**StreetCare Volunteers**

**Volunteer Handbook**

**What you need to know about volunteering with us**

**www.streetcarevolunteers.co.uk**

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**A very warm welcome to you!**

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with StreetCare Volunteers, and for supporting our vision of a caring, compassionate and reasoned Scotland.

We know that volunteers can be a powerful force for change, and your support boosts the work we do, and the quality of the services we are able to provide. You are also our representatives in the local community, letting people know that we are here, what we stand for, what we can do for them and helping us raise vital funds.

Our achievements simply would not be possible without the time, effort, energy and expertise that our volunteers bring to their roles.

Whatever inspired you to join us we want to make sure you feel valued, understood and proud to be part of StreetCare Volunteers.

This handbook is here to explain the things you need to know about volunteering with us. We hope you find it helpful. If you would like more detailed information on any of the subjects covered, please don’t hesitate to speak to your Volunteer Support Person in the first instance, or the SCV Team Leader and they will be more than happy to help you.

Thank you for getting involved.

**Introduction**

We designed this handbook to support you in your volunteering for StreetCare Volunteers. It illustrates our intention to treat our volunteers fairly and consistently, however it will not cover every situation or explain everything about your volunteering, so please don’t be shy, if you have a question, please ask!

It will tell you about:

* what StreetCare Volunteers does,
* your general responsibilities as a volunteer,
* what you can expect from us,
* the practices, policies, and guidelines we must all follow.

Please refer to this handbook anytime you need help or guidance, and remember you can always speak directly with your SCV Team Leader. A summary of relevant policies is included, and full versions of the policies are also available from the SCV Team Leader.

**As a volunteer you should be clear that this handbook and your Volunteer Agreement do not constitute a contract of employment.**

**A little bit about us …**.

We are an independent registered charity & Company Limited by Guarantee with Charitable status. Governed by a Board of Trustees.

The day-to-day work of the charity is undertaken by volunteers and at the time of publication we have no paid staff.

**Our Vision, Mission & Values**

**Our Vision:**

A caring and compassionate Scotland informed by reason.

**Our Mission:**

To be the champion for combatting homelessness and food waste in Scotland.

**Our Values:**

We will live our values in everything we do. These are at the core of how we act as individuals and collectively as a movement and as a charitable organisation.

***Co-operation*:** We will reach out and work with others for positive change and equality.

***Integrity***: We are committed to our principles and will act honestly.

***Reason***: We will use evidence and thought to guide and direct what we do.

***Courage***: We will be courageous in our work. We will stand up for what we believe is right and challenge where needed.

***Sustainability****:*We will work in a sustainable way that assures our future strength and seeks to minimise negative impacts on the wider environment.

# Our work - What we do

# To assist the "Homeless" and others on the pavement / Shelters who are in need of assistance. This may be visually / verbally / writing asking for help, looking like they need assistance or simply presenting as in need of assistance. Assistance comes in the form of the 3 initiatives below –

# a) To provide hot drinks, soup, other foods and warm clothing, on a non-judgemental basis for those who present as needing support - "Homeless". (Relief of Poverty)

# b) To provide a listening ear for people, encountered on the street, who find themselves living in isolation and providing information on services and organisations available to assist those in need.- "Homeless" (Advancement of Education)

# c) To promote the ethos of 'zero waste' by working with stores in central Glasgow to ensure that any food that they have, due to be disposed of, can be used by the project. By distributing these goods to those who present as needing support or to "Homeless" shelters. (Relief of Poverty as food shared with those without)

**Our Volunteers**

**Who volunteers for us**

Volunteers get involved for a variety of reasons. For example:

* to get involved in running their local group
* to make a difference to the lives of people affected by homelessness
* to drive policy change

Others want to develop new skills and gain experience, or simply want to meet new people and have fun!  We don’t have a typical volunteer, and welcome everyone who shares our values.

**Our definition of a volunteer**

A volunteer is someone who commits time and energy to benefit others, freely, through personal choice and without expecting financial reward, except for the reimbursement of agreed out of pocket expenses.  Our volunteers make a commitment to support the work of StreetCare Volunteers.

**Ways to get involved**

Our volunteers help us to achieve our aims in a variety ways, including:

* Providing governance and vision by serving as Trustees on the Board of Trustees .
* As StreetCare Volunteers supporting homeless and those in need
* Supporting our campaign and policy work
* Undertaking research or evaluation, and developing new resources
* Administration and coordination support
* Media and communications
* Events organisation
* Helping with the delivery of training
* As employees, by supporting other charities and not-for-profits through our Employer Supported Volunteering Scheme.

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**Getting the most from your volunteering**

We want you to enjoy your time with us and to feel supported so you get the most from your volunteering.

**Your Volunteering Role**

StreetCare Volunteers believes that every volunteer should have clear guidelines about their role and responsibilities. You will be provided with a **Volunteer Role Description** at the start of your volunteering which outlines what your role involves, the purpose of that role, and the skills and abilities that are required to carry it out.

We are committed to involving volunteers directly with StreetCare Volunteers to:

* Contribute to the delivery of our services
* Make sure we are responsive to the needs of our members, supporters, and clients
* Provide different skills and perspectives

Our Volunteer Policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers.

**What kind of tasks will I be asked to do?**

This will be clear from your Role Description.  Volunteers do not replace paid employees but do enhance their work.  Volunteers have the right to refuse to do tasks that they consider unrealistic or outside the scope of their role or ability.  If these tasks are important elements of a particular volunteering role, then you can discuss alternative roles with your Volunteer Support Person or the SCV Team Leader.

If you are ever in any way uncomfortable with any task you are asked to do as a volunteer, please speak to your Volunteer Support Person in the first instance.

**Getting started**

You will be sent a copy of the relevant **Volunteer Role Description**, and if you are interested in volunteering will be asked to complete a **Volunteer Application Form**.

All volunteers must read our **Volunteer Handbook,** sign our **Volunteer Agreement**and complete our **induction**.

**Induction**

This is your welcome and introduction to StreetCare Volunteers.  We want you to feel supported and to understand your role from the start.

We might suggest a settling in period as sometimes people take a couple of attempts to find their perfect volunteer role.

Your Volunteer Support Person is the person to whom you will be responsible, and who will support and guide you in your role. They will go through your induction with you before your role begins or on your first day.

They will:

* describe the typical activities undertaken in your role
* introduce you to the team (relevant staff, volunteers and clients involved)
* highlight important health and safety measures and fire procedures
* show you where everything is (if office based)
* give you practical guidance related to your role (for example, how to use any equipment necessary for your role)
* ask you if you have any special requirements or support needs in order to carry out your role

Please use this opportunity to ask any questions and to highlight any areas you would like further training or support in. If you’ll be volunteering with us over a period of time, we recommend a settling-in period which gives us both a chance to assess how things are working out.

**What support is available?**

You’ll receive ongoing support from your Volunteer Support Person. As part of your development, you may wish to keep a note of how each task/shift you carried out went, what you did, and if there were any issues that arose. Review and self-reflection are useful tools that can help drive improvements.

Whatever you do for us, we would like you to have everything that you need to be successful, including any necessary training or equipment.

All our volunteers have a named person who is their main contact and support, and all volunteers are also welcome to contact the SCV Team Leader with any feedback, concerns, questions or suggestions.

We ask all our volunteers to take responsibility for requesting support when required, and operate an open door policy. So please don’t hesitate to get in touch at any point during your volunteering with us.

We aim to run sessions for volunteers to get together at once a year, and we invite volunteers to take part in these sessions where possible.  These will give you the opportunity to discuss how your volunteering is going, to obtain peer support, and for us to give you some feedback and ensure that everything is running smoothly and effectively.

Support can take place face to face, but can also be provided over the phone or online.  Volunteers are very much part of the team and your opinions are important to us.

**Will I get a review meeting?**

A review meeting is an opportunity to look at what has happened since you started in your role or since your last review and to discuss what further support and guidance you may need and how to achieve this.  This should not be confused with the formal performance appraisals many people have at work. We rely on you or your Volunteer Support Person to convene a review meeting, if this is felt to be beneficial, or to address any difficulties with your role.  You are encouraged to ask for a review meeting at any time.

Finally, review (or support and supervision) meetings provide an opportunity for you to discuss, set and agree your objectives with your Volunteer Support Person.  These may be about meeting relevant learning and development opportunities, taking a lead on initiatives or activities you have identified that contribute to service objectives, undertaking research projects, or fundraising ideas.

**Training**

We want you to be confident in your role, so we will provide you with learning and development opportunities and the training and support you need to perform your role.

The sort of learning and development opportunities you will have depend on your role – some will be hands-on and practical, and some will be provided online. Some of our roles require very little training beyond the initial induction, while training for other more specialist roles will be tailored to meet the needs of that particular role.

At your initial meeting we will be able to explain more about the training requirements for the role you are interested in.

**What happens if my volunteering is not going well?**

We hope that we will be able to give you the support you need to be happy in your role and perform it to an acceptable standard.

If you do experience a problem, however, we will offer support, encouragement, guidance and, if necessary, training to help you achieve your potential.

Together we can try to work out any difficulties. If it’s agreed it can’t work, this shouldn’t be seen as a failure. We can look at finding a more appropriate role, or exploring other opportunities.

Your Volunteer Support Person should be able to sort out any problem you have.  If you feel your Volunteer Support Person has not sorted out your problem, or your concern is with them, you can raise your problem with the SCV Team Leader or the CEO. This is an informal process and is designed to achieve a positive outcome.  If you are dissatisfied with the outcome there is a written complaints procedure you can follow.  This procedure would also be followed in the event that a complaint was made against you as a volunteer. Your Volunteer Support Person would support you in such a situation.

See our ‘**Problem Solving Procedure**’.

**How will you help me to maximise my contribution?**

We expect high standards from our volunteers and supporters.  Sometimes, there may be times when volunteers fail to maximise their contribution.  In such circumstances, your Volunteer Support Person will meet with you and talk to you about ways in which you can improve.  It may be that they will suggest other ways in which you can make a contribution to StreetCare Volunteers. This is an informal process and is designed to achieve a positive outcome.

**Will my volunteering role affect my benefits?**

Generally speaking, if you are in receipt of benefits (such as ESA) you are entitled to volunteer and your benefits should not be affected by doing so.

You are, however, advised to refer to the Job Centre Plus information booklet which contains important information about informing any relevant agencies.  For further information and guidance regarding volunteering while claiming UK state benefits, please look at details published by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), available at [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/volunteering-and-claiming-benefits](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.google.com/url?q%3Dhttps://www.gov.uk/guidance/volunteering-and-claiming-benefits%26amp;sa%3DD%26amp;source%3Deditors%26amp;ust%3D1684566117972000%26amp;usg%3DAOvVaw1RI60vilZCOmRpom-kelV3&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1684566118233624&usg=AOvVaw3vn2-6VTnqb6rwJZTlcNAp)

**What if I can’t carry on with my role or feel ready to move on?**

First of all, don’t worry.  Talk to your Volunteer Support Person about this as soon as you can and explain what the problems or reasons are.

The SCV Team Leader will always be happy to talk about other volunteering opportunities within the organisation, or signpost you to your local volunteer centre if you’d prefer to find something in another organisation.  If you feel the time has come to leave us we will invite you to complete a short exit questionnaire as your feedback will help us to review our volunteer management and other practices.

StreetCare Volunteers will be happy to provide you with a reference during or after your time as a volunteer.

Please note that if we are contacted by a potential employer looking for an employer’s reference, we must advise the person seeking the reference that ours is a volunteer’s reference.  Please be aware that you should have volunteered regularly for a minimum of three months before you are eligible to request a reference.

**Mutual Expectations**

At StreetCare Volunteers we believe that volunteering is a two-way process. We are grateful for the time and support that you are offering to us but equally we want this to be a fulfilling and enjoyable experience for you. Like any good relationship, it is important to outline what each party can expect from the other so we can build a mutually rewarding partnership.

**What you can expect from us**

We want you to enjoy your time volunteering with us, so we will do our best to make sure that you are always given:

* A warm welcome to StreetCare Volunteers
* Respect, consideration and appreciation
* A clear description of your role and responsibilities
* A friendly and full introduction to your role
* The training, resources and support you need to help you carry out your role
* Support and recognition for your volunteering
* Agreed out-of-pocket and travel expenses
* A safe environment in which to volunteer
* A chance to try other volunteer roles if you would like to (or if you feel the current one is not working out for you)
* The option to change your mind or decline a volunteering activity without feeling pressured
* Updates on the charity you are part of, and how your support has made a difference

**What we expect from you**

To ensure you get the most out of your role and contribute effectively, please try to do the following:

* Understand our shared values and behave appropriately
* Always treat others with respect, consideration and appreciation, no matter who they are and where they come from
* Act in a way that doesn’t discriminate against or exclude anyone
* Complete your induction and any training relevant to your role
* Be professional and safe when volunteering
* Provide as much notice as possible if you are unable to fulfil your volunteering commitment, or if you no longer wish to be involved in a project
* If you don’t fully understand your role and responsibilities, please ask your Volunteer Support Person for guidance
* Support and act in accordance with our Policies & Procedures (read our Volunteer Essentials)
* Keep all confidential information confidential and adhere to our GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) policy
* Follow our guidelines when you are volunteering
* Understand that we may sometimes need to offer constructive comments about your actions when volunteering
* Give the best of your skills and abilities to meet the required standards relating to your volunteer role
* Tell us if you have any concerns or issues – don’t let them fester!
* Share your ideas and feedback with us

If we all work to meet these expectations then we can achieve real success together.

**Volunteer Essentials**

As a volunteer, you need to be aware of certain policies, procedures, our standards, and how we operate, so please read these “essentials” carefully. Your Volunteer Support Person will give you more information during your induction, and will be happy to answer any questions. If you would like to see any policies in full, please request them from the SCV Team Leader.

You must sign our Volunteer Agreement to show that you have read and understand these essentials.

**Accidents and incidents**

If you are involved in, or witness an accident, incident or near miss while volunteering, please report it to your Volunteer Support Person or the SCV Team Leader as soon as possible. They will complete an accident or incident report form so that the risk can be assessed and resolved quickly. If you feel that it’s a real emergency, please contact the emergency services immediately.

**Additional Support Needs**

Volunteers have all kinds of abilities, strengths, and interests. Some are able to “hit the ground running” whereas others require varying levels of support, possibly at the initial stages while they settle in. By offering some support and flexibility and making some adjustments, we can benefit from the skills and abilities of a huge pool of talent. As well as offering their skills many volunteers with additional support needs have the potential to offer insight and understanding and can also act as positive role models.

“Additional support needs” may for example include: Learning disabilities; Mental health problems; Physical disabilities; Been through drug or alcohol rehabilitation; or Reformed offenders.  Volunteers are also welcome to attend their volunteering with a Support Worker or buddy.

Our approach is to keep an open mind, to ask “How can we involve this person and what needs to be in place for that to happen?”. To this end we also offer Wellness Action Plans (WAPs) so please do let us know if you think you would benefit from a WAP.

**Behaviour**

At StreetCare Volunteers, it’s not just *what* we do that is important, but *how* we do it.  We want everybody - staff and volunteers – to demonstrate that they can work to our shared values.

**Bereavement**

If you experience bereavement, you have our deepest sympathy. Everyone is different, so we understand some volunteers may wish to take a break from volunteering during this time, and we encourage our volunteers to take whatever time they need to grieve, others may prefer to return to their volunteering quickly.  We can signpost to bereavement support, and endeavour to be flexible in terms of offering a return to volunteering that works for you.

**Boundaries**

Clear boundaries are important for staff, volunteers and service users. They enable us to deliver a service according to agreed expectations and ensure that everyone receives the same quality of service.

This means making sure that what you say and do is within the limits of your role. We realise that staff and volunteers may sometimes have contact with clients in a personal capacity – as friends, family or colleagues. In this situation, please take care to avoid any apparent conflict of interest.

**Bullying**

We take incidents of bullying very seriously and will seek to address the root cause, including any form of prejudice. This extends to online behaviour.

**Car drivers**

If you’re involved in an activity for StreetCare Volunteers that involves using your car, you must inform your own insurers. Most insurance companies agree to cover volunteer car journeys at no extra charge – check this with your own insurance company. Your car will *not* be covered by StreetCare Volunteers’s insurance. On request, the SCV Team Leader will be able to provide you with a copy of a template letter that you can use to inform your insurance company of your intent to drive as part of your role.

Please read our **Volunteer Personal Safety and Lone Working Policy**.

If you undertake driving as part of your role you should:

• plan your route in advance and check that your vehicle is roadworthy and has sufficient fuel for your intended journey;

• consider joining a vehicle recovery service and check the representative’s ID when they respond to your call;

• ensure that you have the means for contacting someone in an emergency i.e. mobile phone which is fully charged and has sufficient credit, spare money in order to make a call from a call box, the number for your breakdown/recovery service, and a contact number for your Volunteer Support Person, a friend or relative;

• if you break down, be aware of your surroundings and only get out of the car when and if you feel it is safe to do so;

• decline offers of help from strangers whenever in a vulnerable situation e.g. when broken down at night on an isolated road. If you are in desperate need of help because of injury or lack of means to contact help, then politely ask the person to call the police or emergency services on your behalf rather than accept a lift. You should remain in your vehicle if you feel intimidated or threatened in any way by a third party;

• park in a place that is well lit and in public view whenever possible;

• when approaching your car, be aware of your surroundings, have your keys ready and before entering, quickly check that no one is inside;

• keep your doors locked in built-up areas or in stop-start traffic;

• never stop to help someone who appears to be in need of assistance, especially at night, but instead phone the police, fire or ambulance service as appropriate to summon the help required.

**Complaints**

Although dealing with complaints can be difficult, it can give us a positive opportunity to improve the way we do things and provide a better service.

If you receive a complaint about any aspect of our service, or if you have a complaint, please pass this on in writing to your Volunteer Support Person, the SCV Team Leader or another member of staff for them to follow our established complaints procedure. It is helpful to submit as much relevant evidence as possible, as this can enable more robust decisions to be taken. We have a centralised complaints procedure to ensure that we capture all feedback.

In the event that a complaint is made against a volunteer, we will try to settle the situation informally, and depending on the nature of the complaint and the outcome we may subsequently follow other procedures, such as the Volunteer Problem Solving Procedure.

At StreetCare Volunteers we define a complaint very broadly, as ‘a statement of dissatisfaction’. This covers any kind of comment – spoken or written – which relates to dissatisfaction, whether or not it’s labelled as a complaint, and whether or not it needs a formal response.

The complaints procedure aims to be practical and user-friendly and sets out clear and straightforward ways of how to raise complaints and what can be expected of StreetCare Volunteers in how it responds.  StreetCare Volunteers is committed to being open in our investigations and dealing with complaints as quickly as possible and in the prescribed time-period.

**Confidentiality**

Any sensitive information that you come across while volunteering, including details about our members, clients, supporters and our work, must be treated as strictly confidential. For this reason, when you sign our Volunteer Agreement you are also signing a confidentiality declaration. However, if you have any concerns at all, especially about the safety of a client or their family, please do not keep it to yourself. Let the SCV Team Leader know in confidence.

**Co-operation and Communication**

The expectation is that we are polite, friendly and helpful, and treat others as we would wish to be treated ourselves. The use of offensive or inappropriate language is not acceptable.

Never be rude or abusive, even if you are provoked. Such behaviour will not be tolerated. Be aware that, if your first language is not English then it is inappropriate to deliberately exclude others from conversations by speaking in a language that they do not understand.

It is helpful if all volunteers can make sure they share up to date contact details and reply to any messages from their Volunteer Support Person (and any Lead Volunteers) as soon as possible. Clear, consistent and timely communication is essential to the success of our projects.

**Criminal convictions**

For a limited number of volunteer roles, you may be asked if you have any previous criminal convictions. We expect you to let us know about any convictions that might affect your suitability for the volunteer role you’ve applied for. While volunteering for us, we also expect you to let your Volunteer Support Person know as soon as possible if you become subject to any criminal proceedings, charges or convictions. This includes receiving driving penalty points for volunteer drivers. If you don’t tell us, then we will have to review your volunteering and you might be asked to leave.  See ‘Reformed Offenders’ later in this handbook.

**Data Protection**

In your role, you may have access to personal information on our members, supporters, clients, or other volunteers or staff. Where this is the case, you will be provided with training to ensure that you’re aware of your responsibilities.

As well as giving you an overview of data protection principles, the training will set out how and when you are permitted to use personal information as part of your volunteer role.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the SCV Team Leader.

**Do you store my personal details?**

All personal information that relates to volunteers is stored securely and subject to access controls. You can read more about how we use your information in our privacy notice.

**Dress Code - What should I wear?**

As a volunteer for StreetCare Volunteers, you’re also an ambassador for the organisation. You are responsible for presenting a positive image to visitors, clients and the community. Please use your judgement to dress appropriately for the activities you agree to carry out. We can provide a StreetCare Volunteers branded t-shirt for you to wear while carrying out your duties. If you’re ever unsure about what to wear, just ask.

**Drugs, alcohol and smoking**

Volunteers reporting for volunteering under the influence of alcohol or non-prescription drugs will be sent home and may be subject to problem solving action.

If you are taking prescription medication that could affect your volunteering, please discuss this with your Volunteer Support Person.

Where alcohol is served (for example at a reception or social event organised by the Society), alcohol should be consumed safely, and in moderation, regardless of whether the Society has provided or paid for the drinks.

In line with legislation, smoking is not permitted in any office or inside space.  Volunteers who are smokers may take short breaks for smoking.  We ask that breaks are not excessive in duration or number, and should not interfere with your role.

**Environmental Policy**

StreetCare Volunteers will reduce consumption, use recycled/sustainable products, and recycle wherever possible, including use of paper, water, energy, office supplies, maintenance and cleaning.  We will also consider environmental issues when purchasing materials throughout the office. For example, when purchasing tea/coffee/sugar/biscuits and food we will where possible buy organic, fairtrade, seasonal and local, and avoid unsustainable palm oil. Avoiding unnecessary travel, and environmentally friendly forms of transport will be encouraged, e.g. using public transport or bicycles where possible.

**Equality and Diversity**

We are committed to treating all volunteers and volunteer applicants equally and fairly, with respect and dignity. We accept volunteers based on their suitability for the role. We won’t discriminate against any volunteers because of their age, disability, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, responsibility for dependents, or unrelated criminal record.

We seek to provide inclusive volunteering opportunities wherever reasonably possible.

**Expenses**

**If you have never claimed expenses before with SCV, we ask that you discuss your potential claim in advance with your Team Leader in advance.**

StreetCare Volunteers will reimburse volunteers for any reasonable out-of-pocket expenses. If you’re not sure whether or not you can claim for a particular expense, you should check first. We’ll only reimburse the amount that you have spent as a result of your volunteering, up to agreed maximum levels. Tickets and receipts must be provided in order to reclaim this money. It remains the decision of the volunteer as to whether they want to claim expenses or not, but we believe that you should not be out of pocket for your volunteering.

We will promptly reimburse any relevant expenses you have, such as travel to and from the place you volunteer in line with our **Volunteer Expenses Policy**.  We ask that you claim your expenses regularly, and within two months of incurring them.  Your Volunteer Support Person can help you complete an expenses claim form, and can answer any questions regarding your claim.

Normally we will pay the cost of travel at public transport rates, or 20p per mile for cycling.  However where this is not available or is impracticable, for example on access grounds, please discuss this in advance. If a volunteer needs to use their own private car we will reimburse mileage expenses at a rate of 45p per mile again please get approval in advance of such a journey expense.

Volunteers who work for periods of more than four hours may claim their lunch expenses on the production of receipts.  Lunch expenses will be paid to a maximum value of £5.00.

**Can you help with childcare expenses?**

StreetCare Volunteers believes that volunteering should be accessible to all, including those with children or dependent care responsibilities.  However, due to funding constraints, we currently do not fund care, but we will always try to be flexible in the hours and tasks offered.

**Gifts**

Please don’t exchange gifts with staff, volunteers or service users, unless it’s a small token (such as a book, chocolates or flowers). Exchanging gifts can appear as favouritism and may raise expectations unintentionally. A modest gift other than money, under the value of £25, may be accepted where refusal would cause needless offence to the gift giver and they’re not seeking favour, but merely wishing to express thanks. Frequent offers of such gifts by service users should be discouraged.

**Grievances**

See Problem Solving.

**Harassment**

StreetCare Volunteers is committed to providing a working environment in which all staff and volunteers are treated with dignity and respect, free from bullying and harassment.  StreetCare Volunteers will not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of gender, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, religion or belief, ethnic or national origins, age and disability.  Harassment is a serious problem, which is sometimes in danger of being dismissed as an individual being over-sensitive.  It can affect people’s health, performance, prospects, and, thereby, the success of StreetCare Volunteers. Individuals are protected from discrimination in employment under a range of legislation, and StreetCare Volunteers believes that harassment is unacceptable whether or not it is unlawful.  If a complaint is brought to the attention of management, it will be investigated promptly and appropriate action taken.

**Health and Safety**

Your health and safety is important to us. Your Volunteer Support Person will give you information during your induction including (as relevant): reporting an incident, using computer equipment, fire safety and evacuation, first aid etc.

The aim of our Health and Safety Policy is to prevent injuries and accidents, involve and motivate staff and volunteers in health and safety matters, promote a high standard of health and hygiene, control situations which may threaten life, health or property. For health and safety to be effective, it is essential for staff and volunteers to co-operate with safe working practices. All new Volunteer Roles are risk assessed.

It is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with and comply with the Society’s procedures and systems on health and safety and to take reasonable care of your own and other people’s health, safety and welfare. You must comply with all relevant instructions and procedures relating to safety and follow guidance provided by StreetCare Volunteers; inform your Volunteer Support Person of any personal health and safety requirements that you have; and report any situation which may pose a serious or imminent threat to the well-being of yourself or of any other person.

If you have any doubts regarding your health and safety role or responsibility, or if you are unsure how to perform a particular task, do not know how to use a piece of equipment, or feel it would be dangerous to perform a specific task or use specific equipment, then it is your duty to seek advice and report this as soon as possible to your Volunteer Support Person or a member of staff.

**StreetCare Volunteers Property**

As a volunteer you may be entrusted with StreetCare Volunteers’s intellectual property including logos and trademarks. You must agree that you will use StreetCare Volunteers’s intellectual property for official StreetCare Volunteers business only, and that you will not use StreetCare Volunteers’s intellectual property, business letterhead, or social media platforms for personal communications or personal gain.

**Incident Recording Form**

So that details don’t get lost, we ask that any incident is reported as soon as possible to capture relevant information and evidence straight away, so that we have everything we need for an effective root cause analysis and comprehensive investigation should it be required.

**Insurance**

While you are involved with us as a volunteer, as long as you follow our policies and procedures you will be covered by StreetCare Volunteers’s Employer’s Liability Insurance our Public Liability Insurance.  This applies to you whilst you are volunteering on StreetCare Volunteers premises or carrying out duties outside of the building on our behalf, for example at an information stall at a fair.

It does not cover pure accidents (eg. if a person at conference trips over their own feet, or malicious damage).

**Intellectual Property**

StreetCare Volunteers appreciates the creative input and contributions of Volunteers, and to enable StreetCare Volunteers to maximise the benefits of these contributions, Volunteers agree to grant StreetCare Volunteers the unrestricted worldwide royalty-free irrevocable perpetual right to use and exploit content (such as images and artwork) however StreetCare Volunteers sees fit (including via publication online, in print, and in publications or through the creation of derivative works) any intellectual property produced and/or submitted by you as a StreetCare Volunteers volunteer. This licence is transferable and sub-licensable and you agree to waive all moral rights in respect to such material.

**Leaving StreetCare Volunteers**

We know volunteers will not stay with us indefinitely and no one should feel under pressure to stay – we want all our volunteers to have a positive experience from start to finish. If you would like a break from volunteering or feel it’s time to move on, please have a chat with your Volunteer Support Person to explore options.  We would also be grateful if you would provide feedback by completing our **Leaving Questionnaire**.

**Lone Working**

StreetCare Volunteers discourages lone working where reasonably practicable. Where lone working is necessary, whether on a regular or occasional basis, the Society will take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of volunteers working alone. If this applies to you, please read our **Personal Safety and Lone Working Policy**.

The dangers and problems of lone working have been graphically illustrated by some high  profile incidents, one of the  best  known  is  that  of  the  Estate  Agent,  Suzy  Lamplugh,  who went missing following a predetermined meeting to show a prospective client around a  property. Her disappearance raised the profile of lone workers and the risks that they can face, as well as leading to the creation of a charity bearing her name, which has become

an[invaluable source of guidance](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.google.com/url?q%3Dhttps://www.suzylamplugh.org/%26amp;sa%3DD%26amp;source%3Deditors%26amp;ust%3D1684566118012178%26amp;usg%3DAOvVaw1x88xa0AwPVQqaQmqi51aE&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1684566118243126&usg=AOvVaw1JpWnnlc9Dden6l22Z8kJg).

**Manual Handling**

We are all at risk from manual handling injuries, so we ask you to take special consideration and care when lifting and moving items.

• Do not attempt to lift anything that feels uncomfortable to you.

• Where possible lifting heavy or awkward objects should always be done by mechanical devices rather than manual handling wherever reasonably practicable. The equipment used should be appropriate for the task at hand;

• The load to be lifted or moved must be inspected for sharp edges and wet patches;

• When lifting or moving a load with sharp or splintered edges, gloves must be worn;

• **Plan the lift before you start**. Where is the item going? Can you lift the load alone, or do you require help? Have you ensured the pathway is clear and there are no obstructions? Ensure you are lifting from a stable base (position your feet slightly apart to give you a solid foundation to conduct the lift).

• **Know your limits**. You should not attempt to lift or move a load which is too heavy to manage comfortably – you should ask for assistance if there is any danger of strain;

• **Push the load rather than pull it**. It's much safer to push a load than pull it. Just make sure you can see over it, and that your route is clear;

• **Bend your knees.** When lifting an object off the ground, assume a squatting position, keeping your back straight. The load should be lifted by straightening your knees, not your back;

• **Keep your head up**. Look ahead when moving the load, not down at it. This will keep your spine in the correct position, and you'll be able to see where you're going;

• **Hug the load and avoid twisting or leaning**. The closer the load to your body, the less strain is put on your back. Avoid twisting or leaning as this places pressure on the spine. Turn by moving your feet instead.

• You should not attempt to obtain items from shelves which are beyond your reach. A ladder or stepping stool should be used. You should not use chairs or any makeshift device for climbing and should never climb up the shelves themselves.

**Media Policy**

**Can I talk to the media?**

Unless communicating with the media is a specific and designated part of your volunteering role and you are expressly authorised to do so, you are not permitted to communicate with the media on any matters relating to StreetCare Volunteers’s business.

Although we would like you to be involved in promoting our work to people in your local area, getting the right messages across can be tricky. Only designated employees may issue press releases or talk with members of the media/press.  All media enquiries should be referred to the Chief Executive or the Communications Manager.

Even when authorised by the trustees, particular care must be taken as to what is said and what information is disclosed. If in any doubt always defer to the trustees.

See also see section on ‘Social Media’.

**Misconduct**

Whilst in our experience it is very uncommon for volunteers to engage in misconduct, volunteers are reminded that they are expected to adhere to their role description and our values.   If there are occasions when disciplinary or performance issues arise StreetCare Volunteers will handle them fairly and consistently. See ‘Problem Solving’.

**Mobile Phone use for personal calls**

Please set your mobile phone to silent or vibrate while volunteering, unless it is required by your role (for example, for safety reasons, Streetcare team leaders ensure their phones are on and audible in case they need to be contacted).

**Personal safety and Emergency Contact cards**

As part of your application, we invite you to complete an emergency contact form, this is entirely voluntary. If you wish you can choose to share information that will only be used in case of emergency or concern for your welfare.  For example, you can provide the details of an emergency contact, and any medical information, such as health conditions or allergies that you would like us to be aware of.  This information is kept securely in a database which can be viewed only by StreetCare Volunteers staff and authorised volunteers. It is your responsibility to inform us if any of your information changes. It is recommended that volunteers carry Emergency Contact Cards on their person.

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Please remember that it is your responsibility to ensure that while volunteering you do everything possible to avoid injury to yourself or others.  If an incident or accident or any injury occurs to you, please report it to your Volunteer Support Person or a member of staff as soon as possible.

We have designated first aiders at our national office who will assist anyone in need of medical attention during office hours.  If you are volunteering elsewhere, or out-of-hours, please familiarise yourself with local fire, emergency and first aid procedures.

Roles done by volunteers remotely, such as School Visitors or outside, such as StreetCare, should follow the personal safety procedures for their specific role.

If your role as a volunteer involves you dealing with members of the public, either over the phone or in person, it is expected that you will be polite and courteous at all times.

Unfortunately, incidents can arise when the behaviour of members of the public can be unacceptable.  Under no circumstances should you have to endure verbal or physically aggressive behaviour or put yourself at risk of assault.   If you feel uncomfortable with any particular situation or you experience any form of aggressive or unacceptable behaviour speak with your Volunteer Support Person or a member of staff who will provide you with support and if required record details of the incident.

All First Aid and Fire procedures will be outlined during your induction.  If at any point during your volunteering you want a refresher of this information, please ask your Volunteer Support Person who will be happy to talk through procedures with you.

If it’s required for your role, you’ll be issued with an Emergency Contact Card which you should always have with you when carrying out your activities.

**Privacy Policy**

We collect the information that you provide when signing up as a volunteer (such as our Volunteer Application Form). This may include personal data, such as name, email address, and other information that you volunteer, such as your emergency contact details.

We do this in order to create your contact record, log your interest, and ensure that we can provide the service that you’ve requested.You can read our [Privacy Policy here](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.google.com/url?q%3Dhttps://www.humanism.scot/privacy-cookies/%26amp;sa%3DD%26amp;source%3Deditors%26amp;ust%3D1684566118023136%26amp;usg%3DAOvVaw04Hm3sTSk6qO2z2RzRWb61&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1684566118245937&usg=AOvVaw2Os9dEOjXntRjWE0-Tixt9).

**Problem Solving**

For most people, volunteering at StreetCare Volunteers is an enjoyable and positive experience and any issues, which arise, are normally resolved quickly. Very occasionally, there may be situations which are more serious or need further investigation and in these circumstances, we will follow our problem solving guidance.

**Protection of Vulnerable Groups Children and Young People**

StreetCare Volunteers provides services to a wide range of individuals and organisations throughout Scotland, and we recognise that some of our clients will be young people and vulnerable adults. All staff and volunteers can play an important part in promoting the safety and protection of the vulnerable groups with whom we work.  We wish to ensure that all young people and vulnerable adults are protected and kept safe from harm while they are in receipt of services from StreetCare Volunteers, as such we will keep under review which roles may require PVG (Protection of Vulnerable Groups) scheme membership.

**Reliability and timekeeping**

While we don’t have a legal contract in place with you, we do have certain hopes and expectations for our volunteers. We depend on our volunteers’ help, so it’s really important that we know we can rely on your support, when it’s needed. Please try to keep to any arrangements you make. If your circumstances change, if you’re planning to go on holiday, or you can’t make your shift, please let your Volunteer Support Person know as soon as possible. If you are unable to make several shifts, then your Volunteer Support Person might have a chat with you to make sure you are still able to volunteer with us.

**Reformed Offenders**

StreetCare Volunteers is committed to equal opportunities and undertakes to treat all applicants for paid or voluntary positions within the organisation fairly, and not to discriminate unfairly on the basis of previous convictions or other related information.

Where we ask for details of any previous convictions it is because we have identified that the role demands it. Having a criminal record will not necessarily prevent any individual from volunteering with StreetCare Volunteers, and due consideration is given to the nature of the position together with the circumstances and background of any offences.

**Role description**

Your Volunteer Role Description will give you a good idea of what your role involves – please read it carefully so you understand the different tasks it describes. It is essential that you keep to your role description because the support and training we provide relates to your role. If you want to change roles, or take on an additional role, have a chat with your Volunteer Support Person or the SCV Team Leader and they’ll explore other options with you.

**Social Media**

Social media can be seen by everyone so be careful if you are talking about StreetCare Volunteers. In brief, when engaging in social media you must be clear about who you are representing**,**you must take responsibilityfor ensuring that any references to StreetCare Volunteers are factually correct and accurate and do not breach confidentiality requirements, and you must show respect for the individuals and communities with which you interact.

Where you are authorised to contribute to the Society’s own social media activities as part of your volunteering, for example for marketing, promotional and recruitment purposes, you must read our **Social Media Policy**and adhere to the following rules:

• use the same safeguards as you would with any other type of communication about the Society that is in the public domain;

• ensure that any communication has a purpose and a benefit for the Society;

• obtain permission from the Communications Manager before embarking on a public campaign using social media;

• request that your Volunteer Support Person checks and approves content before it is published online;

• follow any additional guidelines given by the Society from time to time.

Any posts on social media that are considered offensive or put StreetCare Volunteers’s reputation at risk may result in your volunteering being reviewed.

[StreetCare Scotland](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.google.com/url?q%3Dhttps://www.humanism.scot/get-involved/streetcare/%26amp;sa%3DD%26amp;source%3Deditors%26amp;ust%3D1684566118030395%26amp;usg%3DAOvVaw2kjYQa7T3WMIi5N90pNilO&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1684566118247473&usg=AOvVaw1jQD8ZRKcv44dq9g_fGp2K) is a volunteer-led initiative run by StreetCare Volunteers to help people in need on the streets of Scotland’s cities. StreetCare Glasgow began in 2011 and works with other support agencies in the city as well as church and other community groups carrying out similar work. StreetCare Edinburgh launched in October 2018 and closed in 2019, and StreetCare Stirling in 2019.  Projects provide hot drinks, soup, other foods and warm clothing on a non-judgemental basis for those who present as needing support. In addition our volunteers provide a listening ear for people who find themselves living in isolation.

**Trustees**

Charity trustees are the people who have general control and strategic management of the charity and are responsible for making sure that the charity works to achieve its charity’s purposes (the reasons the charity exists).

All charity trustees have legal duties and responsibilities under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005: the primary piece of charity law in Scotland. The role of our charity trustees is extremely important and can be very rewarding. Our charity trustees act with care and diligence, and follow the OSCR (Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator) [Guidance and good practice for charity trustees](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.google.com/url?q%3Dhttps://www.oscr.org.uk/media/3621/v10_guidance-and-good-practice-for-charity-trustees.pdf%26amp;sa%3DD%26amp;source%3Deditors%26amp;ust%3D1684566118031215%26amp;usg%3DAOvVaw0l3aF7Xg-nfLhyiOpsXPjq&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1684566118247720&usg=AOvVaw25k6fc9wN3loiXUb0JIuRF).

**Use of Equipment**

In order to enable some individuals to volunteer from home or otherwise away from the Society’s premises, the Society may provide them with designated items of office equipment. Office equipment may include computer hardware and software, laptop, printer, scanner, telephone / mobile phone or any other item of office equipment.  If you are provided with any items of office equipment, you agree that you will be responsible for ensuring they are properly looked after, only used by you for the purpose intended, and stored and otherwise kept safely at all times.

The Society reserves the right to require you to return any item of office equipment at any time during your volunteering for any reason whatsoever.

If you are to be allocated one or more items of office equipment for use at your home or away from the Society’s premises, you will be asked to sign a form or respond to an email acknowledging receipt of the equipment.

**Wellness Action Plan (WAP)**

Designed to support your health and wellbeing, a WAP is a tool for any volunteer that feels they would benefit from one. A WAP reminds you and informs us of what is needed to help you stay well during your time volunteering with us.  Please let us know if you feel you would benefit from one.

**Young volunteers**

We want to encourage young people to get involved.  We value their enthusiasm, energy, ideas and commitment. The minimum age to volunteer is 18 but it depends on the type of volunteering. For more information, speak to the SCV Team Leader.

Where young people are to be involved in

**Volunteer Policy**

1. **Introduction**

This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers and is relevant to staff, volunteers and trustees within the organisation. It aims to create a common understanding and to clarify roles and responsibilities to ensure the highest standards are maintained in relation to the involvement of volunteers. The volunteer handbook gives further details about the support and procedures in place for volunteers.

StreetCare Volunteers values voluntary activity as an important expression of citizenship and an essential component of a free and democratic society. StreetCare Volunteers seeks to involve volunteers in what it does in order to:

* Provide its participants with a diverse range of positive mentors and role models from throughout society.
* Contribute a wide variety of skills, experience and perspectives to our programmes.
* Help increase knowledge and understanding about Humanist issues.
1. **StreetCare Volunteers’s commitment to volunteering**

We recognise volunteers as an integral part of the organisation. Their contribution supports our mission and strategic aims, and complements the role of paid staff. We aim to encourage and support volunteer involvement to ensure that volunteering benefits the organisation, its clients and the volunteers themselves. Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

We are committed to offering a flexible range of opportunities and encouraging a diversity of people to volunteer with us, including those from under-represented groups such as youth, people with a disability, older people and people from black and minority ethnic communities. We recognise that there are costs associated with volunteer involvement and will seek to ensure adequate financial and staffing resources are available for the development and support of volunteering. We recognise our responsibility to organise volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

1. **Principles**

StreetCare Volunteers:

* Recognises that voluntary work brings benefits to volunteers themselves, to service users and to paid staff.
* Will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to StreetCare Volunteers’s work.
* Will not introduce volunteers to replace paid staff.
* Expects that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work.
* Recognises that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training for them to fulfil their role effectively.
* Will endeavour to identify and cover the costs of involving volunteers.
* Recognises that the management of volunteers requires designated responsibilities within specific posts.
* Will endeavour to involve volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities and ensure our volunteering opportunities are as accessible as possible
1. **Recruitment & selection**

Recruitment of volunteers will be from all sections of the community, and will be in line with StreetCare Volunteers’s Equality and Diversity Policy.  We endeavour to promote our volunteering opportunities to a diverse audience.

People interested in becoming volunteers will be given or signposted to general information about StreetCare Volunteers and specific information on the volunteer role in which they are interested. Volunteer Board Members (trustees) will also be given a role specific induction by the Chief Officer.

Dependent on the role, volunteers will be asked to complete a simple application form and (where required) supply the details of two referees. Once they have made an application, people interested in becoming volunteers with StreetCare Volunteers may be invited for an informal chat with the SCV Team Leader or another named member of staff or volunteer, depending on their location and the role they are interested in.

During this session, they will be talked through an induction checklist and given further information about StreetCare Volunteers and specific information on the volunteer role in which they are interested. They will also have the opportunity to ask questions. When they are ready to commit to volunteering they will be asked to sign a Volunteer Agreement.

Volunteers who are taking on roles which mean they will be supervising vulnerable groups or be in any other position of trust, will be asked to provide information about any criminal convictions through a Self-Disclosure Form. This information will be dealt with in the strictest confidence and will not necessarily prejudice the person being accepted for voluntary work.

For roles that involve specific activities with young people or protected adults (regulated work), volunteers will also be required to have membership of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups scheme.  StreetCare Volunteers can assist with the application process if required.

In some instances, it may be determined through the recruitment and training process that an applicant may not have the suitable skills, experience or personal qualities required for a particular volunteer role. In these circumstances, StreetCare Volunteers will endeavour to find an alternative role suitable for the applicant. If there are no suitable roles available, we will communicate to the applicant the reasons for our decision and decline their offer of help.

In exceptional cases, StreetCare Volunteers may refuse an application without giving any reason. Where relevant, we will signpost the applicant to more suitable volunteering opportunities at other organisations.

1. **Induction and training**

Volunteers will be given induction and training appropriate to the specific roles and tasks to be undertaken.

1. **Volunteer Agreements and Role Descriptions**

Each volunteer will be given a role description and a volunteer agreement containing full information about their chosen area of work and a clear idea of their responsibilities and StreetCare Volunteers’s responsibilities to them.

1. **The volunteer’s voice**

Volunteers will be consulted on decisions which affect them. Volunteers are encouraged to express their views about matters concerning StreetCare Volunteers and its work. Volunteers will be invited to complete an exit Interview or leaving questionnaire upon completion of their period of volunteering.

1. **Expenses**

StreetCare Volunteers will reimburse volunteers for all agreed and reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred while volunteering for StreetCare Volunteers, including items such as travel, and food. Volunteers should submit a volunteer expenses claim form to the SCV Team Leader  in order to process their expenses. Receipts or proof of purchase should be provided in all instances, in line with our Volunteer Expenses Policy.

1. **Equipment**

StreetCare Volunteers will provide equipment to volunteers for use only in line with their volunteering role.

**10. IT**

Any use of IT must be in line with the relevant StreetCare Volunteers policies, in particular Data Protection and Social Media Usage policies.

1. **Support for volunteers**

All volunteers will be assigned a named person as their main point of contact, that they are encouraged to approach for support.

1. **Insurance**

All volunteers are covered by StreetCare Volunteers’s insurance policy whilst they are on the premises or engaged in authorised work on the organisation’s behalf. Policies held include public and employer’s liability as well as personal accident cover for all volunteers. StreetCare Volunteers does not provide motor insurance for volunteers using their own vehicles. Voluntary work is normally covered as ‘social domestic pleasure use’ but volunteers are advised to check this with their insurer.

1. **Health and Safety**

We will take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the volunteers’ health, safety and welfare while volunteering is met in accordance with the Health and Safety policy. All volunteers are given health and safety information relevant to their location and role as part of their induction.

1. **Equalities & Diversity Policy**

StreetCare Volunteers is committed to equal opportunities for staff, volunteers and participants in all aspects of its recruitment, support and training.  Volunteers are expected to be open-minded, sensitive and respectful of people, values and experiences and should expect to be treated in the same manner. StreetCare Volunteers has a separate Equalities & Diversity Policy.

1. **Confidentiality**

StreetCare Volunteers expects volunteers to respect the confidentiality of any information they are party to as a volunteer for the society, as per our Data Protection Policy which is available upon request. Any breach of confidentiality will be investigated. This may result in the volunteer being asked to leave their volunteering.

1. **Drug and Alcohol Policy**

The drinking of alcohol or the use of non-prescription drugs is not permitted:

* By any volunteer or member of staff, while on duty
* By anyone on StreetCare Volunteers premises

In the event that a volunteer is discovered or suspected of alcohol and/or drug misuse, action will be taken to investigate the incident.  If there is reasonable evidence to indicate that the individual has been in breach of the policy, s/he may be subject to disciplinary action, which in turn may lead to the termination of their involvement with the organisation.

1. **Data protection**

StreetCare Volunteers abides by the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018

Personal information collected from volunteers is stored securely and access is limited only to those staff members and volunteers who are authorised to use it for volunteer management purposes.

1. **Dealing with Problems**

We aim to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. Seeking to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly. We will attempt to deal with any problems informally and at the earliest opportunity. All volunteers will have a named person to whom they can turn in the case of any difficulty or concern. Where informal resolution is not possible, the organisation’s **Volunteer Problem Solving Procedure** will be adhered to.

If the named person is unable to resolve the problem they will refer the matter to the Community Engagement Officer, if they are unable to resolve the problem they will refer it to the Chief Officer and ultimately the Board of Trustees.

Whilst the involvement of volunteers is generally a positive experience for everyone involved, there are times when things can go wrong.

A volunteer may wish to make a complaint about something or someone, and similarly the volunteer’s performance may decline, or someone may wish to make a complaint about a volunteer’s contribution, attitude or conduct.

These are rare occurrences, and the Volunteer Problem Solving Procedure is designed to clarify the process for dealing with these problems.

1. **Moving on**

Volunteers are asked to inform StreetCare Volunteers when they no longer wish to volunteer. When volunteers move on from their role they will be asked to provide feedback on their volunteering experience by way of a leaving questionnaire.

They will also be given the opportunity to discuss their responses to the questionnaire more fully with their named contact, the SCV Team Leader, coordinating volunteer or a member of staff.

On the basis of their voluntary work, volunteers will have the right to request a reference.

1. **Monitoring and Evaluation**

We will systematically monitor and evaluate our use of volunteers with reference to this Volunteer Policy.

1. **Other relevant documents**

The Volunteer Handbook includes detailed, useful information for volunteers including template forms, and organisational policies relevant to volunteers including a summary of our policies.

**Volunteer Expenses Policy**

**On Reimbursing Volunteer Expenses**

Although volunteering is unpaid, it should not cost a volunteer anything either. That’s why it’s good practice to reimburse a volunteer for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the course of their volunteering. **If you have never claimed expenses before with SCV, we ask that you discuss your potential claim in advance with your Team Leader in advance.**

**Why reimburse expenses?**

Expecting volunteers to cover their own expenses could be a barrier to people with low incomes or little spare cash. Not reimbursing expenses could also deter people who feel they are already contributing a significant amount of time.  Over time not readily reimbursing expenses can also lead to demotivation and a reduction in volunteer retention.

**Which expenses should be reimbursed?**

Any reasonable expenses incurred while volunteering should be reimbursed.

This includes but is not limited to:

* travel, including to and from the place of volunteering
* meals and refreshments
* administration costs, eg postage, phone calls, stationery.

For expenses such as meals and refreshments, it is useful to set a limit. We should ensure that all our volunteers are aware of the rules about expenses, to ensure they don’t incur unnecessary costs. This can be outlined in our volunteer expenses policy which should be shared with all our volunteers when they are recruited, and form part of their induction and volunteer handbook.

**Why is getting it right important?**

It’s important that any money we give to volunteers should only be for actual expenses incurred for a number of reasons.

• Any money given above ‘out of pocket’ expenses is regarded by HMRC as eligible for Income Tax and National Insurance Contributions.

• It could be viewed by an employment tribunal as being an employment contract between the volunteer and the organisation or group. As a result, the volunteer would be granted the same rights as employees, including the national minimum wage.

• It could affect payments if a volunteer is in receipt of benefits.

**Encouraging our volunteers to claim expenses**

Sometimes volunteers feel that they should not claim expenses. This might be because they feel it’s asking for too much or because they don’t need the money. Having money there to cover costs for volunteers is part of knowing the true cost of planning for volunteers so it’s good to encourage volunteers to claim it.

**Gifts**

It is important that any gifts given to say thank you to volunteers are seen as one off occurrences. Anything that is received regularly could be classed as payment in kind and become eligible for Income Tax. Legal requirements change so it is important that we have a process in place to regularly review our expenses policy and claim procedure.

**Volunteer Expenses Policy**

**Purpose**

StreetCare Volunteers Volunteer Expenses Policy provides guidelines on what expenses can be claimed for and promotes a reimbursement procedure that is fair and consistent across the organisation.

Please take the time to familiarise yourself with the policy. If you have any questions, it's best to ask your Named Volunteer Support Person or the SCV Team Leader.

**Policy Statement**

* We really appreciate the time our volunteers give to help support our work and we are committed to ensuring that no volunteer is out of pocket because of expenses incurred whilst carrying out their role with StreetCare Volunteers.
* As a charity we need to ensure that any expenditure is relevant to our charitable objectives and can be fully justified, therefore all expenses should be reasonable and kept to a minimum.
* It is also important that there is transparency with all payments and therefore all claims must always be supported by the relevant receipts for auditing purposes. Wherever it is possible we will ask for a valid VAT receipt to be submitted along with any expenses claim made.
* Expenses will be reimbursed for involvement/activity agreed with the volunteer’s named contact. Where availability allows, volunteers will be asked to take part in events and activities within their local area to minimise travel. Volunteers are asked to consider travelling via the most cost effective method of transport.

**Definitions**

For the purpose of this policy the term “Volunteer” has been used in its broadest sense:

A volunteer with StreetCare Volunteers is someone who, without expectation of financial reward beyond reimbursement of expenses, performs a task at the request of and on behalf of the charity.

**Scope**

* This policy applies to all volunteers who carry out their role within the whole organisation.
* Voluntary work experience placements, such as people on government funded work experience programmes organised through Job Centre Plus or on traineeships, are not covered by this policy. In most cases people taking part in such programmes can claim their expenses from their work experience placement provider.
* The reimbursement of expenses to volunteers are only given to cover any out of pocket costs that have been incurred and do not represent any financial reward or any compensation for loss of time. Payment of expenses does not change the recipient’s status as a volunteer.
* Interns are not covered by this policy as their expenses are to be processed in accordance with the StreetCare Volunteers Staff Policy.

**Key Responsibilities**

* StreetCare Volunteers will value and recognise the contribution of our volunteers, and ensure there is reimbursement of agreed out of pocket expenses.
* Volunteers are expected to act honestly and responsibly and to submit fair and reasonable agreed out of pocket expenses in accordance with this policy.
* The relevant employees are expected to check that claims comply with this policy, deal with them promptly and ensure they are claimed in accordance with the correct process.

**Reimbursable expenses – What can be claimed for?**

Before a claim is made, consideration needs to be given to the following;

* The expenses that are being claimed are reasonable and only cover any out of pocket expenditure and;
* Prior approval and agreement has been sought in advance with the appropriate Named Contact at StreetCare Volunteers.

Reasonable travel costs will be reimbursed in accordance with the following guidelines;

* Wherever possible the cheapest mode of transport should be used.
* If a volunteer is entitled to any kind of travel concession such as senior citizen pass or student pass, this must be used to help minimise costs to the charity.
* Weekly or monthly bus or train tickets are only to be paid for if they are the cheaper option and have been agreed in advance with the relevant member of staff.

**Public transport**

* Reimbursement will be made for the cost of travel tickets, bus, train, or underground fares. Appropriate receipts, used tickets, or ticket stubs must be attached to the expenses claim form. Where using a ‘pay-as-you-go’ electronic travel card or contactless card to obtain the lowest fare, a print-out / screenshot from the appropriate website / app to which the card is registered is appropriate as a receipt.
* The use of taxis will only be reimbursed in exceptional circumstances and where agreed in advance with the volunteer’s main staff contact. Exceptional circumstances may include but are not limited to situations where it is cheaper for a number of volunteers to share a taxi, if a volunteer has particular health or mobility restrictions or where it would be unsafe for a volunteer to take another form of transport.

**Cycle mileage**

* We will pay volunteers who cycle to the location of their volunteering a 20p per mile mileage rate, in line with Inland Revenue guidance.

**Use of own transport**

* To claim car mileage costs you must hold a valid driving licence and have informed your insurers that you are using your car for voluntary work.
* A volunteer using their own car may claim a contribution towards their mileage for the journey at the official HMRC rate, which is currently set at 45 pence per mile, but may be subject to change. Check with your named contact first, as mileage may be capped.
* You are entitled to claim a ‘passenger allowance’ of £0.05 per mile where another volunteer is carried as a passenger. You should note the name of the passenger on your claim form.
* A receipt for the purchase of fuel, covering the amount being claimed, should be included with your expenses claim.
* If a volunteer uses their own car to get to and from their site of volunteering, contribution towards car parking may be claimed for, up to a maximum of £10 per day. Payment must only be paid to cover the duration of the time volunteering and wherever possible volunteers must use the cheapest car park available. Appropriate receipts must be attached to the expenses claim form.
* We do not reimburse parking fines or speeding tickets under any circumstances

Any travel expenses to be claimed that are not covered by the above guidelines must always be agreed in advance with the SCV Team Leader.

**Subsistence**

* Volunteers who choose to participate in activities for 4 hours or more may claim for reimbursement of the costs of refreshments/meals up to the value of £4.50. Volunteers who choose to participate in activities for 5 hours or more may claim for reimbursement of the cost of refreshments/meals up to the value of £5.00.
* The time spent volunteering at the event should be noted on the expenses claim form.
* Volunteers may not claim for the cost of alcohol.

**Overnight Accommodation**

* In cases of volunteers requiring hotel or overnight accommodation this must be agreed in advance with the SCV Team Leader.

**The process of claiming expenses**

1. A Volunteer Expenses Claim Form must be completed and submitted to StreetCare Volunteers in order to be reimbursed for any of the above out-of-pocket expenses.

2. An original receipt for each expense listed must be given at the time of submission (clearly scanned receipts are also acceptable).

3. Volunteers are asked to calculate their mileage from postcode to postcode (via Google Maps), purchase fuel and obtain a receipt to claim for mileage.

4. Volunteers are asked to submit claims within 8 weeks of incurring the expense, and to assist with submitting claims before the close of our financial year (end of December).

5. Your claim MUST be approved before it can be paid.

6. When claiming expenses for the first time personal bank details must be completed.

7. Small claims can be reimbursed in cash at the national office with advance notice.

**Allowable expenses**

**Who can claim Allowable expenses?**

**Trustees expenses**incurred when on Board business including attending AGM & Conference.

**Local group expenses**incurred on the behalf of the local group.  These must be agreed in advance by the national office.  Local Treasurers should submit an annual budget proposal, and any other requests must be made in writing and are subject to approval.

**General volunteer expenses**incurred by volunteers who have signed a volunteer agreement (including Education volunteers / School Visitors, StreetCare Volunteers, Eco-humanists, Pastoral Care & Chaplaincy Volunteers etc)

**Payment of expenses** StreetCare Volunteers will maintain a simple and efficient system so that expenses are quickly reimbursed. To ensure the society utilises its resources in the most beneficial way, payments are made fortnightly via BACs (directly into your bank account). Please ensure all expenses are submitted either weekly or monthly. All expenses should be submitted within 2 months of the expenditure occurring. Claims that are more than 2 months old will not be accepted.

**Local groups** will make their own arrangements for the reimbursement of expenses. Where local expenses cover representational activities on behalf of either the local group and/or StreetCare Volunteers, details of this activity should be provided as soon as possible, even if the local group is arranging it. This is to ensure that all representational activities are logged and, where required, supported by the Senior Management Team and Board of Trustees

**The consequence of non-compliance**

Any abuse or misuse of volunteer expense payments will be treated very seriously and may result in a volunteer being asked to cease their volunteering and in the case of paid staff disciplinary action may be taken.

**StreetCare Volunteers Volunteer Agreement**

**Name of Volunteer**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Named contact**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Volunteer Role/s**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

To ensure you have the best possible volunteering experience with us, we have created this agreement which sets out our commitment to you and what we hope you can contribute.

This is to protect both the safety of our volunteers, and the organisation.  If you have any concerns or questions about your volunteering please speak to your named Volunteer Support Person, or the SCV Team Leader.

This agreement should be read alongside the relevant Volunteer Role Description, our Volunteer Policy and Volunteer Handbook.

**The following has been agreed between StreetCare Volunteers and the volunteer named above.**

**StreetCare Volunteers is committed to**:

* Providing you with an induction (and a copy of the Volunteer Handbook).
* Being responsive to your requirements, and providing a positive experience.
* Explaining the standards we expect and encouraging and supporting you to achieve and maintain them.
* Providing a named person (your Volunteer Support person) who will be your first point of contact whilst volunteering. They will help you to get the most from your volunteering, allow you to raise any issues you wish to talk about and provide support and signpost to training as required.
* Doing our best to help you develop your volunteering role with us.
* Being flexible in relation to your volunteering hours, recognising your need for holiday time and other commitments.
* Honouring the time commitment you have agreed to give us, and not expecting more from you unless offered and agreed.
* Providing training required to undertake the role, and ensuring you know what to do to stay safe, in accordance with our Health and Safety Policy.
* Reimbursing agreed out-of-pocket expenses following procedures set out in our Volunteer Expenses Policy.
* Providing adequate insurance to cover our volunteers whilst undertaking volunteering approved and authorised by us.
* Ensuring that all volunteers are treated fairly and in accordance with our Equality and Diversity Policy.
* Trying to resolve fairly any issues or difficulties you may have whilst you volunteer with us before they become problems. In the event of an unresolved problem, to offer an opportunity to discuss the issue in accordance with the relevant policies.
* Follow up on any feedback or questions you may have regarding your involvement as a volunteer.

**StreetCare Volunteers Volunteer Agreement (page 2)**

**StreetCare Volunteers Volunteer**

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ , agree to volunteer with StreetCare Volunteers and am committed to the following:

* Performing my volunteering role to the best of my ability, as agreed in my volunteer role description.
* Adhering to the organisation’s policies, procedures and standards.
* Familiarising myself with the work of StreetCare Volunteers and my role in particular, and asking if I’m not sure about what to do to stay safe whilst volunteering.
* Maintaining the confidential information of the organisation and of its clients.
* Meeting time and other commitments as agreed but when unable to do so giving reasonable notice so that other arrangements can be made.
* Providing references (if requested) and agreeing to checks under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme, as required.
* Returning any loaned equipment when ending my volunteering.

My agreed voluntary time commitment is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The intention of this agreement is to assure you that we appreciate your volunteering with us and to indicate our commitment to do the best we can to make your volunteer experience with us a positive and rewarding one.**Please note that this is a voluntary agreement only and does not constitute a contract of employment. It is not intended to be legally binding and may be stopped at any time by either party.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Volunteer**Signed: |  |  | **On behalf of SCV** Signed: |  |
| Name: |  |  | Name: |  |
| Volunteer role: |  |  | Job / Role title: |  |
| Date: |  |  | Date: |  |

**Wellness Action Plan (WAP)**

At StreetCare Volunteers we are committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of everyone who works or volunteers with us. A WAP is a tool for any volunteer that feels they would benefit from one. A WAP reminds you and informs us of what is needed to help you stay well during your time with us.

You should regularly review the WAP with your named Volunteer Support Person. You only need to provide information that you are comfortable sharing with us and that relates to your role with us. This form is not legally binding but it helps us to agree, together, how to support you practically in your role and address your physical and mental / emotional health needs.

|  |
| --- |
| 1. What helps you stay healthy while at StreetCare Volunteers? (For example, taking adequate breaks or being clear about tasks).
 |
| 1. What can your Volunteer Support Person do to support you to stay healthy? (For example, regular feedback and supervision or explaining wider developments).
 |
| 1. Are there any situations that may arise during your time with us that can trigger ill health for you? (For example, heavy lifting, conflict or something not going to plan).
 |
| 1. How might stress/mental health difficulties impact you? (For example, finding it difficult to make decisions or struggling to focus on tasks).
 |
| 1. Are there any early warning signs that we might notice when you are starting to feel unwell? (For example, changing normal behaviour patterns or withdrawing from other people).
 |
| 1. What support could we put in place to minimise triggers or to support you to manage this? (For example, extra catch-up time with supervisor, a break from the role or a change of start time).
 |
| 1. If we notice early warning signs that you are feeling stressed or unwell, what would you like us to do? (For example, talk to you discreetly about it or contact someone you have named to be contacted in this situation). Please include contact names and numbers if you would like your Volunteer Support Person to get touch with someone if you become unwell.
 |
| 1. What steps are you able to take if you start to feel unwell while with us?  Is there anything we need to do to help you take these steps? (For example, take a break and go for a short walk or ask your Volunteer Support Person for support).
 |
|  Volunteer Signature |  |           Date |   |
|  Volunteer Support Person Signature |   |           Date |   |
| Date to be reviewed |   |   |

Privacy notice: Any information shared is on the legal basis of 'Consent' and as such you have the right to request that it is erased.

 *Adapted from Mind Cymru (July 2019)*