

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Volunteers are an important part of DASL. They help DASL to achieve its aims and objectives and to deliver its services. They are a way of reinforcing links between the organisation and the community it serves. They help to define the identity of an organisation as one which values the contributions of disabled people and other minorities.
- 1.2 DASL will not use volunteers to do work which paid staff should be doing or to cover for shortages of staff. It will endeavour to make the volunteer experience distinctive and rewarding, adding value to the work which DASL does. It will try to ensure that volunteers' efforts are recognised and that they are supported and given opportunities to develop their skills and experience.
- 1.3 This policy does not cover the roles and responsibilities of volunteers who join DASL's Management Committee, for which separate policies and procedures are in place.

## 2. Equal Opportunities

- 2.1 DASL has an Equal Opportunities Policy. This applies to volunteers as much as to paid staff, both in the way which DASL treats volunteers and in their responsibilities when dealing with other volunteers, staff and service users.
- 2.2 Disabled volunteers will be especially welcomed by DASL and efforts will be made to ensure that disabled people with relevant skills and commitment are enabled to offer themselves as volunteers and receive the training and support they require to carry out their roles effectively.

## 3. Recruitment

- 3.1 As far as is practicable, recruitment and selection policies and procedures for volunteers will follow those for paid staff, as stated in the Equal Opportunities and Recruitment Policies. This will include the way in which volunteering opportunities are advertised and the application process.
- 3.2 Applicants will usually be asked to complete a standard application form. A job description for the type of volunteer work will be provided to applicants. All applicants will be interviewed by the supervisor (and an additional member of staff if required) and asked about their skills and experience and the commitment they can make to DASL. The interview will be conducted in line with DASL's best practice in regard to equalities.

- 3.3 Successful applicants will be asked to provide two references, which can be from anyone except immediate members of their family or household (if available, related to previous work or volunteering experience), and these will be taken up by DASL prior to them starting their duties.
- 3.4 Volunteers will also be asked to complete a declaration of any convictions under the *Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Act 1975* and to cooperate with a Criminal Records Bureau check where this is required by DASL, depending on the nature of the work which will be undertaken.
- 3.5 If DASL decides not to take someone on as a volunteer, it will explain how its decision was reached and, if appropriate, give the person information about other volunteering opportunities which may be available to them.

## 4. Terms and conditions

- 4.1 All volunteers will be asked to sign a Volunteer Agreement which will explain the responsibilities and commitments of each party.
- 4.2 All new volunteers will be given an induction programme which will cover the work of the organisation and training in their duties. Particular attention will be given to ensuring that the volunteer is fully trained and / or aware of key generic policies including Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities and Confidentiality. Volunteers taking on particular jobs (eg advice work, information work, office administration, newsletter production) will also receive more specific training in these areas of their work. During this period the supervisor will also help the volunteer to identify any training and support needs.
- 4.3 Volunteers will receive regular supervision, monthly during the first three months and usually at least quarterly thereafter, and an annual appraisal meeting where they will be able to discuss their longer-term personal development. Within the limits imposed by DASL's available financial resources, volunteers will be enabled to attend external training to improve their skills and, if appropriate, gain qualifications.
- 4.4 There will be a three month probation period, which may be varied by agreement between the volunteer and their supervisor. If this has not been completed satisfactorily, the supervisor will discuss any problems with the volunteer and with the Coordinator to identify whether any remedial action can be taken to address any issues of performance before any decision is taken to terminate the volunteer's service with DASL.
- 4.5 Where a volunteer has a complaint they will be expected to raise this in the first instance with their supervisor. If the complaint is about their supervisor, or if this is not effective in resolving the issue, they will be able to follow the same grievance procedure as applies to paid staff. Equally, volunteers will be subject to the same disciplinary procedure and rules as paid staff including where there are instances of gross misconduct.

- 4.6 Volunteers will be expected to inform their supervisor with as much notice as possible when they will be unable to attend at their agreed times because of sickness, holidays or other commitments.
- 4.7 Volunteers will be invited to attend team meetings and to be involved in project work and other activities as appropriate.
- 4.8 DASL cannot pay volunteers for their work but will undertake to give reasonable expenses for travel and subsistence costs which volunteers incur in direct connection with carrying out their duties.