


Policy

Title: Volunteer Policy

Document No.	Version	Status	Effective Date
POL-02	02	Approved	25/01/2020

Document Approvals

	Print Name	Signature	Date
Approver	Fran Crowell		25/01/2020

1.0 Objective

The purpose of this volunteer policy is to provide guidance for both staff and volunteers with regards to volunteering within Remember Us

2.0 Scope

The scope of the document applies to all Volunteers of Remember Us.

3.0 Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of Remember Us to have a policy in place to provide guidance for both staff and volunteers with regards to volunteering within Remember Us

It is the responsibility of Remember Us staff and volunteers to ensure they have read and understand the policy herein.

4.0 Policy

4.1 Introduction

Thank you for giving up your time to volunteer with Remember Us – Social Group for people with special needs. The purpose of this volunteer policy is to provide guidance for both staff and volunteers with regards to volunteering within Remember Us. It is also to acknowledge the importance and value of our volunteers. It aims to provide clarity to the volunteer's role and to outline the organisation's procedures and good practices in relation to the involvement of volunteers. This policy is effective from **25/01/2020** and is not retrospective.

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4.1.1 Mission Statement

Our mission is to combat isolation by creating a social environment for people with special needs and their families that supports their development and inclusion as valued members of the community

4.2 Volunteering for Remember Us

4.2.1 Definition of volunteering

Volunteering is any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives. Central to this definition is the fact that volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual. Volunteering benefits everyone; the individuals who do it, the organisations that they work with; and that organisation's user groups, as well as the wider community.

4.2.2 The Role of the Volunteer

Volunteers are a valuable and vital resource without which Remember Us could not provide its services. Volunteer involvement provides a unique aspect to our services along with a strong sense of community support.

4.2.3 Who can volunteer?

Remember Us welcomes all volunteers regardless of their cultural and ethnic origin, religion, age, gender and physical, social or economic background. However, we do have some requirements that need to be fulfilled:

- To be committed to the mission statement of Remember Us.
- The skills and abilities of the volunteer must match the requirements of Remember Us.
- The applicant must be over 16 years of age
- Applicants must be willing to submit a Garda Vetting Application.

4.2.4 The Rights of the Volunteer

- To know, if and how, they are being selected.
- To be given an overview of the structure of Remember Us.
- To be given meaningful work to do.
- To receive induction training and literature and where appropriate training for the specific role being undertaken.

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- To receive supervision and support where required.
- To know who to turn to with problems, to work with the knowledge that support is always available.
- To be appreciated and have their work valued.
- To be able to say no and not feel guilty.
- To have a safe working environment and to be covered by insurance.
- To be informed about and given the opportunity to play an active part in the organisation as a whole.
- To be free from discrimination.
- To raise grievances when appropriate.

4.2.5 The Responsibilities of the Volunteer

- To respect the aims and objectives of Remember Us
- To carry out the agreed work to the best of one's ability
- To respect the confidentiality of the organisation, members and any individuals a volunteer comes in contact with in the course of their work for the organisation.
- To be reliable and responsible and honour commitments
- To attend training sessions as scheduled
- To ask for help and support when needed
- To be honest if there are problems.
- To agree with Remember Us's volunteer policy

4.2.6 Commitment

Remember Us requires a commitment of service from all volunteers to ensure continuity of service for our members. The time commitment of a volunteer is to be agreed between the Programme Co-ordinator and the volunteer and where possible will be as flexible as the tasks allow. This commitment is for the benefit of both the volunteer and Remember Us.

While voluntary time commitment is never expected to match that of fulltime staff members, unscheduled absences create organisational problems and may directly affect the standard of services provided. When expecting to be absent, volunteers will inform the Programme Co-ordinator as soon as possible, so that alternative arrangements can be made.

4.3 Recruitment and Training of Volunteers

Recruitment of new volunteers will be based on an equal opportunities basis, where each person's application will be treated equally.

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4.3.1 Application Procedure

In order to protect the people using our services and in seeking to maintain their welfare, all who apply to be volunteers, whether they are known to the organisation or not, will be thoroughly screened before being accepted as approved volunteers. Enquiries to become a volunteer will be dealt with by the Programme Co-ordinator.

All potential volunteers will be required to complete an application form and, as the volunteer will be working with children and/or vulnerable adults, a Garda Clearance form. Potential volunteers may be called for interview.

4.3.1.2 Garda Clearance Form

Garda vetting is the process by which the Central Garda Vetting Unit (CGVU) discloses details regarding all prosecutions and/or convictions in respect of an individual. The CGVU is the unit within the Garda Síochána responsible for conducting Garda Vetting. Garda Vetting is not conducted by Gardaí at a local level.

Garda Vetting is a vital step in the safety and protection of children and vulnerable adults. In addition, it helps protect the organisation, other volunteers and staff. All applicants who will be working with children or vulnerable adults are provided with a Garda Vetting Form at the time of their application. This form must be submitted with the application to become a volunteer who will be working with children or vulnerable adults. Until the Garda Vetting Form has been received the application can go no further.

4.3.2 Training

All volunteers receive induction training, this training program takes place before a volunteer is placed. The training consists of a general introduction to the organisation, as well as information on the purposes and requirements of all those who volunteer for the organisation.

Bi-annual volunteer meetings will be held where aspects of training will be refreshed as well as updates and additions to current procedures will be presented.

Retraining after extended absence

Where a volunteer has been absent for a period of six months or more, they will be required to undertake a period of refresher training and shadowing to help them readjust to volunteering. This will be organised with the individual volunteer.

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4.3.3 Data Protection

Remember Us accepts full responsibility for the handling of all personal data disclosed to the organisation and has a duty to manage all such data, including all personal data, within the rules laid down by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). As a responsible data controller Remember Us is required to notify you of the following information regarding the collection, holding, use and disclosure (collectively known as 'processing') of personal information relating to you:

- Obtain and process information fairly.
- Keep information for only one or more specified and explicit lawful purpose.
- Use information and disclose it only in ways compatible with these purposes.
- Keep information safe and secure.
- Keep information accurate, complete and up to date.
- Ensure that information is adequate, relevant and not excessive.
- Retention of personal information, in the main the personal information obtained will be retained for 7 years after completing the volunteering role.

Your rights

You have a number of rights in relation to the personal information, which is held about you, including

- The right to see the personal information and to be provided with details regarding the processing of it.
- The right to have the personal information rectified if it is inaccurate or incomplete
- The right to request that the personal information is erased or to object to it being processed
- The right to complain to the data protection commission, which may be contacted via its website at info@dataprotection.ie

4.3.4 Review

Upon the completion of the recruitment procedure there will be an initial period of 8 weeks whereby the volunteer will be supervised by the Programme Co-ordinator/Lead Volunteer. Upon the conclusion of this period of 8 weeks the role of the volunteer will be reviewed by the Programme Co-ordinator and a member of the board of directors and in circumstances where it becomes apparent that the volunteer is unsuitable for the role the individual may be asked to cease acting as a volunteer.

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4.4 General Procedures

4.4.1 Confidentiality

Volunteers will not disclose any information regarding any member or person associated with the organisation. Volunteers will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement with the organisation.

4.4.2 Personal Safety

Volunteers should not have to tolerate abuse of any kind. Remember Us endeavours to maintain the safety of volunteers at all times. If you are unhappy or feel awkward with an individual or situation, you should discuss it with another volunteer or the Programme Co-ordinator.

4.4.3 Equal Opportunities

Volunteers are recognised as important part of Remember Us team and will be volunteering in an organisation that is committed to equal opportunities and diversity. This commitment is reflected throughout the charity's policies and practices.

4.4.4 Appropriate Behaviour

Volunteers are required to work within the policy and procedures of Remember Us. Volunteers should be aware that they are representatives of Remember Us and need to present a positive image to the public of Remember Us. It is against Remember Us's ethos for a volunteer to use their position within the organisation to promote their personal, political or religious beliefs.

4.4.5 Representing Remember Us

Volunteers are not permitted to represent Remember Us publicly in any situation without having discussed it with and obtained prior approval from the Programme Co-ordinator. This refers not only to when one is volunteering with Remember Us, but also when the work has finished.

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4.5 Terms and Conditions

4.5.1 Working Hours

Working times will be negotiated between the Programme Co-ordinator and the volunteer prior to commencement of position. A regular commitment is required. When a volunteer is likely to be absent the Programme Co-ordinator should be notified at the earliest possible time so alternative arrangements can be made.

4.5.2 Expenses

The cost of volunteering should never be allowed to discourage volunteering. Volunteers give their time and skills free of charge. If from time to time a volunteer incurs costs outside of their usual level of involvement, then Remember Us will reimburse any such out of pocket expenses incurred directly as a result of their volunteering activity provided they have been agreed in advance with the Programme Co-ordinator and that valid receipts can be produced.

4.5.3 Changes in Personal Circumstances

Volunteers are requested to inform Remember Us of any changes in their personal circumstances such as change of address, phone/mobile etc. or any other issue/development which would be likely to impact the volunteer's ability or suitability to continue to act as a volunteer.

4.5.4 Health & Safety

Remember Us is committed to protecting the health and safety of all volunteers and visitors to our activity venues and accepts its duties under health and safety legislation. We are also committed to ensuring, where possible, that all risks and hazards are eliminated or controlled to an acceptable level. Under the health and safety legislation volunteers are also responsible for taking reasonable care of their own health and safety at work and that of any other person who may be affected by their actions or omissions while at work. Volunteers should acquaint themselves with all safety procedures and ensure that they do their utmost to maintain safe working practices in the organisation.

If any volunteer observes or is aware of any practice which may be unhealthy or unsafe, he/she should draw the matter to the attention of management immediately. Volunteers must comply with all rules and procedures that relate to matters of health and safety. Failure to do so will be treated as warranting disciplinary action. Any deliberate action by any volunteer which endangers the health or safety of any other person in any activity venue may be deemed to be

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gross misconduct and may warrant dismissal. Volunteers must also comply with any new rules or procedures that may be introduced for the purpose of maintaining adequate health and safety precautions.

4.5.4.1 Insurance

Insurance is provided by Remember Us to cover all volunteers working on behalf and at the direction of the organisation. This cover applies to the place or premises where Remember Us's work is carried out. It does not extend to motor insurance or to travel to and from their voluntary work.

4.5.4.2 Fire Safety

If the fire alarm sounds, leave the building immediately by the nearest exit.

4.5.5 Dignity at Work Policy

Remember Us is committed to implementing and promoting measures to protect the dignity of volunteers and to encourage respect for others at work. Remember Us values the creative and innovative potential that volunteers with diverse backgrounds, skills and abilities bring to the work environment. Remember Us aims to create a work environment which is free from harassment, bullying, racism and disrespectful behaviour, by dealing effectively with any complaints of such conduct, and by welcoming diversity and promoting equality.

Volunteering will not be influenced or affected by a volunteer's race, colour, religion, sex, marital status, nationality, family status, sexual orientation, disability, age or membership of the travelling community. All volunteers are required to take personal and individual responsibility to comply with this policy and to behave in a non-discriminatory way. Should you have questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in Remember Us, you are requested to bring these issues to the attention of the Programme Co-ordinator. You are encouraged to raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal.

4.5.5.1 Grievance / Complaints Procedure

Volunteers are afforded protection under the Equal Status Acts 2000-2004 and have a right to make a complaint if they feel they have been discriminated against and/or treated in less favourable manner. Remember Us's policy and procedures are in place in order that complaints can be raised and dealt with effectively within the organisation.

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4.5.6 Dismissal

Volunteers who do not adhere to this volunteer policy or Remember Us's code of conduct or who fail to perform their work satisfactorily after support and guidance from the Programme Co-ordinator/Lead Volunteer may be asked to cease acting as a volunteer. No volunteer's involvement will be ended until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss with the Programme Co-ordinator the reasons for being asked to cease acting as a volunteer. Grounds for being asked to cease acting as a volunteer include, but are not limited to, the following:

- gross misconduct.
- being under the influence of drugs (including alcohol)
- theft.
- misuse of equipment and/or materials.
- abuse of members and/or co-workers.
- breach of confidentiality.
- failure to supply a satisfactory Garda vetting application form when required.
- failure to abide by Remember Us's policies and procedures.
- failure to complete duties to a satisfactory standard; or
- acting in a way that is detrimental to the interests of Remember Us.

Should a volunteer feel the basis for being asked to leave was unfair, they may appeal the decision to the Board of Remember Us. The appeal is to be made in writing within one month of the volunteer being asked to leave. The outcome of the appeal will be communicated to the individual within 28 days and will be final.

4.5.7 Termination & Exit Interviews

Volunteers are requested to give notice of termination at the earliest opportunity to allow time to find a replacement. To help with the future development of the volunteer programme, volunteers leaving Remember Us may be asked to complete an exit interview questionnaire. This helps Remember Us to learn from volunteer's experiences and put into practice lessons learned.

4.6 Feedback

Remember Us seeks to make ongoing improvements to the way it operates this policy. Constructive feedback on the policy is always welcomed and will be recorded. It should be given to the Programme Co-ordinator who will ensure that it is given due consideration.

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4.7 Review of Policy

The policy will be reviewed on a regular basis. Any information gathered will be used to evaluate the policy and procedures at regular intervals to identify changes if necessary, to improve the policy. All changes to this policy will be communicated to all volunteers.

For more information on volunteering please visit <http://rememberus.ie/volunteers/>

5.0 References

Remember Us Young Person Vulnerable Adult Policies&Procedures_V02_20200125

6.0 Revisions

Version Number	Description of Revision
01	First issuance of Policy for Volunteers
02	Review and update of format