



Southampton Veterans' Trust Volunteer Policy

Southampton Veterans' Trust (SVT's) Mission:

SVT exists to strengthen the resilience, reach and voice of the voluntary and community sector of Southampton Veterans' Centre. Our vision is that there is a strong, sustainable and influential voluntary and community sector that is able to make a positive difference to people's lives in the Veteran community.

Why Include Volunteers?

We recognize that volunteers play a vital role within our organization and that their contribution enables us to deliver our services. We want to ensure that there are good working relationships and that volunteers are well supported.

- Our role is to encourage voluntary activity, and therefore we want to take a leading role in the involvement of residents as volunteers to help deliver our services.
- We need people from all walks of life and all communities, who can bring their different skills and experiences to our work
- Volunteers bring a different perspective to the organisation, often reflecting the views of the local community
- Volunteers can also help to extend the services we are able to offer.

Who is a volunteer?

A volunteer is any individual who undertakes unpaid activities on behalf of our organisation of their own free choice. Work experience placements are different to volunteering and further guidance should be sought from line management.

Volunteers may be involved in short or long-term activities or as a one off. Typical activities may include:

- Supporting fundraising or awareness raising events
- Involvement in direct delivery of our services and projects
- Working in our office
- Being part of our board of trustees

Roles and Responsibilities

Each volunteer will be supported and supervised by a designated member of staff within the organisation. The designated staff member will provide guidance, support and supervision to the volunteer to ensure that the volunteering experience is a positive and rewarding one.

The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no contractual obligation for the volunteer to attend or to undertake particular tasks. However, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability and a reciprocal set of expectations:



Volunteers can expect:

- To have clear information about what is and is not expected of them
- To receive adequate support and training
- To be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment
- To be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner
- To receive reimbursement for reasonable expenses
- To have opportunities for personal development
- To be recognised and appreciated
- To be able to say 'no' to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable
- To know what to do if something goes wrong

The organisation expects volunteers:

- To be reliable, open and honest
- To uphold the organisation's values and comply with organisational policies
- To make the most of opportunities given, e.g. for training
- To contribute positively to the aims of the organisation and avoid bringing the organisation into disrepute
- To carry out tasks within agreed guidelines
- To adhere to SVT's confidentiality policy at all times

Recruitment

Recruitment will usually involve a standard application form, informal interview and the taking of references. Some roles may require further checks such as DBS checks which will be undertaken in accordance with the latest guidance. Recruiting staff will discuss the most appropriate recruitment process with the Volunteer Centre Manager. For example, for some roles it might be reasonable to avoid application forms and meet all applicants.

Equal opportunities principles will be adhered to when recruiting volunteers and an additional form will be used to record monitoring information for our Equal Opportunities Policy.

Where it is reasonable to do so we will be flexible with the tasks within role descriptions – e.g. where some tasks may be difficult for a person with anxiety, or to better fit the motivations of the individual.

Recruitment of volunteers for SVT will be supported by the Volunteer Centre which will draw up role descriptions with the relevant staff member. Opportunities will be advertised on our website and through signposting sessions, through our volunteer newsletter, and via social media. All enquiries will be responded to within 7 days.

The Volunteer Centre will assist in the recruitment process but the final decision regarding recruitment of any individual volunteers will be made by the relevant staff member. Volunteer Centre staff will also advise on the use of DBS disclosures and other safeguarding



measures where relevant to individual roles. SVT will request at least one, if not two, references for all volunteers.

Where applicants are not able to be placed into their preferred role they will be given feedback and the opportunity to discuss other roles with ourselves or other local organisations.

Any new roles for volunteers must be agreed with the Volunteer Centre Manager before they are advertised.

Induction and Training

Volunteers will receive a full induction which will include:

- 1) An introduction to other volunteers and staff members
- 2) A tour of SVT's offices with particular attention to the location of exits and the assembly point
- 3) A copy of the Volunteer Handbook containing copies of SVT policies in respect of Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities, Confidentiality, Boundaries and Safeguarding
- 4) A copy of the SVT Staff Tree
- 5) Expenses Form and verbal instruction as to its completion
- 6) Health and Safety procedures including verbal instruction regarding the Fire Evacuation Procedure
- 7) Housekeeping e.g. use of SVT kitchen, location of toilets

In general, training will be provided by the volunteer's supervisor in an 'on the job' basis, but some roles may require formal training – e.g. in safeguarding issues. The Volunteer Centre Manager will help advise on what training might be needed.

Taster period

Each volunteer will be offered a six-week taster period. At the end of the period they will meet with their supervisor. If both are happy with the placement they will continue in their role.

Support and Supervision

Each volunteer will have a named supervisor. The supervisor is responsible for training and supervising the volunteer, as well as giving feedback and answering queries. They will also plan work for the volunteer.

Volunteers and supervisors will agree on appropriate arrangements for catch-up sessions. This will vary according to the nature of the role and how often the volunteer comes in. We recommend that each project that involves volunteer holds volunteer meetings at least every quarter to allow volunteers the opportunity to speak with staff and other volunteers, as well as to raise any queries or concerns.



Recognition

Volunteers will be given the opportunity to share their views and opinions of their experiences of volunteering with us. We will also recognise their contribution through social media, during Volunteers' Week and through the use of certificates, newsletters and by saying thank you.

Confidentiality

All volunteers are bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as staff, as laid down in any SVT policy or by verbal instruction from their supervisor. Volunteers who will have access to confidential information will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. Breach of confidentiality is taken very seriously and may result in us asking the volunteer to leave.

We are bound by the Data Protection Act to ensure that we treat volunteer information with respect. Only staff who need to see information for purposes related to volunteer involvement will be able to access it. We will not pass information on without permission.

Expenses

It is the policy of SVT to reimburse relevant volunteers expenses against the production of receipts or proof of travel payments.

Mileage expenses will be reimbursed in line with the current rates paid by HMRC (currently 45p per mile) up to a distance of 20 miles per volunteering session (£8.00 maximum). Reimbursement against an Oyster Card will be made upon production of a statement detailing the relevant journey (in line with guidance notes from NCVO). Oyster Card expenses, or any other form of public transport expenditure, will be paid up to a maximum of £8.00 in line with mileage expenses.

Volunteers who volunteer for an all-day session outside of the SVT's office, such as an event, are entitled to claim meal expenses up to the value of £5.00 but must provide receipts.

Problem-solving Procedure

SVT acknowledges that sometimes problems do arise. In the first instance, any volunteer with a complaint or concern should bring it up with their supervisor. If the issue cannot be resolved by informal discussion, then it can be taken up formally through the problem-solving procedure. Volunteers will be made aware of the policy during the induction period.

Health and Safety

SVT appreciates that all staff and volunteers have the right to work and volunteer in a safe environment. Therefore, all staff and volunteers must carry out their duties in line with SVT's Health and Safety Policy whilst engaged in their work/volunteering activity.



Volunteers are covered by SVT's Public Liability Insurance but if they wish to use their car to carry out any aspect of their volunteering role, the onus is on the volunteer to notify their insurance company to ensure that they are covered on their vehicle insurance. We can support volunteers by providing a template letter or list of insurance companies who generally cover volunteer driving.

Moving On

When volunteers leave their role, they will be asked to complete an exit survey to provide feedback on their volunteer experience. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss their responses more fully if they wish to do so. Responses from exit surveys should be anonymised and kept confidentially, although key information should be used to inform SVT's volunteering offer and ensure continuing good practice.

Diversity

All volunteers will be expected to have an understanding and commitment to equal opportunities and diversity and should therefore ensure that they have read SVT's Equal Opportunities Policy. Volunteers are expected to comply with this policy at all times. Volunteers may also request training in respect of diversity issues if they feel that would assist them in their volunteering role.

SVT is very sensitive to different cultures, lifestyles, backgrounds and languages and strives to ensure equality of opportunity to ensure that individuals are given equal access to information, services etc and requires all staff and volunteers to follow these principles. We will strive to provide extra support and make reasonable adjustments, if needed, for volunteers with additional needs including disability, language or mental health.