



Volunteer Policy

Purpose

This policy describes the relationship between Impetus and its volunteers. Recognising that volunteers give their time and talent in carrying out very diverse tasks in a broad range of activities, the policy provides standards to ensure that they are appropriately trained, supported and managed. In so doing, it ensures that service users, volunteers, staff and the organisation as a whole benefit from this partnership.

Scope

This policy governs the behaviour of staff, volunteers and trustees when acting as or supporting volunteers within the organisation.

Volunteers are defined as persons who engage in an agreed working relationship with Impetus that has no financial reward.

Context / Background

Impetus is a voluntary organisation that believes that volunteering is a valuable and integral part of community wellbeing.

Impetus and its projects both 'work with', and promote volunteering as a mutually beneficial experience for the volunteer and the organisation.

In line with this we are committed to the implementation and promotion of best practice when working with volunteers, and that volunteers should be treated professionally and respectfully at all times. We also believe that volunteers have a responsibility to uphold the principles, standards and reputation of Impetus.

Policy

With regards to the management and support of volunteers, Impetus will adhere to the following.

Recruitment

All volunteers will be recruited using approved recruitment methods, ensuring that:

- All volunteers are interviewed within a framework of Equal Opportunities.
- Full records are maintained of Name, Address, Contact Details and Interview.
- At least 2 acceptable references are obtained for each volunteer.

- A private file is set up and maintained for all personnel records regarding each volunteer.
- Information pertaining to volunteers will be treated as confidential and will be managed within our data protection guidelines.
- Enhanced CRB checks will be taken where appropriate.
- ISA registration will be required where necessary.

Induction

All volunteers will undergo an induction, which will outline the nature of the volunteering relationship between themselves and Impetus and familiarise them with:

- Impetus; its structure and mission
- Placement project guidelines relevant to volunteers;
 - Policies and Procedures
 - Equalities and Confidentiality
 - Health and Safety
 - Claiming expenses
- Volunteer Role Description
- Volunteer Support.

Supervision and Support

- All staff with the responsibility of supporting volunteers will be appropriately trained in best practice.
- All volunteers will be assigned a supervisor or volunteer co-ordinator.
- Each volunteer will receive regular support appropriate to their role by a named person. This will include discussions on how the placement is going, whether expectations are being met, personal welfare and development and will involve regular formal supervision unless in agreed exceptions
- Written notes of this supervision will be stored in the volunteer's personnel folder.

Engagement and Representation

Impetus will encourage volunteer involvement throughout the organisation and provide opportunities for active volunteer involvement in decision-making processes. This will include:

- Inviting Volunteers to become members of Impetus
- Holding regular staff meetings that are extended to office volunteers
- Inviting office Volunteers to Impetus annual strategy day
- Encouraging volunteer representation on Impetus Project Steering Groups.

Training

Volunteer supervisors will promote personal development amongst volunteers. Whilst Impetus may not always have appropriate funding for volunteers' training, we will always ensure that volunteers are trained in key skills for their role.

Insurance

Impetus will ensure all volunteers will be covered by appropriate insurance.

Expenses

All volunteers will be entitled to claim agreed out of pocket expenses associated with their role.

Preventing problems

Managers can minimise problems occurring in the first place by ensuring that they have planned well for volunteer involvement and that volunteering benefits both for the organisation and the volunteer. Attention should be paid to the following:

- Know why you are involving volunteers
- Have meaningful roles with enough work to sustain interest
- Take care in matching volunteers to roles – find out what they hope to achieve through volunteering so that you can be sure that the role is appropriate
- Have clear expectations on both sides
- Provide any necessary training
- Ensure that you have appropriate support in place
- Provide opportunities for volunteers to raise their views and contribute to decision making .

Dealing with problems

Impetus aims to make volunteering a positive experience for everyone involved. However there are occasions when problems may arise. Impetus has clear procedures in place for dealing with problems that may arise. Volunteers do not use the same discipline and complaint procedures as paid staff as these have been developed to satisfy employment legislation which does not cover volunteers.

If a volunteer wishes to raise a complaint about any aspect of their volunteering that cannot be simply and informally resolved by talking to the person responsible for their support they should use Complaints Procedure for Volunteers. If it comes to the attention of Impetus that there is a problem with the work of a volunteer that cannot be simply and informally resolved, the Addressing Problems with Volunteers Procedure should be used.

Applied Procedures

Project specific Volunteer Guidelines

Complaints Procedure for Volunteers

Addressing Problems with Volunteers Procedure

Date Approved by Board: 23rd March 2010

Review Date: March 2012

Complaints Procedure for Volunteers

Purpose

Impetus recognises that from time to time problems may arise in the workplace that causes a volunteer to feel aggrieved. Complaints are concerns, problems or complaints that volunteers raise with their manager. A volunteer may wish to complain on a variety of factors that affect their well-being and ability to carry out their role. A complaint may be work or procedure related or may relate to personal matters such as personal harassment.

You have the right to complain if you feel that you have been unfairly treated. Your complaints will be resolved openly, fairly and quickly to

- Protect you
- Resolve the issue
- Minimise any risk of disruption to staff, service users and other volunteers
- Demonstrate that Impetus respects its volunteers
- Protect the reputation of Impetus

The procedure will follow these 3 stages.

Informal Complaint

1. You should make a verbal complaint to your supervisor or your Volunteer Co-ordinator. If your complaint is about this person then it should be made to another manager if you feel it cannot be made directly or raised at supervision.
2. The person will discuss with you, how you would like the problem resolved. It may be appropriate for the person with whom your complaint is lodged to tell the person causing offence that their behaviour is unwelcome, embarrassing and unacceptable and will stop, or they may offer mediation.
3. Once action has been taken, the person dealing with your complaint will ask you if the cause of your complaint has ceased and no victimisation has occurred. If you are satisfied that the issue has been resolved the informal complaint procedure will be finished. If you feel that the informal approach has failed to resolve the problem, you may start the Formal Complaint Procedure

Formal Complaint Procedure - Written complaint

1. If you feel the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved then you should write to the CEO explaining the nature of your complaint. If your complaint was with the CEO, or heard by the CEO, you should write to the Chair of the Board, who may ask a Project Leader to look at your complaint.

2. A formal meeting will be arranged within 14 working days once your complaint has been received. The meeting will be at a time and place convenient to all parties. You are encouraged to make every effort to attend this meeting. You will be allowed to explain your complaint and how you think it should be resolved. The meeting may be adjourned to allow an investigation to take place.

3. You will be allowed to have a companion with you at the meeting. Your companion will be allowed to address the meeting to put and sum up your case, respond on your behalf to any views expressed at the meeting and confer with you during the hearing.

4. Following the meeting you will be informed of the decision in writing as soon as possible and normally within 10 working days. This will include the action the CEO intends to take. Also, you will receive a copy of the meeting records/minutes. You have the right to appeal against the decision.

Appeal

1. If you are not happy with the outcome of the Complaint meeting you may write to the Chair of the Board, within 10 working days of receipt of the decision explaining why you are not happy with the decision.

2. The Chair will set up a hearing with a Panel comprising three Board members, usually from the members of the Personnel Sub Committee. Panel members will not be involved in the earlier meeting. The panel will hear the complaint as soon as possible after the receipt of your request and normally within 14 working days. It will then decide on how the matter will be resolved and convey that decision to you within 10 working days of the meeting. The decision of the Panel will be final. You will receive a copy of the meeting records/minutes.

3. You will be allowed to have a companion with you at the meeting. Your companion will be allowed to address the meeting to put and sum up your case, respond on your behalf to any views expressed at the meeting and confer with you during the hearing.

Records

The following will be kept in your personnel file:

Informal Procedure:

- Notes relating to the informal complaint, action that was taken and any outcomes.

Formal Procedure

- Your letter to the CEO outlining the nature of your complaint.

- The notes from the complaint meeting, showing the decisions, any actions and the reasons for the actions.
- A copy of the letter sent to you.
- Your letter appealing against the decision.
- Notes from the appeal meeting, showing the outcome(s).
- Any subsequent outcomes.
- A copy of the letter sent to you.

Addressing problems with volunteers

Purpose

This procedure sets out the action which will be taken by Impetus in the event of misconduct, unacceptable behaviour or persistent unsatisfactory performance. This may include:

- Persistent bad time keeping
- Going beyond the boundaries of the agreed role
- Not respecting service users confidentiality/dignity/independence and individuality
- Breach of health and safety regulations or agreements
- Misuse of the organisations equipment or facilities
- Theft
- Discrimination on grounds of disability/ethnicity/religion/gender/sexuality/age
- Abuse or other offensive behaviour
- Arriving for work under the influence of alcohol, drugs or other substance abuse.

Many issues such as not fitting in as well as expected with the team or being unreliable should be picked up and dealt with during regular supervision. It may be possible to resolve these without resorting to formal procedures.

Informal Action

1. Your supervisor or Volunteer Co-ordinator will raise his/her concerns in an informal, confidential meeting. You will be given the chance to explain any personal or work issues that may be affecting your behaviour and performance. This may include:
 - Any training needs you may have.
 - Whether you need extra support or supervision.
 - Whether you are unfulfilled in your current role. Have your needs changed, or would you like to use different skills to help the organisation?
 - Are you suffering from burnout or unable to cope with the demands of your role anymore? Do you need a break from volunteering or would you like to volunteer in another project/ organisation for a while?
2. There will be an emphasis on finding ways to help you improve and sustain your improvement. You will receive in writing details of how your performance and conduct will be reviewed and over what period, normally six months. Also, you will receive a copy of the meeting notes.

Formal warning

If the issue is not resolved at the oral stage or review.

1. You will receive a written warning from your supervisor or volunteer co-ordinator outlining the reason for the complaint. The letter will contain sufficient information about your alleged misconduct or poor performance and its possible consequences to enable you to prepare to answer the case at a meeting
2. The meeting will be held within 14 working days. You will be allowed to state your case, which could be to your supervisor, volunteer co-ordinator or a senior member of staff. You can be accompanied by a person of your choice.
3. After the meeting your supervisor, volunteer co-ordinator or senior member of staff will decide on what action will be taken. You will be informed of this decision in writing and if appropriate a written warning will be given. The letter will set out the nature of the misconduct or poor performance and the change in behaviour and performance required with timescale. Depending on the nature of the complaint, further objectives could be set and help offered to you. If you are dismissed you have the right to appeal. The decision to dismiss you will be a last resort

Right to appeal

1. If you feel that the (disciplinary) action taken is wrong or unjust you may appeal against the action. You must let the Chair of the Board know the grounds for your appeal in writing. The Chair will respond within 10 working days.
2. An appeal meeting will be held at an agreed time and place. You have a right to be accompanied at the appeal. The appeal will be held by a member of the Board.
3. You will be informed of the decision in writing within 10 working days and receive a copy of the minutes of the meeting.

Under what circumstances should volunteers be suspended immediately?

There are some occasions on which volunteers can be suspended immediately, while an investigation is carried out. These include but are not limited to acts that constitute gross misconduct such as

- Theft
- Assault or Acts of violence
- Malicious damage
- Deliberate falsification of documents
- Harassment
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.