

VOLUNTEER POLICY – FRIEND IN ME INC

1. Purpose

- 1.1. Friend In Me Inc (called “FIM” and “we” in this policy) takes responsibility for ensuring that volunteers within its own organisation are appropriately involved, valued for their contribution and respected as colleagues.

2. FIM Equal Opportunities

- 2.1. As an employer and engager of volunteers FIM is committed to a policy of equal opportunities. This principle will apply to service delivery, recruitment, promotion, training, facilities, procedures and all terms and conditions.
- 2.2. Volunteers will be expected to adhere to the equal opportunities requirements set out below in this Policy.
- 2.3. **Recruitment and Selection:** Recruitment of volunteers will be from all sections of the community and will be in line with this Policy. Appropriate targeting may be used.
- 2.4. **Information and Training:**
 - 2.4.1. Volunteers will receive full information about their chosen area of work and will be given a clear idea of their responsibilities to FIM
 - 2.4.2. Volunteers will be given induction and training in the specific tasks to be undertaken
 - 2.4.3. Volunteers will be consulted in decisions which affect them
- 2.5. **Support and Supervision:** Volunteers will be assigned a named contact person for supervision and support.
- 2.6. **Problem Solving:** FIM recognises that problems do arise, and we aim to identify and resolve these problems at the earliest stage. Volunteers who have a problem of any kind should discuss it in the first instance with their named contact person.
- 2.7. **Confidentiality:** Volunteers will be bound by the same confidentiality conditions as FIM paid staff.
- 2.8. Expenses and Insurance
 - 2.8.1. FIM will ensure that there is a clear and accessible system to enable volunteers to claim out of pocket expenses.
 - 2.8.2. Volunteers will be adequately covered by insurance while carrying out agreed duties.
- 2.9. **Health and Safety:** All volunteers are covered by the same health and safety policies and provisions as staff.
- 2.10. **Costs:** FIM will endeavour to identify and cover the costs of involving volunteers and recognises the value of designated responsibilities within specific posts for the management of volunteers.

- 2.11. **References:** On the basis of their voluntary work, volunteers will have the right to request a references
- 2.12. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** FIM will systematically monitor and evaluate its involvement of volunteers with reference to this Volunteer Policy.

3. Guidelines for Involving Volunteers

These Guidelines are intended for use along with this Policy. They give further detail on recommended good practice in the involvement of volunteers within FIM.

- 3.1. **Prior to Recruiting Volunteers:** Prior to recruiting volunteers, full consultation and discussion should take place with users of the service, paid staff and unions to satisfy that there is a genuine need for volunteers and to develop a clear description of their role. A contact person within the section proposing to involve volunteers should be identified and the staff time and expenses to train, support and reimburse volunteers determined.
- 3.2. **Recruitment:**
 - 3.2.1. FIM has equal opportunities requirements as set out in this Policy and will prevent discrimination particularly on the grounds of gender, marital status, disability, race, colour, religious belief, political belief, sexuality, nationality, ethnic origin, age, trade union activity, responsibility for dependents or employment status.
 - 3.2.2. In order to reach a wide section of the community, recruitment should be by a variety of means.
 - 3.2.3. Positive action in recruitment may be used for specific voluntary tasks. For example, specific work with minority ethnic groups.
- 3.3. **Initial Contract:** People interested in becoming volunteers with FIM should be invited for an informal talk with the appropriate contact person. They should:
 - 3.3.1. Be given written information to take away
 - 3.3.2. Have their role explained and how it fits in with FIM's overall aims and ethos
 - 3.3.3. Have the next stages of becoming a volunteer with FIM outlined;
 - 3.3.4. If the volunteer wishes to proceed with the application at this stage, the contact person should fill out the application form for the volunteer (getting referees' details) and ask the volunteer to sign
 - 3.3.5. If the volunteer is undecided, agree the next step e.g. for the contact person to phone the potential volunteer in a week's time.
- 3.4. **Selection:**
 - 3.4.1. All volunteers should complete an application form. Two written references will be required. If the volunteer is to carry out specialised work (e.g. IT support) at least one reference should relate directly to this.

- 3.4.2. If volunteers may be working with vulnerable people, or in positions of trust, they should be asked to provide information on their application form about any criminal convictions that they may have.
- 3.4.3. All information should be dealt with in the strictest confidence and should not necessarily prejudice the person being accepted for voluntary work.
- 3.5. **Records:**
 - 3.5.1. Minimum details should be kept on volunteers. This will include the application form, references, placement details, relevant information regarding the person's health, correspondence and any other relevant information such as emergency contact details.
 - 3.5.2. Record keeping is kept secure and no personal information or data is given to external parties.
- 3.6. **Induction:** Induction sessions should be provided for all new volunteers and should cover:
 - 3.6.1. Role of volunteers
 - 3.6.2. Responsibilities of volunteers
 - 3.6.3. Arrangements for training, support and supervision
 - 3.6.4. Contact person
 - 3.6.5. Need for confidentiality
 - 3.6.6. Ethos/values, etc
 - 3.6.7. System for payment of expenses
 - 3.6.8. Problem-solving procedures
 - 3.6.9. Background to FIM
 - 3.6.10. Building orientation
 - 3.6.11. Health and Safety
 - 3.6.12. Meeting staff
- 3.7. **Expectation of Volunteers:** FIM expects volunteers to
 - 3.7.1. Participate in induction sessions
 - 3.7.2. Comply with existing policies and procedures
 - 3.7.3. Undertake voluntary work at agreed times
 - 3.7.4. Inform relevant staff if unable to attend
 - 3.7.5. Give some notice if unable to continue volunteering
 - 3.7.6. Raise any issues of concern relating to their voluntary work with the contact person.

3.7.7. Agree with the aims and ethos of the organisation

3.8. **Placement:**

3.8.1. Once a suitable voluntary placement has been identified details about the frequency and length of commitment and nature of the voluntary activity should be determined and an established trial period agreed.

3.8.2. FIM reserves the right to ask volunteers to leave and will give reasons in writing if requested.

3.9. **Expenses:**

3.9.1. The procedures for claiming expenses should be clear and accessible.

3.9.2. All agreed out of pocket expenses should be reimbursed on production of receipts.

3.9.3. The pro forma should be used and the supervisor should liaise with admin staff.

3.10. **Insurance:** It should be ensured that volunteers have appropriate insurance cover in terms of employers and public liability.

August 2020