

Volunteer Recruitment, Selection and Induction Policy

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This document describes the NDCS policy for the recruitment, selection and induction of volunteers and is in 2 parts:

Part 1 – Volunteer recruitment and selection

Part 2 – Volunteer induction

The policy should be read in conjunction with supporting policies and guidance documents referred to throughout the document.

Details of volunteer recruitment, selection and induction are recorded, managed and stored securely in accordance with the NDCS Data Protection policy using our CRM database (VIKI). A volunteer may request a copy of any information held on their record at any time.

Part 1 – Volunteer recruitment and selection

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Volunteers make considerable contributions to the day-to-day activities of the organisation and service provision, as well as in areas of development and management. Getting the right people in the right roles is one of the biggest challenges of working with volunteers.
- 1.2 NDCS is committed to equality of opportunity and believes that volunteering should be open to all¹.
- 1.3 NDCS welcomes anyone with relevant qualities to apply to be a volunteer. Selection is made on the basis of a candidate's suitability to carry out the agreed tasks. For some roles we may provide additional training and support to enable someone to become competent in a role (eg. for young deaf person).
- 1.4 Given the nature of our work, it is essential we have clear and robust recruitment and selection processes in place that effectively screen volunteers. The organisation is committed to ensuring safe recruitment and selection to safeguard children and young people, as well as enabling the skills, experiences, interest and enthusiasm of volunteers to be maximised for the benefit of the organisation.
- 1.5 The same care is taken in the recruitment of volunteers as the approach to recruiting paid staff described in the NDCS Safer Recruitment and Vetting Policy, in relation to:
 - a) regulated work² and;
 - b) activities inspected under a regulatory framework

2. Principles

- 2.1 We aim to have clear and robust recruitment and selection processes in place that effectively screen volunteers. To achieve this aim, we are developing processes to:
 - a) provide a high quality and safe service
 - b) recruit volunteers that can meet the needs of NDCS and service users
 - c) recruit volunteers that reflect the communities in which they work
 - d) ensure a fair, transparent and welcoming application process
 - e) remove unnecessary barriers that may prevent people from volunteering
 - f) ensure appropriate use of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Access NI and Disclosure Scotland (Protecting Vulnerable Groups – PVG)

¹ See [NDCS Equality & diversity policy December 2014](#)

² As defined by Schedule 4 to the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended). See NDCS Safeguarding Policy and Guidance

- 2.2 The minimum age for most of our volunteer roles is 18 years. Under a regulatory framework, a risk assessment will be undertaken to assess any risks associated with young volunteers working closely with or supervising young people. We sometimes have opportunities for young people aged 12 to 18 years to volunteer as part of our children and young people participation strategy.
- 2.3 We recognise volunteering can be a useful and effective way:
- a) for us to add value to the services we provide
 - b) for deaf young people to gain valuable skills and experience.
- 2.4 This policy applies to all volunteering activity which NDCS defines as any activity which is carried out by an individual or group of individuals, without payment, for the mutual benefit of NDCS, its members and those undertaking the activity³.

3. Recruitment

- 3.1 Before recruiting volunteers, an initial analysis is conducted to identify:
- a) the objectives of the strategy, programme or project they support
 - b) the activities a volunteer will perform to support these objectives
 - c) the knowledge and skills a volunteer needs to undertake these activities
- 3.2 During the initial planning process decisions are then made about:
- a) the volunteer role or roles that are needed using a competence-based approach
 - b) the number of volunteers required
 - c) when volunteers are needed – e.g. for specific events, on-going
 - d) where volunteers are needed
- 3.3 Consideration is also given to:
- a) the impact of recruitment of new volunteers on other NDCS activity, including current employees, volunteers and service users
 - b) ensuring that volunteers are complementing rather than substituting for the work of paid staff
 - c) ensuring there is sufficient funding to pay for volunteer management and expenses
 - d) ensuring volunteers are managed effectively⁴
 - e) policies, procedures and resources to ensure high quality support for all volunteering activity

³ See NDCS Volunteering: The Strategy 2013-2017

⁴ See Managing volunteers at NDCS, Nov 2012

4. Volunteer role descriptions

- 4.1 We produce volunteer role descriptions for all our volunteering opportunities based on relevant volunteer competences.
- 4.2 The development of clear volunteer role descriptions is critical to ensuring suitable people are recruited to different volunteer roles. It allows teams to define the skills, knowledge and qualities they need a volunteer to have or develop to be effective in a specific role. It also allows a prospective volunteer to understand what is expected of them, helping to avoid any confusion and misunderstanding of expectations.
- 4.3 The role description outlines the specific tasks and responsibilities to be undertaken, as well as the necessary skills, knowledge and experience required to start the role.
- 4.4 The level of skills, knowledge and experience required will vary depending on whether the volunteer will be trained and supported to achieve the required level or if they need to demonstrate the level before they are selected.
- 4.5 The role description also supports decisions about who to interview and select using clear and open criteria that complies with NDCS policies and legislation relating to equality and diversity.

5. Promoting opportunities

- 5.1 Volunteering opportunities are promoted through a range of methods including the NDCS and other websites, advertisements, leaflets, talks, social media and appropriate networks.
- 5.2 Promotion may be targeted to reach those who are currently underrepresented in the organisation or, depending on the role and organisational need, to those with specific skills and experience.
- 5.3 Opportunities may be promoted for deaf people where our beneficiaries can benefit from volunteering or from being supported by a deaf person.
- 5.4 Recruitment materials should represent a positive image of volunteering with graphics that reflect the values of the organisation and the diversity of the communities NDCS works in. Materials should be accessible for the volunteers we wish to recruit and made available in different formats, if appropriate.
- 5.5 Enquiries from potential volunteer are recorded and managed as interactions on the organisation's CRM database (VIKI).

6. Selection

- 6.1 Volunteers are selected on the basis of a candidate's suitability to carry out the agreed role using competence-based selection criteria. This will also include

health and safety and welfare considerations where the volunteer opportunity is within a regulated framework.

- 6.2 Selection activities may vary according to the volunteer role being advertised, including the complexity of the role, the length of time the volunteer will be involved with NDCS and where they are located.
- 6.3 Selection activities may include:
 - a) completion of an application form
 - b) selection events such as face-to-face meetings, interviews, assessment or information days
 - c) selection discussions such as phone calls, Skype or instant messaging
- 6.4 Staff conducting selection activities for regulated roles, must complete the NDCS Safer Recruitment training. Staff selecting volunteers for non-regulated roles may also complete our safer recruitment training where appropriate.
- 6.5 Volunteers may be accepted by NDCS pending one or more of the following:
 - a) suitable references (see paragraph 7.4 below)
 - b) vetting and barring checks (see section 8 below)
 - c) acceptable performance of their role

Where volunteers are provisionally accepted, a further assessment is made once agreed checks or actions have been completed.

- 6.6 For volunteer opportunities designed for our beneficiaries to gain valuable knowledge, skills and experience, selection also involves an assessment of a volunteer's potential to fulfil the role possibly with additional training and support.

7. References

- 7.1 Two references are required for all volunteers performing regulated work as defined by the NDCS Safer Recruitment and Vetting Policy. References may also be requested for volunteers performing non-regulated work depending on the needs of the role.
- 7.2 Where volunteers are asked to provide references, these should be from referees who:
 - a) know them and can comment on their behaviour and ability
 - b) are not relatives⁵
- 7.3 Open references or testimonials are not accepted in support of a volunteer's application.

⁵ By relative we mean a sibling, parent or other close relation, carer or equivalent, as defined by HMRC

- 7.4 References must be received and approved before a volunteer undertakes any activity within the organisation, including training. This enables us to address any issues quickly and avoid investing time and resources in volunteers who we decide not to accept. Where issues are raised, they will be discussed with the volunteer and may result in a further reference being requested or the application being declined.

8. Vetting and barring

- 8.1 Disclosure checks (DBS, Access NI or PVG) are required for all volunteers performing regulated work as defined by the NDCS Safer Recruitment and Vetting Policy. Where this is required, a risk assessment will be completed to indicate checks are both proportionate and relevant to the volunteer role.
- 8.2 Prospective volunteers are notified if a DBS, Access NI or PVG check is required and guidance provided in line with current legislation. For more information see the NDCS Safer Recruitment & Vetting Policy.
- 8.3 Vetting and barring is recorded and managed using the organisation's CRM database (VIKI), in line with data protection regulations.

9. Decisions

- 9.1 Volunteers are notified whether their application has been successful.
- 9.2 NDCS reserves the right to decline a volunteer without giving an explanation. In most cases, applicants who are declined should be offered constructive feedback. It should also be considered whether it is appropriate to refer them to a different volunteering role within the organisation that is more suitable, to a local group or another volunteering organisation.
- 9.3 Volunteer recruitment and selection decisions must be recorded and managed on the organisation's CRM database (VIKI).

Part 2 – Volunteer induction

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The National Deaf Children's Society is committed to ensuring all volunteers are competent to carry out their role. This means they have the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes, and can apply them effectively to complete the tasks required for their specific role.
- 1.2 The delivery of high quality services to deaf children, young people and their families is paramount and we provide appropriate learning and development opportunities to volunteers both initially and throughout their time with us.
- 1.3 Responsibility for volunteer induction, and the learning and development that supports it, sits with the volunteer's supervisor. It is supported by the person responsible for the volunteer programme and the volunteer team.

2. Induction

- 2.1 We recognise induction is an important part of supporting new volunteers to integrate into the organisation and undertake their role effectively.
- 2.2 Our volunteer induction generally covers two key areas:
 - a) induction into the organisation (NDCS and the team they work with)
 - b) induction into the role (their role and the programme it is part of)
- 2.3 There are core elements that all NDCS Volunteers need to complete irrespective of role.
- 2.4 Induction is supported by the:
 - a) NDCS Volunteer Handbook
 - b) Team Information Booklets for the appropriate programme

3. Induction into the organisation

- 3.1 Before new volunteers start with us, they receive information about the organisation through the recruitment process. This includes:
 - a) information about what NDCS does
 - b) volunteer role description
 - c) contact information
- 3.2 Following selection, volunteers receive more detailed information about:
 - a) NDCS mission, vision and aims
 - b) how the organisation works to achieve its goals

- c) how the work of the volunteer contributes to these goals
- d) how their volunteering role fits into the organisation as a whole

3.3 Volunteers are provided with an NDCS Volunteer Handbook that includes general information and an introduction to key policies. Depending on their role, volunteers are also provided with – and supported to understand – relevant core policies and procedures including:

- a) child protection
- b) equality and diversity
- c) health and safety
- d) confidentiality
- e) data protection
- f) claiming expenses

3.4 Volunteers are also provided with details of the staff who manage them. This includes:

- a) contact details of their volunteer supervisor
- b) names of other team members
- c) administration processes
- d) communication processes

4. Induction into the role

4.1 Volunteers are provided with a clear understanding of their role and how they should complete the responsibilities and tasks assigned to them, and how they should behave. They also receive specific information about the location or team where they undertake their role. This includes:

- a) NDCS Volunteer agreement
- b) role description
- c) support and supervision processes
- d) problem solving procedure
- e) health and safety procedures

4.2 Volunteers working with children or young people receive and are supported to understand the following NDCS policies and procedures:

- a) Guidance for safer working practice⁶
- b) Child Protection Policy, Procedure and Guidance⁷
- c) E-safety Policy⁸
- d) Informed Choice position statement

4.3 Volunteers based in an NDCS office receive:

⁶ December 2013

⁷ July 2015

⁸ January 2014

- a) Information about the building, office environment and facilities
- b) Details of where they are working and how to complete a workstation assessment, where appropriate
- c) Appropriate training or instructions on any equipment they need to use

4.4 All volunteers need to provide us with:

- a) contact details for them which we can use in case of an emergency
- b) contact details for someone else we can contact in case of emergency
- c) bank details or other arrangements for payment of expenses

5. Induction methods

5.1 Our methods for delivering induction activities vary depending on the volunteer role and the best use of resources. They may be provided in a group or individually, face to face or remotely.

5.2 Group induction is beneficial to both us and volunteers as it:

- a) helps volunteers build relationships
- b) may take less time overall
- c) allows discussion of key areas such as confidentiality, equality and diversity and child protection

5.3 If face-to-face induction is not possible or appropriate, we provide induction activities and information in writing, electronically, via Skype or over the phone.

5.4 Whatever the method, induction is recorded and managed using the organisation's CRM database (VIKI).

6. Learning and development during induction

6.1 Volunteers receive role-specific learning and development opportunities to ensure they are competent and confident to carry out their role effectively. Providing learning and development activities also motivates them to increase their involvement.

6.2 Learning and development opportunities offered also depend on the type and level of skills and experience volunteers bring with them.

6.3 As a minimum and irrespective of their background, all volunteers receive an initial briefing on:

- a) health and safety
- b) confidentiality
- c) equality and diversity

- 6.4 Other initial training depends on the role or programme and may be completed over a number of hours, days or weeks.
- 6.5 Training is based on NDCS Volunteer competences which the volunteer need to demonstrate at either:
- a) selection
 - b) after induction
 - c) over time
- 6.6 Volunteers' learning and development needs are assessed during induction and recorded and managed using the organisation's CRM database (VIKI).

7. When a volunteer leaves during induction

- 7.1 Sometimes during induction a volunteer may realise the role they are being asked to undertake is not suitable for them. Where this occurs, the volunteer's supervisor requests:
- a) their reasons for withdrawing
 - b) feedback on the recruitment, selection and processes

This helps us identify whether changes or improvements can be made to better inform future applicants and manage NDCS resources effectively.