awen

Ymddiriedolaeth Ddiwylliannol Cultural Trust

Polisi Gwirfoddoli

Volunteering Policy



Ava Plowright
Chair to Board of Trustees



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Volunteer Policy

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Who can help?

The People and Organisational Development Team can provide support and advice with the application of this policy and answer any questions you may have. Please email support@awen-wales.com or call 01656 754825

Other Support

- Safeguarding Policy and related Procedures
- Social Media Guidelines
- Data Protection Policy
- Equity, Dignity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy
- Volunteer Expenses Procedure
- Volunteer Complaints Procedure

Please Note

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment with Awen and may be subject to change.

1. Introduction

1.1. This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practices by which we involve volunteers. It aims to create a collective understanding and to clarify roles and responsibilities to ensure the highest standards are kept in relation to the management of volunteers.

1.2. The *Volunteering at Awen Document* gives further details about the support and procedures in place for volunteers.

2. Our commitments

2.1. We recognise volunteers as an integral part of Awen. Their contribution supports our purpose and strategic aims and complements the role of paid staff. We aim to encourage and support volunteer involvement to ensure volunteering helps Awen, its clients and the volunteers themselves.

2.2. Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure paid staff understand the role of volunteers and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

2.3. We are committed to offering a flexible range of opportunities and to 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 the global majority.

2.4. We recognise 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.

2.5. We recognise people have a right to participate in the life of their communities through volunteering and can contribute in many ways. We recognise our responsibility to organise volunteering efficiently and sensitively, so the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

2.6. In line with Awen's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, we will ensure that all volunteer opportunities, recruitment, and support practices are inclusive and accessible. We are committed to creating a welcoming environment where volunteers from all backgrounds feel valued, respected, and supported throughout their time with us.

3. Scope

3.1. This policy applies to all staff and volunteers.

4. What is a volunteer?

4.1. Volunteers are individuals who undertake activity on behalf of Awen, unpaid and of their own free choice.

4.2. The Welsh Government Volunteering Policy (2015) defines volunteering as activity which

- is undertaken freely, by choice
- is undertaken to be of public/ community benefit
- is not undertaken for financial gain

4.3. Work experience placements, internships and trainees are different from volunteering. Please refer to the People and Organisational Development (POD) Team for further information about these.

4.4. Volunteers may be involved on a one – off, short-term or on a long-term basis. They may be involved, for example:

- in the direct delivery of our services
- in community engagement to raise awareness of our work
- in one off events and promotional activities
- in our offices or in community venues

4.5. Volunteers are valued for:

- Bringing additional, diverse and new skills and perspectives to Awen
- Enabling us to be more responsive and flexible in our approach
- Championing our cause within the wider community
- Enhancing the quality of our work and of client experience
- Contributing to the wellbeing of users of services, staff, local communities and themselves

5. Standards of good practice

5.1. Our management practice is informed by the Investing in Volunteers Quality Standard for volunteer management.

5.2. There is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both in terms of what Awen expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of Awen.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Head of People/People Team

- Development of policies and, procedures
- Maintaining volunteering records including agreements and timesheets.
- Support managers with the organisation and delivery of training for volunteers

Managers

- Promotion of volunteer opportunities
- Recruiting and inducting volunteers
- Arranging training which is proportionate, suitable and delivered in an appropriate way to meet individual volunteer needs, whilst meeting training objectives for the role being undertaken
- Maintaining appropriate records and liaising with the POD Team to ensure records are up to date

Employees

- Welcoming volunteers and providing advice and guidance
- Being a volunteer buddy where identified

Volunteers

- Complete the *Volunteering at Awen* agreement and read the handbook
- Be reliable and honest
- Uphold the Awen's values and comply with Awen's policies

- Make the most of opportunities provided, e.g. for training, mentoring etc.
- Contribute positively to Awen's aims and purpose and avoid bringing Awen into disrepute
- Carry out tasks within agreed guidelines

Volunteers can expect

- Clear information about what is and is not expected of them
- Adequate support and training relevant to role
- To be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment
- To be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner
- To receive out of pocket expenses
- Opportunities for personal development
- To be recognised and appreciated
- To be able to say 'no' to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable
- To know what to do if something goes wrong

7. Recruitment and selection

7.1. Equal opportunities principles will be adhered to in recruiting volunteers. Opportunities will be widely promoted, in both English and in Welsh and in other languages as appropriate, to attract interest from different sectors of the community.

7.2. Positive action to target recruitment may be used where appropriate.

7.3. Information will be made available to those enquiring about volunteering, including information about volunteering at Awen and role descriptions.

7.4. Risk assessments will be in place to cover the activities undertaken by volunteers where applicable. These risk assessments will be shared with the volunteers together with any control measures and systems of work.

7.5. Recruitment may involve an informal chat or a written request and may include the requirement to undertake a DBS check. The process will be defined and consistent for any given role. For example, the recruitment process for regular volunteers and for volunteers for one-off events will be tailored in each case and may differ from one another.

7.6. Where applicants are not able to be placed in their preferred role, they will be provided with feedback and given the opportunity to discuss alternative volunteering roles or signposted to the local volunteer centre or the http://www.volunteering-wales.net website.

7.7. For roles which involve sustained and direct contact with young people or adults with learning difficulties, volunteers will be required to have a full DBS disclosure check which will be arranged by Awen. DBS disclosures are dealt with in the strictest confidence. A criminal record is not necessarily a bar to volunteering.

8. Induction and training

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

8.2. Access will be provided to Awen's Digital Learning Platform and training will be proportionate to the role being undertaken.

9. Support and supervision

9.1. Volunteers will be offered support and supervision as appropriate and this is discussed during induction. Arrangements vary according to the volunteer and the role undertaken, and may include telephone support, group meetings or one to one reviews.

10. Recognition

10.1. Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions via staff and volunteer team meetings, planning events, focus groups and/or volunteering surveys.

10.2. Formal recognition of the contribution of volunteers is expressed through annual reports, website articles, social media, and during Volunteers' Week.

11. Dealing with problems

11.1. Awen aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. It seeks to ensure volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly.

11.2. 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 contact in case of any difficulty.

11.3. Awen reserve the right to end the volunteering arrangement if necessary.

11.4. Where informal resolution is not possible, Awen's *Volunteer Problem Solving Procedure* may apply.

12. Expenses

12.1. Volunteers will be given clear information about what expenses can be claimed and how to make a claim. Volunteers will receive all out-of-pocket expenses incurred during their volunteering activities.

13. Moving on

13.1. When volunteers move on from volunteering with us, they will be asked to provide feedback on the volunteering experience by way of an exit questionnaire. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss their responses to the questionnaire more fully.

13.2. Volunteers who have remained with Awen for at least 3 months will have the right to request a reference. Volunteers will be supported to move on to other options.

13.3. Volunteers may request a copy of their training record.

14. Data Protection

14.1. Awen processes personal data collected in accordance with its *Data Protection Policy*. Data collected will be held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals on a need-to-know basis.

14.2. Inappropriate access or disclosure of volunteer data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with Awen's Data Protection Policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the disciplinary policy.

14.3. Data collected as part of the volunteer policy and procedures will be stored and retained in line with *Awen's Retention Procedure*.

15. Document Control

Policy Owner: Head of People

Business Unit: People and Organisational Development Team

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