# VOLUNTEERS POLICY

Volunteers are a valuable part of our organisation. They complement and support our existing staff base bringing with them a wide range of individual skills. FSN aims to recruit volunteers and endeavours to nurture volunteer skills, offering development through a range of training opportunities. FSN listens, values and responds to volunteers’ suggestions and recognises that successful volunteer involvement requires an open two-way communication leading to mutual understanding and a good relationship between the organisation and volunteer.

### 1.0 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

1.1 FSN seeks to recruit volunteers who are enthusiastic, have a willingness to learn, and have a friendly caring and helpful approach to children, young people, families and carers, that reflects a mature attitude and an open mind that is

non-judgmental and non-discriminating. FSN applies its Equal Opportunity Policy to all of its work with volunteers.

1.2 FSN advertises for volunteers by using notices at all its work places, on the website and social media. When a person approaches a member of staff showing interest in becoming a volunteer an informal meeting will be arranged with the Volunteer Coordinator to talk through any queries and enable the potential volunteer to learn about the project and organisation. A volunteer role description including required skills and experience will be issued for any volunteer role.

1.3 If the person feels that they wish to give some of their time to the organisation the Volunteer Coordinator will request that they fill in an Application Form and at the same time confirm that references will be taken up and enhanced police DBS check made for all placements, in line with FSN recruitment policies and procedures .

1.4 A formal interview will take place. After the return of satisfactory references and DBS checks, the volunteer will be contacted to attend an induction session and plan a start date. The Volunteer Coordinator will hold a review and support meeting usually after 6-8 weeks, to see if the arrangement suits both the volunteer and the project. This review period will allow for any changes to be made, additional support or placement to end.

 1.5 FSN follows the requirements of legislation and good practice guidelines in offering employment and volunteering opportunities to ex-offenders. As many of our services are provided to vulnerable groups, all volunteer roles require that applicants must declare convictions even if they are spent. Generally speaking, FSN cannot offer volunteering opportunities if there are convictions relating to children or violence. Those with other convictions within the past 10 years will require some further review, but may not stop your opportunity to volunteer. Due to the vulnerability of FSN service users, ex drug users need to demonstrate that they have been clean for at least 10 years. All information regarding convictions is treated in a confidential manner and will only be disclosed to those responsible for decision making or managing the individual if the conviction is relevant to the placement. If a DBS issue is found, HR will contact the applicant to ask for more information which will go to the CEO in the first instance, who will in the majority of cases be able to make a decision. If it is necessary the CEO will pass the final decision onto the Personnel Panel, made up of members of FSN Board of Trustees.

### 2.0 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

2.1 FSN seeks to encourage its staff, trustees and volunteers to develop their skills. Volunteers are entitled to the same training opportunities, support and expenses as staff. The Volunteer Coordinator and managers will support volunteers should they wish to apply for further training / courses and for grant funding for their training

2.2 As a learning organisation FSN seeks to provide opportunities to develop its volunteers particularly with access to vocational courses that are generally taught in-house.

2.3 During the induction process, all members of staff are expected to co-operate in training new volunteers in policies, procedures and methods of responsibilities within FSN.

2.4 Volunteers are required to undertake a comprehensive induction with the Line Manager of their chosen project. As part of the induction, volunteers will be expected to complete mandatory safeguarding training. This can be accessed through the ESCC (Online) Learning portal or in-house (face to face training) with FSN. This training will need to be updated annually. Volunteers may also be required to complete further mandatory training in line with specific project requirements.

2.5 The induction process enables volunteers to understand the services delivered by FSN, how their role as a volunteer fits within the organisation and the contribution expected from them. The induction process will also cover responsibilities in regard to policy and procedure such as respecting confidentiality, GDPR, equality and diversity and code of conduct.

2.6 Training needs will be identified during volunteer support and supervision sessions,

where the volunteer coordinator,manager and volunteer will identify training that will support the volunteering activity as well as the personal development of the volunteer.

2.7. If the volunteer feels the demands of the role are unrealistic, beyond the scope of the role, or they do not have the skills to carry out the role, a discussion can take place with the volunteer coordinator or line manager. Regular supervision with the volunteer coordinator or line manager is undertaken to review how the volunteer is managing the role and make any adjustments, as required and appropriate.

2.8 Volunteers are to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and all other persons who may be affected by their acts or omission at FSN. Volunteers are required to follow guidelines and procedures relevant to their role and in line with FSN’s Health and Safety policy and the risk assessment provided for their role.

### 3.0 EXPENSES

3.1 FSN volunteers are entitled to claim expenses. These include:

* Travel to and from the place of volunteering
* Travel undertaken in the course of volunteering
* Light meal taken during the period of volunteering work if over 4 hours
* Postage and telephone costs if required for the volunteering activity

There is a form to be filled in to claim expenses which will need to be approved by the volunteer coordinator or line manager.

**4.0 REFERENCES**

4.1 FSN are happy to complete references for volunteers who have been actively helping for more than 6 months. References can only be offered within three years of leaving the organisation. You should obtain permission from your Line Manager to give their name and the address at FSN as a referee. HR and your Manager will then complete the reference.

**5.0 INSURANCE**

5.1 Volunteers helping in the projects are fully covered by FSN’s Employer’s Liability Insurance. To ensure that the insurance is valid:

* Certain tasks within your role may need to be risk assessed
* A proper qualification may be required
* A current DBS must be held by HR
* Regular supervision reviews of your role must take place.

These measures will ensure that you are protected at all times.

### 6.0 PROBLEM SOLVING

6.1 FSN will endeavour to address any issues and to seek to find ways of meeting the volunteers’ needs as well as those of the organisation, staff and service users. FSN has a Volunteer Problem Solving policy (FSN.022.u) which sets out the procedures for addressing any issues or concerns raised by or about volunteers.

**7.0 RESTING VOLUNTEERS**

7.1 If a volunteer needs to take time out for health or personal reasons this is known as ‘Resting’. FSN aims to maintain a flexible and sensitive approach to supporting our volunteers and has a Volunteer Resting policy (FSN.022.t) which sets out the limit and procedures for any rest period.

**8.0 ENDING YOUR ROLE**

8.1 If you are leaving on a permanent basis you will be asked to complete an exit questionnaire with the Volunteer Coordinator so that we can evaluate your experience and thank you for your time. If you have not volunteered for over six months (without a discussion with the Volunteer Coordinator) you will be automatically asked to complete an exit questionnaire.