

## **Anex Volunteer Policy**

### **Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities**

#### **Rights**

- All volunteers are entitled to a safe working environment.
- All volunteers are to be provided with a written description of the job that is to be performed, which will clearly indicate to whom they are accountable.
- Volunteers will be provided with appropriate levels of support, information, training and performance evaluation necessary to undertake their volunteer duties.
- All volunteers have the right to personal liability and volunteer workers insurance.
- Volunteers will be provided with access to financial reimbursement for approved expenses incurred whilst undertaking approved volunteer activities.
- Volunteers have the right to decline to be involved in any particular situation or task that they believe is unsuitable or inappropriate.
- Volunteers will be treated with respect and be provided with appropriate resources with which to resolve any general difficulties arising when carrying out their volunteer tasks.

#### **Responsibilities**

Volunteers will:

- Respect the confidentiality of past, present and future staff, clients and other volunteers.
- Be non-judgemental in performing volunteer tasks. That is, regardless of their own personal beliefs, will respect the convictions, ideals, religious and other personal beliefs of clients, volunteers and staff.
- Undertake relevant training provided by Anex.
- Work within the policies and procedures of Anex.
- Be responsible, reliable and committed to working co-operatively within Anex.

## **Volunteer Assessment and Selection**

In assessing volunteer suitability for work with Anex, at minimum, the following points will be considered.

1. What is the job we want them to perform?  
*Provide a volunteer position description*
  
2. How do we want the job performed?  
*Policies, procedures, supervision, monitoring and review*
  
3. What does the volunteer offer the organisation?  
*Existing skills and abilities – can we utilise them, are they relevant?*  
*Ability/willingness to learn/commitment to training and skill development?*
  
4. Is the person suitable for the position's needs?  
*Personal attributes and experience*
  
5. What does the organisation offer them?
  - *Satisfying work*
  - *Skill development opportunity*
  - *Involvement with others*
  - *Political and practical involvement*
  - *Support for and from others*
  - *Opportunity to contribute to the community*

## **Volunteer Support**

Whilst being a volunteer has many rewards, it can lead to issues that can be confronting. It is important that there are ways of dealing with these issues when they arise.

**Supervision** – All volunteers working for Anex are allocated to a supervisor. The supervisor provides volunteers with ready access to an immediate point of reference to help solve problems, clarify roles and responsibilities and to support volunteers.

**Setting Limits** – It is important to acknowledge that volunteers are people who have volunteered their time. At any time a volunteer feels uncomfortable with requests that are placed upon them by clients, other volunteers, or staff, they have the right and responsibility to say NO. It is important for volunteers to recognise their own limitations and needs as a person with rights, responsibilities and a life beyond Anex, and to appreciate the impact that not recognising these limits can have on the people they work with. It is equally important for Anex to recognise and respect such rights.



**Annual Leave** - All volunteers are encouraged to take a minimum of 4 weeks or more leave per annum from their volunteer role.

**Training** – Training provides opportunities for skill development and the chance to exchange information and knowledge with other volunteers.

## **VOLUNTEER COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

It is the objective of this procedure to ensure that negotiation and discussion between parties resolve any grievance. The parties to the agreement recognise that from time to time individual volunteers may have grievances, which need to be resolved in the interest of relationships and natural justice.

A grievance procedure is those steps taken by a volunteer when she/he considers circumstances to be cause for legitimate complaint.

### **Procedure**

In the first instance the volunteer shall inform their immediate supervisor and they shall attempt to resolve the complaint.

If the grievance remains unresolved the final arbiter is the Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Executive Officer's decision shall be final and accepted by the parties, so ending the matter.

## **VOLUNTEER DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

The use of formal disciplinary action is only one of the means available to the organisation to assist in maintaining a satisfactory standard of service. Other means include proper orientation and induction processes, adequate supervision, training, and performance evaluation and feedback.

Formal disciplinary action is used in cases of misconduct. Misconduct occurs when a volunteer is clearly able to perform a function or meet a reasonable expectation but refuses to do so. Disciplinary action is undertaken when the conduct of a volunteer adversely affects the reputation of the organisation and or the standards of service delivery.

The immediate supervisor has primary responsibility for ensuring volunteers are aware of and meet the required standards of work performance and conduct.



### **Minor Breach Procedure**

Where a minor breach of the required standards of work performance or conduct occurs, the immediate supervisor should:

check and substantiate facts; discuss the issue with the volunteer concerned with a view to resolving the matter. Make a short note in their diary that they have raised the matter with the volunteer concerned.

If this procedure is unsuccessful and there is a repeat of the incident the matter moves into formal disciplinary procedures.

### **Disciplinary Procedure (formal)**

#### **Stage 1:**

- The supervisor convenes a meeting (within 10 working days of the incident occurring or the Supervisor becoming aware of the incident) with the volunteer/s concerned to discuss the issue/s. The supervisor outlines the concerns and provides the volunteer/s with an opportunity to respond to the issues raised. Types of breaches that may warrant disciplinary action are: low level breach of confidentiality, breach of boundaries, misrepresenting Anex, repeated non attendance at agreed times, etc.
- The supervisor determines and presents a course of action to the volunteer/s to resolve the matter. A course of action may include; a change of roster, change of duties, additional training, a rest or break from current role, etc.
- If there is no further breach the matter ends.

#### **Stage 2:**

If the breach is repeated or conduct remains substandard, the supervisor discusses the matter with the Chief Executive Officer, and determines which course of action to take. There are two choices at this stage.

**Option 1. Review.** Another meeting can be convened with the volunteer, to review the agreed course of action and determine a new course of action to resolve the matter.

**Option 2. Warning.** Issue a warning to the volunteer.

Both options require a judgment call on the supervisor's behalf. The judgment will depend on the circumstances of the matter at that time. For example, it may be that there has been a repeat of the original breach but that it is the supervisor's judgment that the breach occurred due to a communication error, misunderstanding or that it was

inadvertent. Or maybe the supervisor's judgment, after considering the facts and circumstances, that the volunteer is clearly unsuitable for the role they are performing and delaying the issuing of a warning would lead to a breach of the organisation's duty of care.

**Option 1: Review.** A review meeting should be called within 10 working days of a breach or the Supervisor becoming aware of the incident. An observer shall be present at the volunteer's request. The original course of action is discussed and reviewed and an amended course of action adopted.

Courses of action that may be appropriate at this time may be similar to those outlined in Stage 1 and may include:

- Redeployment to another activity
- A rest or break from volunteer work for a minimum period of 3 months.

**Option 2: Warning.** The volunteer/s supervisor must discuss the matter with the Chief Executive Officer and obtain approval to issue a warning.

Ideally a warning should be issued face to face in an interview with the volunteer/s, in conjunction with written advice. If an interview is not possible due to the volunteer/s reluctance or inability to attend, the warning in writing will suffice. This must occur within ten (10) working days of the breach or the Supervisor becoming aware of the incident.

The warning advises the volunteer that no further breach of standards of conduct or work performance will be tolerated and any further breach will result in suspension/dismissal from all volunteer duties.

### **Stage 3: Suspension of Duties**

In the event of the matter recurring or conduct remaining substandard, then all duties performed by the volunteer shall be suspended.

Suspension may be permanent or until it is demonstrated that action has been undertaken that resolves the matter once and for all. It is up to the Chief Executive Officer, in conjunction with the volunteer/s supervisor to determine which shall apply.

A letter is to be issued to the volunteer. The letter will indicate the reasons for the suspension of duties and the date of effect. The Chief Executive Officer must sign the letter.



### **Instant Dismissal**

Instant dismissal is invoked in cases of serious breaches of conduct, and can only be invoked by the Chief Executive Officer. Examples of cases that would warrant instant dismissal are:

- Physical assault by a volunteer of another volunteer, staff member, client
- Serious breach of a client's confidentiality.
- Theft of property from a client, volunteer, staff member or Anex
- Sexual assault of a client
- Gross Negligence in relation to duty of care
- Gross misconduct
- Continual flouting of Anex's policies and procedures
- Threatening or intimidating other volunteers, clients or staff.

(These are indicative only).

Where a volunteer's conduct is deemed by the volunteer's supervisor and the Chief Executive Officer to warrant instant dismissal, the volunteer will be verbally advised of the dismissal if possible, and will be provided advice in writing of the reasons for their dismissal.

In addition, the Chief Executive Officer is responsible for determining whether or not Anex is required to advise other authorities of the breach and for reporting where required eg, mandatory reporting requirements in relation to sexual assault, reporting requirement to police in the case of theft, etc.

### **Policy Dissemination**

All volunteers will be provided with a copy of these procedures prior to commencing their work at Anex.