

Volunteering Policy

1. Purpose

This policy is designed to ensure good practice and provide information to any interested party about how we organise volunteering at Purple Patch Arts.

This policy outlines the framework we use to recruit and manage volunteers.

This policy aims to assess and address the risks associated with volunteering at programmes or projects, and the benefits associated with having volunteers within the organisation.

2. Principles

Purple Patch Arts recognises the value of volunteering for both individuals and the organisation.

We are keen to provide opportunities for volunteering in a way which is mutually beneficial and meets everyone's needs.

We have a limited amount of resources to be able to support volunteering.

Purple Patch Arts will only support volunteering through our tailored 'Placement Programme'

3. Rationale

The 'Placement Programme' aims to:

- Provide training and relevant experience to individuals working or aspiring to work with people with learning disabilities.
- Identify and develop individuals who may be suitable to join our staff team
- Reduce artist and support worker costs by identifying, training and placing appropriate individuals on programmes and projects

4. Definition

Our volunteering policy and procedures apply to any unpaid person who is not a participant or an associated support worker / PA attending programmes or projects.

These people will usually be described as 'on placement' with Purple Patch Arts.

The 'Placement Programme' offers 4 different pathways through which people can engage with Purple Patch Arts:

- Programme Support Placements
- Programme Artist Placements
- Peer Support Placements
- Administration Placements

Programme Support placements are based at Programmes and give training and experience to individuals wanting to provide support to adults with learning disabilities and / or get experience of working inclusively in a creative education setting.

Programme Artist placements are based at Programmes or Projects and give training and support to experienced artists or workshop leaders wanting to develop their practice to work inclusively.

Peer Support placements are usually based at Programmes and are for adults with learning disabilities who have the capabilities to develop professional skills in providing support to people with more complex needs.

Administration placements are based at the office and give training and experience in the administrative processes involved with running a charity.

5. Implementation

Ratios

Where possible Purple Patch Arts will only have 1 person undertaking a voluntary placement at a Programme / Project at any one time. This ensures:

- The staff team are able to support the person on voluntary placement adequately
- There are sufficient skills and experience to promote quality provision

Purple Patch Arts will have a maximum of a 1:5 voluntary placement ratio across programmes and projects.

People on voluntary placement will not usually be included in calculations on minimum staffing ratios but will be in addition to these.

People on voluntary placement may only be included in calculations on minimum staffing ratios when:

- They have sufficient skills / experience to warrant this
- It has been approved by the Programmes Manager

Legal Responsibilities

Any person on voluntary placement will not be expected to take primary responsibility for First Aid, Health and Safety, Administration and Safeguarding within Programmes.

Any person on voluntary placement will abide by the company's Health and Safety and Safeguarding Policies and will inform staff immediately if these are not being met.

Artistic / Education Responsibilities

People on voluntary placement will not usually have responsibility for artistic / education delivery.

Where people on voluntary placement want to develop skills in artistic / education delivery it may be possible for them to take a lead in aspects of this with the prior agreement of the Programme Leader and Programmes Manager.

Consistency

We require people on voluntary placements to make a commitment to attend their chosen Programme / Project each week and for a minimum of a term.

If a person on voluntary placement misses 2 consecutive weeks unexpectedly or 4 weeks over the course of a term, a senior member of staff will hold an informal review with them to look at any issues that might be arising.

Skills, Training and Support

Any person undertaking a voluntary placement will have an induction which covers the following:

- Principles of person-centred care
- Disability Awareness and Equality
- Health and Safety in the Workplace
- Challenging Behaviour and appropriate responses
- Communicating with adults with learning disabilities
- Introduction to Safeguarding

Any person undertaking a voluntary placement will be required to provide 2 satisfactory references before attending a Programme or Project.

Any person undertaking a voluntary placement will have to undergo a DBS check at the time they have their induction.

People on voluntary placements will be contacted regularly by the Programmes Manager or Projects Manager and given the opportunity to raise any concerns and provide feedback.

People on voluntary placements will be given the opportunity to feedback and ask questions at the end of each session they attend.

People on voluntary placements are expected to uphold the high standards of good practice demonstrated by staff. If they are not doing so, Purple Patch Arts reserve the right to terminate the placement.

6. Recruitment and selection

People interested in voluntary placements do not need to formally apply but rather make an informal enquiry either by phone or email.

All enquiries will be responded to within a week offering more information about opportunities, and requesting details via a short application form. Applicants will then undergo a short, informal interview.

Any person needing additional support to read or understand the information will be supported in this.

There are no set deadlines or timescales when enquiries have to be made and this happens on a rolling basis.

In order to be able to undertake a voluntary placement an individual will need to demonstrate:

- Their suitability to undertake one of the placement programme pathways
- That by undertaking a placement they would support the company in meeting its placement programme aims
- That they are able to make the necessary time commitment involved in the induction, training and work involved (as described in this policy)

Individuals who participate in our programmes would not usually be offered a volunteering post as their needs are being met elsewhere within the company's work.

7. Organisational Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for the discharge of this policy lies with the Programmes Manager and Projects Manager

The Programmes Manager and Projects Manager is responsible for:

- Ensuring consistent application of the policy
- Monitoring effectiveness
- Reporting any breaches of the policy to the CEO immediately.

Programme Leaders will:

- Support people on voluntary placement to understand this policy and their role within workshops
- Provide direction, instruction and support within session
- Hold a short de-brief with volunteers after each session
- Report any issues or concerns regarding volunteers to the Programmes Manager or Projects Manager

All staff must:

- Ensure they have read the policy and are aware of its terms
- Report any breaches of the policy to the Programmes Manager or Projects Manager immediately
- Report any ongoing incidents concerning people on voluntary placement to enable systems to be reviewed and revised.

8. Risk Assessment

Purple Patch Arts understand and acknowledge the risk of not having adequate procedures for people on voluntary placements. These risks might include:

- A poor quality of activity
- Participants absconding, feeling upset or confused and presenting challenging behaviour
- Staff members feeling pressured, stressed or unsupported
- People on voluntary placement feeling unsupported or undervalued.

By having the following measures in place and set out in this policy these risks are managed through:

- The 'Placement Programme' which can be confidently administered by the team in spite of limited resources
- Appropriate ratios of people on voluntary placement
- Appropriate inductions and access to training
- Regular opportunities for check in and feedback

9. Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the Programmes Manager and Projects Manager to alert the CEO to any breaches of the Policy as soon as is possible.

This policy will be reviewed biennially.