

# Policy & Procedure

## Volunteering Policy

<PEOPLE DIRECTORATE>

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## **Introduction**

Volunteers are vital and contribute a huge amount to Sue Ryder. The time, effort and skills of volunteers help make it possible for us to deliver 2.5 million hours of expert, compassionate, care and support. From supporting the delivery of care services to serving customers in our shops, our volunteers are advocates for our work.

This policy explains the principles and practice by which Sue Ryder involves volunteers. It sets out the standards for recruitment, induction and appointment of volunteers. It provides a framework for fair and equal treatment of all volunteers, and it gives clear guidance about what we expect from volunteers and what they can expect from us.

### **1. About Sue Ryder**

Sue Ryder supports people through the most difficult times of their lives whether that's a terminal illness, the loss of a loved one or a neurological condition – we're there when it matters. Our Doctors, Nurses Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists and carers give people the compassionate and expert care they need to help them live the best life they possibly can.

### **2. Definition of a volunteer**

In the context of this policy a volunteer is a person who performs a service willingly and without pay to support Sue Ryder's work.

This includes people spending time with Sue Ryder through work experience, supported volunteering programmes, and those who are referred to the charity through community sentencing.

### **3. Who the policy applies to**

The policy is for all Sue Ryder volunteers and any Sue Ryder staff that work alongside or provide support to volunteers.

### **4. Commitment to volunteering**

Our ambition is that all volunteers feel appreciated, respected and proud to be part of the Sue Ryder team.

We are committed to developing volunteering opportunities that benefit the charity as well as providing an experience that is rewarding for volunteers in an atmosphere that is inclusive, stimulating and supportive.

We value the contribution volunteers make to every aspect of our work, and will invest appropriate time and resources into the planning and development of volunteering across the charity. We will stay up to date on national best practice and always strive to achieve it.

We are committed to making sure that volunteers are represented at every level of our work; that their voices are heard, and that their opinions are valued.

## 5. Volunteering Guidelines

What volunteers can expect from us. We will:

- Make sure volunteers have all the training they need in their role
- Ensure volunteers feel appreciated and respected
- Give all prospective volunteers equal opportunities; celebrating diversity and being inclusive
- Provide volunteers with regular support in a way that suits them
- Ask for feedback and provide opportunities for volunteers to help shape our future
- Celebrate successes and recognise the contribution of volunteers across the charity
- Resolve any concerns or complaints promptly and fairly
- Ensure volunteers have a clear idea of what their role involves
- Match volunteer skills and interests with appropriate roles that help the charity achieve its ambition
- Store volunteer data safely and correctly
- Take steps to make sure all our volunteers and patients are safe

We want to make sure all our services and support continue to flourish with the contribution of volunteers. In order to do so we ask all our volunteers to:

- Show support and consideration to your fellow volunteers and staff
- Support Sue Ryder values and behaviours
- Respect the confidentiality of people in our care and colleagues
- Act in a way that doesn't discriminate or exclude anyone
- Give as much notice as possible if you are unable to fulfil your planned volunteering, or no longer wish to be involved in volunteering
- Carry out any training that is needed in your role
- Work within our policies and procedures and guidelines; taking responsibility for their own health and safety
- Act as an ambassador for Sue Ryder
- Bring any concerns or issues to the attention of their local Volunteer Coordinator or line manager

## 6. Volunteer recruitment and selection

Sue Ryder adopts a needs-led approach to volunteer recruitment. This means we first identify a task, activity or a role that is required and then we take steps to recruit a suitable volunteer to undertake it.

### 6.1 - Application Procedure

Volunteers join Sue Ryder for a wide range of reasons, bringing with them a diverse set of skills and attributes that enrich our services. In order to make our roles accessible and our recruitment process fair, we're committed to adapting our selection process wherever possible to meet the needs or preferences of volunteers. We have a number of checks, training requirements and support measures in place to ensure that we're confident volunteers are matched to roles appropriate for them.

Volunteers can submit their interest in a number of ways:

1. By completing a standard application form which can be provided in printed form or online via our website
2. By completing a short online submission of interest form followed up with a phone call from one of our team to discuss their motivations, skills and experience in more detail.
3. Via a partnership or placement scheme with another organisation
4. Via a third party website such as Indeed, Do It or other similar volunteering recruitment pathways.

This information enables the charity to make a decision as to whether a suitable placement can be provided. Volunteer placements are made subject to the needs and restrictions of the location.

We have no upper age limit for volunteers, however we do not currently recruit volunteers less than 18 years of age in retail at the moment. This rule does not apply to some of our healthcare where we are able to welcome volunteers aged 16. More information about this can be found in our [Involving Young Volunteers](#) policy or by contacting the local Volunteer Coordinator.

Application forms and related documents are available to all staff on the [Volunteer section of RyderNET](#).

## **6.2 - Interviews and taster sessions**

Following a successful application, potential volunteers will be invited to an informal interview or a 'taster session' to see if they enjoy the experience. If at this point a role is not well suited to a potential volunteer, we will look at alternative roles within the organisation, or, where possible, signpost to organisations that may be able to assist them to find other volunteering opportunities.

## **6.3 - References**

Potential volunteers will be asked to provide details of two people that the Charity can approach for references. Although we prefer to have references these are not mandatory in retail.

Sue Ryder runs an inclusive volunteering programme. Where necessary and only with appropriate alternative safeguards we will make exceptions for people that do not have any referees (new arrivals to the country, people on placements etc.). We will accept agencies such as those on our Community Plus schemes and other placement providers can act as referees for their placements.

Some of our roles require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. This is carried out at no cost to the volunteer. You can read more about this in **Section 10**.

## **6.4 - Role Profile**

All Sue Ryder volunteer roles will be meaningful and worthwhile. The role profile outlines the tasks that the volunteer will be required to undertake when performing their role. All roles are clearly defined, so that both staff and volunteers understand the boundaries and scope of the role.

## **7. Volunteer induction, training and development**

All new volunteers will be made to feel welcome. They will be introduced to members of the team and receive a local induction. To keep our volunteers and patients safe we ask all

volunteers to complete training when they start in their role, and in some cases, refresher training each year. Senior Lead Volunteers will also be asked to carry out a selection of mandatory training.

Volunteers will have free and easy access to a variety of online resources and e-learning programmes that will help them feel confident in their role. They will be encouraged to develop their skills and take on a new role if they would like to.

## **8. Supervision and one to one opportunities**

Volunteers will be provided with ongoing support and supervision by a member of Sue Ryder staff or a Lead Volunteer. Volunteer one to ones / catch ups will vary depending on the responsibility and frequency of their role. All volunteers will be offered regular opportunities to discuss their role, share feedback and identify development and support needs.

It is important for volunteers to be reliable in any arrangements made with us. If a volunteer's circumstances change or they are unable to carry out a planned activity we ask that they let their Sue Ryder contact know as soon as possible. When volunteers plan to go on holiday we ask that they let their Sue Ryder contact know that they'll be unavailable for certain dates and when they plan to return.

## **9. Reward & Recognition**

The Charity has a variety of ways to recognise the contribution of volunteers, including long service awards, thank you certificates, annual awards, a Volunteer Facebook Group and regular communication. We will continually look to develop new ways in which we can recognise and thank volunteers for their invaluable commitment to our work.

## **10. Sometimes things go wrong**

Sue Ryder understands that sometimes things can go wrong. Should this happen we have a [Talk to Us](#) volunteer complaints procedures that will be followed. We aim for all complaints and disputes to be resolved openly, fairly and quickly to:

- protect our volunteers
- minimise disruption to staff, service-users and other volunteers
- demonstrate respect and commitment to our volunteers
- protect the reputation of the Charity

Most concerns and complaints can be resolved at a local level, informally, in a conversation between line manager and volunteer. If the matter cannot be resolved in this way, volunteers can refer the matter to the next level of management - departmental manager or area manager - who may carry out an investigation.

For our retail volunteers - Where matters remain unresolved, volunteers can telephone, write to, or email the Volunteer Helpline. For our Healthcare and Fundraising Volunteers – Where matters remain unresolved, volunteers can telephone or email the Volunteer Manager for Healthcare and Fundraising.

Further investigations may take place, and a solution or course of action will be suggested. There is an appeal process however this is the final stage and the decision is final and ends the volunteer complaint process.

### **10.1 - Procedure for addressing poor performance or inappropriate behaviour**

If there are concerns around a volunteer's behaviour or contribution, the matter will be discussed with their supervisor and steps agreed to address it. Volunteers will receive information about the concern, and supportive and constructive feedback.

A volunteer placement may be ended if the Charity believes that there is sufficient cause. Examples of this include:

- A breach of confidentiality
- A breach of trust
- Acts that bring the charity into disrepute
- Any acts that disregard Sue Ryder policies or procedures including Equality and Diversity
- Physical or verbal abuse of a service user, members of staff, other volunteers, members and the public
- Theft from the charity, staff, other volunteers or service-users

Sue Ryder has a Zero tolerance of any "Hate Crimes".

Where it is necessary to end a volunteer's involvement with the Charity we will aim to give due notice to the volunteer and will treat the volunteer fairly, and with dignity and respect.

## **11. Moving on**

The Charity recognises that volunteers are free to cease their involvement at any time. When a volunteer decides to leave the Charity we will ask them to share their reasons for leaving. We welcome feedback which may help us to improve future volunteering experiences. The volunteer will be offered the opportunity to stay in touch with Sue Ryder's to hear about the Charity's work and for the chance to be involved at another time in the future.

We are willing to provide references to prospective employers for future positions volunteers apply for. All references are provided via the volunteer helpline team on request from a prospective employer. We do not provide testimonials e.g. an upfront reference or letter of recommendation. We also do not send references directly to the volunteer under any circumstances.

Personal references/recommendations – If a manager would like to provide a reference this is possible. However, please note this a personal reference and these references cannot be provided on Sue Ryder letter headed paper or via a Sue Ryder email account. More information about providing references for volunteer can be found in our [Volunteer Leavers and References](#) guide.

Volunteers must return all property belonging to the charity should they cease to be a volunteer, including their volunteer ID badge, lone working device, and any technology that has been provided such as a phone or laptop. This also may include shop keys.

## **12. Equality and Diversity**

Sue Ryder is committed to equity and inclusion in all areas of its work. We believe that no one should receive less favourable treatment on the protected characteristics of their age, disability, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity. We take into account the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 whilst going above and beyond to protect people that aren't protected in the act, for example, non-binary people or people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

At Sue Ryder we work to remove barriers, enabling an inclusive and engaging volunteering experience. All decisions to work with a volunteer will be based upon a person's suitability for the role. Processes are in place to ensure that all volunteers are treated fairly and consistently in our recruitment process.

More information can be found in our Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy and our Bullying and Harassment Policy.

### **13. Safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults**

Sue Ryder will take all reasonable steps to safeguard young people and vulnerable adults while they are in contact or care with the Charity, complying with all current legislation and codes of practices.

All volunteers who are to work with children, young people or other vulnerable groups, will be made aware of their responsibility in relation to safeguarding. They will receive appropriate, regular training and supervision. Where necessary we will take up references and seek an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Check from the appropriate body (DBS, Disclosure Scotland).

### **14. Keeping in touch**

Sue Ryder actively encourages all volunteers to sign up to receiving information relevant to their role and the Charity. Through good communication we will help volunteers feel more engaged and involved in the work of the Charity. This in turn supports volunteers to be advocates and supporters of Sue Ryder.

### **15. Expenses**

For Retail volunteers

- Volunteers completing shifts of 2 hours are eligible to claim out of pocket travel expenses.

For Healthcare and Fundraising Volunteers

- Volunteers completing shifts of 2 hours are eligible to claim out of pocket travel expenses.
- If the volunteer already has a telephone calling plan and uses some of the included minutes in the course of their volunteering, but doesn't exceed those minutes, the volunteer has incurred no additional expense as a result of their volunteering so there is nothing to reimburse. If the included minutes are exceeded and an additional cost is incurred by the volunteer, again only costs that are clearly a result of the volunteering should be reimbursed. So if the cost of the calls is itemised it can be reimbursed, but if they aren't itemised it's not possible to show that it was the calls related to the volunteering that took the volunteer over their included minutes.

Expenses must be agreed prior to the volunteer starting and are authorised by the volunteer's supervisor or departmental manager. Receipts or tickets must be provided. Our Volunteer Expenses Policy for Retail and Healthcare explains this in more detail and can be viewed on Rydernet.

### **16. Health & Safety**



Sue Ryder is committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of all its volunteers, staff and visitors. Any activities carried out on a voluntary basis are covered by the same Health and Safety Policy as those carried out by Sue Ryder employees. It is important that volunteers understand and accept their personal responsibility towards promoting and maintaining health and safety standards in order to provide a safe working environment for all.

Some of our roles require health and safety training which is refreshed on a regular basis. Our Senior Lead Volunteers in retail are also required to carry out mandatory training. This training will be allocated automatically.

Volunteers are encouraged to raise any concerns they have about health and safety by contacting their line manager or emailing the volunteering team at [volunteering@sueryder.org](mailto:volunteering@sueryder.org)

## **17. Insurance**

All 'authorised' volunteers are covered by Sue Ryder Public Liability insurance for any official charity voluntary activity as instructed by a member of staff.

## **18. Copyright and intellectual property**

Volunteers may be asked if they would donate to Sue Ryder the copyright and intellectual property to any original works they may produce whilst volunteering e.g. photographs, original artwork and research findings etc. For particular roles that specifically involve producing such work, volunteers will be asked to sign an Intellectual Property Agreement.

## **19. GDPR – General data protection regulations**

Sue Ryder gathers a variety of information on volunteers in order to manage, support and recognise volunteers' contribution to the Charity. This personal information is stored and maintained, with appropriate safeguards, on our central volunteer database. The Charity abides by all provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018.

Volunteers who collect or administer any personal data on individuals will also be required to comply with the provisions of the Act.

Some volunteers will be asked to complete Information Governance and/or GDPR training as part of their role, depending on the tasks they carry out.

## **20. Confidentiality**

Volunteers must maintain confidentiality during their time with Sue Ryder. When volunteers are invited to join us they are also asked to sign a confidentiality declaration. This means that confidential information about people we support, volunteers, employees and our work is kept private, unless sharing this information is required by law.

All our home working volunteers will be required to comply with our home working guidelines to ensure data protection law is complied with.

## **21. Covid-19**

Anyone with symptoms of a respiratory infection, including Covid-19, should not come into a

Sue Ryder workplace. Volunteers are advised to take a rapid lateral flow test, and to self-isolate if the test result is positive for Covid-19.

Depending on where they live volunteers should follow guidance on self-isolating set out by the respective government in England, Scotland and Wales:

England - [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

Scotland - [www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot)

Wales - [www.gov.wales](http://www.gov.wales)