the first step towards volunteering with SHS. Volunteers play a vital role in providing meaningful choice and genuine friendships for the people that we support. With your help we can continue to fulfil our Mission Statement of empowering service-users with the necessary skills to live full and satisfying lives as equal citizens of their local communities.