

Volunteering Policy

1. Policy Statement

Volunteers are an integral part of Speech and Language UK. We value our volunteers and aim to provide a good volunteering experience for them. This volunteering policy sets out how we hope to achieve that.

A volunteer is somebody who is involved in an unpaid activity doing something to benefit others.

Speech and Language UK's mission is to ensure that no child who struggles to communicate is left out or left behind. Our vision is a world where all children and young people who struggle to communicate receive the help they need so that they can have a happy childhood, make progress at school, and thrive as adults. Volunteers contribute to Speech and Language UK's work, enhancing existing services and providing alternative perspectives and skills to paid employees.

We provide diverse volunteering opportunities to people with all levels of skills and experience who are looking for a new challenge or a stepping-stone into employment. Volunteers are involved as trustees, administrators, fundraisers, researchers, awareness raisers and teaching support, amongst other opportunities.

2. Responsibilities and Expectations

Speech and Language UK has certain expectations of our volunteers. In particular that they:

- Represent Speech and Language UK to members of the public in an appropriate and professional way, enhancing the reputation of the organisation.
- Respect the need for confidentiality.
- Co-operate with paid staff and other volunteers.
- Aim for high standards in the work that they contribute.
- Communicate regularly with their lead manager and ask if they are unsure about anything.

Speech and Language UK equally has responsibilities towards its volunteering cohort. In particular that they:

- Make volunteers feel welcomed and valued, and to communicate regularly that their contribution is recognised.
- Ensure the volunteering position is clearly outlined with a role description and that expectations are made clear.
- Ensure that every volunteer has a paid member of staff with whom they can discuss any issues relating to their role.
- Provide regular opportunities to discuss progress, reflections and personal development.
- Are given a reference relating to their volunteering on request.
- Are paid out of pocket expenses such as reasonable travelling expenses and meals, if the latter involves volunteering for over five hours, on receipted expenditure.

3. Recruitment of Volunteers

Speech and Language UK encourages volunteer involvement from all sections of the community and does not discriminate against any volunteers in the selection procedure. The recruitment of all volunteers will operate within the principles of Speech and Language UK's equality, diversity and inclusion policy, outlined in Speech and Language UK's standards of conduct policy.

A variety of approaches will be used to select and vet volunteers these will be appropriate to the role in which they wish to volunteer.

Volunteers under the age of 18 must have written consent from a parent or guardian before taking part in any volunteering.

All volunteers must provide proof of their right to volunteer in the UK and provide original documentation (e.g., passport, visas, biometric permits) to the HR Department before commencing volunteering. If anyone is unsure about the types of documents that Speech and Language UK accepts, please contact the Human Resources department for advice.

Speech and Language UK encourages volunteers from a range of backgrounds and adopts equality of opportunity principals in its recruitment processes.

4. Induction of Volunteers

All volunteers must be locally inducted. The process should cover:

- Information about the organisation and its relevant policies such as this policy, standards of conduct, whistleblowing, safeguarding and any operational procedures deemed essential to the volunteering being carried out.
- The way volunteering will be structured.
- Any training that will need to be completed, such as safeguarding.
- How the volunteer can raise issues and express ideas and concerns.
- The process for expenses to be paid.
- How developmental feedback will be given.

The content and nature of the induction process will vary according to the role.

5. Volunteer Agreements

All Speech and Language UK volunteers will be asked to sign a Volunteer Agreement establishing what volunteering they agree to do, and what Speech and Language UK will provide for them in return. The document in no way implies a real or perceived legally binding contract of employment. We also ask volunteers to sign a criminal record self-declaration form and our Emergency contact details form.

6. Training for volunteers

Speech and Language UK is committed to providing volunteers with opportunities to enhance their skills. Training will be in accordance with the volunteer's role description and

will be the responsibility of the volunteer's line manager. This is likely to include online training in relation to safeguarding and data protection.

7. Volunteer Expenses

Speech and Language UK run a number of projects whose finances and budgets operate differently and have differing constraints. It is therefore important that volunteers agree expenses with the relevant Speech and Language UK staff member before they are incurred. Where volunteers have agreed expenses, they must complete the expenses claim form and include receipts for money spent before submitting for authorisation and payment.

Full Time volunteers (volunteering for five full days per week) will receive reasonable out of pocket expenses either through BACS system directly into their bank account, or by cash.

Where volunteers need to travel a considerable distance to their placement, Speech and Language UK regret that only limited expenses can be reimbursed.

Speech and Language UK endeavour to pay expenses as fast as possible, but volunteers should be made aware that they may not be paid immediately.

8. Health and Safety for volunteers

Everybody has the right to volunteer in a safe environment. To ensure this happens at Speech and Language UK:

- The line manager will risk assess new roles before recruiting
- Volunteers will be signposted to any relevant local health and safety policies
- Practical safety issues will be discussed during the induction
- Safe practice guidelines will be provided for volunteers who are operating on a lone basis.

Speech and Language UK expect all volunteers to conduct themselves in a safe and responsible manner, and to be mindful of activities that may put themselves or others at risk of injury.

9. Insurance for volunteers

Volunteers are covered by Speech and Language UK's insurance policy whilst they are on the premises or engaged in any work on Speech and Language UK's behalf.

10. Concerns and issues expressed by volunteers

If a volunteer has a complaint about an Speech and Language UK staff member or another volunteer that they feel cannot be resolved informally, there is a problem-solving procedure that should be followed. If it becomes apparent that the relationship between Speech and

Language UK and a volunteer is not working out, it may be necessary to end the arrangement without notice.

11. Complaints Procedure for volunteers

If a volunteer has a grievance with an Speech and Language UK staff member, they are encouraged to talk to their designated paid member of staff first and to the Head of Department if the grievance is with this individual. Speech and Language UK has a problem-solving procedure.

If someone also has an issue with a volunteer, they should use this procedure to address it assuming they cannot resolve this informally. Volunteers are able to ask their assigned employee for this.

12. Cessation of volunteering

On occasions, it may be necessary to end a volunteer's involvement and for the volunteer to move on from their volunteering role. This may be because the role undertaken is no longer needed, or because the volunteer is no available or no longer able to satisfactorily carry out a particular role. When this happens, Speech and Language UK will give due notice to the volunteer, and will treat the volunteer fairly, and with dignity and respect.

All volunteers leaving Speech and Language UK should be locally offered an exit interview. The purpose of this is for the supervisor to learn how the volunteering experience has been for the volunteer and in order that we can make changes in the future if necessary. It is also to help the volunteer to assess their learning and is a chance to quantify the volunteering that has been done. This is particularly useful if Speech and Language UK is, subsequently, asked to provide a reference for a volunteer.

Speech and Language UK will provide references for volunteers for up to two years after a volunteer has left the organisation.