

Involving Young Volunteers in Healthcare and Fundraising

People Directorate

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**Because no one
should face death
or grief alone**

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1. Equity Statement

Sue Ryder designs and implements policies, procedures and ways of working that meet the diverse needs of our clients, service users and employees. We ensure that our policies not only don't discriminate but also consider the unique needs of certain identities and communities. This document has been reviewed to ensure that no one receives 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 consider the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 whilst going above and beyond to protect people who aren't protected in the act, for example, non-binary people.

2. Introduction

At Sue Ryder, we value young volunteers (aged 16-17) and aim to create a safe and rewarding experience for them. This policy outlines the tasks they can undertake and the measures we have in place to ensure their safety and respect while volunteering. Please refer to this policy alongside the Sue Ryder National Volunteering Policy for more details.

3. General Principles

3.1 Types of activity

There are no specific laws about young people volunteering for non-profits, but we must follow clear guidelines to make sure they are safe, protected and well supported.

These principles around types of roles must be applied to all volunteers aged 16-17:

- Must not volunteer in any one-to-one patient-facing roles
- Must not volunteer in a ward setting
- Must not work on a one-to-one basis with members of the public, other volunteers or paid staff who do not have a DBS check
- Must not carry out hose-to-house collections or street collections
- Must not carry out a volunteering role that requires access to the Fundraising Database (Raisers Edge)
- Must not have responsibility for handling donations

3.2 Hours

These principles around volunteering hours must be applied to all volunteers aged 16-17:

- Must not volunteer before 7 am or after 7 pm
- Must not volunteer for more than 2 hours on any school day or Sunday
- Can only volunteer for 1 hour before the start of school
- May only volunteer a maximum of 12 hours per week in term time
- Must have a break of at least 1 hour after four hours of volunteering
- Must have at least 2 weeks free from volunteering during the school holidays

You should also consider whether they are able to carry out the work and have everything they need to complete tasks. Your assessment of this should take into account the young person's age and stage of development, their circumstances and any additional needs they may have.

3.3 Assessing risk

Risk assessments must be carried out for all young volunteers. In addition to the usual considerations around health and safety, your risk assessment needs to identify any potential safeguarding issues that might occur with the tasks that young people are asked to undertake. These include:

- the potential risks for exploitation of the young volunteers
- the possible emotional impact of tasks
- the impact of pressures young people may be experiencing in their lives (for example during exams)

Exploitation and grooming

Forming healthy working relationships with adults is an important part of being a young volunteer. However, you should be aware of the risks of grooming and inappropriate behaviour. Measures you can take to mitigate risk include:

- setting out how you expect young volunteers and the adults working with them to behave during their induction period
- making sure young volunteers know who they can talk to if they have a concern and that they feel safe to do so

- making sure young volunteers aren't left alone with an adult who is not DBS checked

3.4 Recruitment

You may need to adapt your usual volunteer recruitment processes to meet the needs of young people; for example, you may choose to hold a less formal interview.

Always carry out all the necessary checks, such as references and DBS checks. Information about DBS check requirements can be found on Rydernet.

Consent and parental permission

You must get written agreement from young volunteers who want to be involved with your organisation. This should set out what they will be doing and the organisation's expectations of them. The young person should sign this document. A parental consent form must be signed by the volunteer's parent or guardian. It is important that the parent/guardian fully understands what the volunteering involves and can see that you will take good care of the young person. Make sure that you provide them with information about any time commitments, the location of the volunteering, the tasks to be performed, and how the young volunteer will be supervised and checks conducted on adults working with their children and other Safeguarding measures.

Although a young person may have agreed to their involvement, there may be specific activities that they feel uncomfortable taking part in, and you should discuss with them what alternative arrangements would be appropriate.

Emotional impact and other pressures

You should think about the emotional impact of working in a hospice or fundraising setting on your young volunteers and make sure support is in place if they are ever worried or concerned about anything. In addition, young volunteers may be facing other pressures at home or at school. For example, they may experience additional stress during exam periods or if they have caring responsibilities at home. Consider whether you need to make any adjustments to their role, and make sure they know who they can talk to if they need to.

If a significant risk remains despite your best efforts to do what is reasonably practicable to control it, you must not engage the young person in the volunteering role.

3.5 Induction and training

All volunteers should be given an induction and regular training, including safeguarding training in line with our National Volunteering Policy.

You should tailor your induction process so that it is accessible for young volunteers and covers any additional requirements or questions they may have. Make sure you discuss what a young person should do if they have a concern either about themselves or someone else and provide the volunteer with our Talk to Us Complaints Policy.

Young volunteers should understand their safeguarding responsibilities, know what it is that you expect from them and what steps they should take if a safeguarding matter arises. Make sure safeguarding policies and procedures are always accessible for young volunteers.

3.6 Working with groups of young volunteers

Groups of young volunteers must be adequately supervised. For young people aged 16-17 the adult to young person ratio should be 1:10. When deciding on the number of adults required, it is important to bear in mind that these ratios are guidelines only, in certain situations it will be necessary to have a higher number of adults than the recommendation suggests. If, for instance, the children or young people have specific support needs, or a risk assessment identifies behaviour as a potential issue for the group or event, the number of supervising adults will need to be higher.

Volunteers from other groups

There are lots of groups and organisations who help and encourage young people to find volunteering opportunities such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and National Citizen Service. Some schools and colleges also run volunteering schemes with their students. There can be benefits in working alongside groups like this that are experienced in working with young volunteers.

If you're working with another organisation, make sure you follow their policies and procedures as well as those of your own group or organisation. You should also find out what they expect of the young volunteer and your organisation. For example, do they require regular updates, or will the young volunteer need to carry out certain activities? Our Legal Team will need to approve any agreements with another organisation.

3.7 Named line managers

Young volunteers may need additional support and supervision. You should make sure that there is clear and accessible support available and that young volunteers know how to access this.

All young volunteers should have a named line manager. Anyone acting in a supporting role should be skilled and competent at supporting young people from a variety of backgrounds and abilities.

For one month from their start date young volunteers must have a one-to-one or supervision every week. After the first month the frequency of supervisions may drop to every other week if the volunteer and their supervisor feel this is appropriate.

Buddying schemes

You could create a "buddying" system where young people in a similar position can support each other, although this should never be a substitute for adult support.

3.8 Having a young volunteer in your team

Young volunteers need age-appropriate support. What follows is a suggested list of good practice guidelines for the wider team.

Professional boundaries

- Never give a young person your home address or personal telephone number
- Do not loan money to young people or borrow it from them
- Report any substance use to the Volunteer Coordinator immediately (even if you suspect it)
- Try not to undermine parents, teachers etc.
- Report any concerns (including abuse, drugs and alcohol, risky behaviour and anti-social behaviour) to the Volunteer Coordinator
- Do not give or receive gifts
- Never contact a young person on social media or private email

4. Eligibility

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.

The policy is for all young Sue Ryder volunteers (aged 16-17) and any Sue Ryder staff who provide support to young volunteers.

5. Responsibility

Individuals

Young volunteers are responsible for ensuring they understand and adhere to this policy, and other relevant policies, including our National Volunteering Policy.

Managers

Managers are responsible for ensuring this policy is always followed. They must ensure that young volunteers are clear on the support available to them and have a clear understanding of how to access support and report concerns.

Volunteering Team

The Volunteering team are responsible for providing ongoing support and advice to people who are working with, or planning to work with, young volunteers.

6. Associated policies and procedures

National Volunteering Policy

Talk to Us Complaints Procedure

7. Useful Links

[Young volunteers and safeguarding – NSPCC guidance](#)

[Engaging and supporting young people to volunteer – NCVO guidance](#)