

Newcastle Volunteering Forum (NVF) 3rd March 2010 Volunteers and the Law

Present:

Jean Pattie – North of Tyne PALS, Sally Evans – Friends Action North East, Peter Monaghan – Greater Walker Trust, Jennifer Kelly – Mining Institute, June Thomas – Waygood, Maureen Moon – Fawdon Community Centre, Nicola Stavers – Norcare, Nina Kanwar – Kids Kabin, Maria Papanikandrou – Streetwise Young People's Project, Brenda Wilson – British Red Cross, Chrissy Watt – Stepney Bank Stables, Jean Marsou-Bayat – JET, Marianne Patterson – CSV, Mark Earle – West End Befrienders, Aimee Livingstone – NHS – Inner West CMHT, Amy Taylorson – NHS – Inner West CMHT, Michael – Jesmond Rangers, Gemma Finch – Volunteer Centre Newcastle, Karen Watson – Volunteer Centre Newcastle.

Apologies:

Lisa Tonia – Waygood, Claire McCardle – Cyranians, Ashleigh Wilson – Shared Interest.

Overview of Benefits:

Karen gave an overview of benefits in relation to volunteering. All volunteers claiming benefits must volunteer with an organisation with charitable aims, they must be available for interviews and training with the job centre, and if they have an advisor at the job centre, they must inform them that they are volunteering.

If volunteers are receiving Employment Support Allowance (ESA) they must complete a Vol1 form which can be obtained from the job centre. Be sure to word these forms correctly and do not use employment related wordings.

'Volunteering While Getting Benefits' leaflet given out (can be downloaded from www.direct.gov.uk). If volunteers have further queries they can also contact CAB and welfare rights (0191 277 2633) or go to http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/wr_advice_newclocal for further information on agencies that offer benefits advice in Newcastle (thanks to Aimee Livingstone for these details).

Expenses

All volunteer involving organisations need an expenses policy stating who can claim, what they can claim and why they can claim. This is especially important for those on benefits and refugee and asylum seekers.

Some organisations may have limits on the amount of expenses they can reimburse. If a volunteer lives out of area, they may have to pay for part of the travel costs to the organisation – define your area.

Take into account the length of time between expenses payments, some volunteers may not be able to wait until the end of the week or month. Consider paying upfront and receiving receipts after.

A discussion took place around fundraising for expenses including travel and childcare. Organisations can contact Louise McGlenn – Newcastle Funding Adviser, NCVS 0191 232 7445, for advice.

CRB

Anyone who works or volunteers with a child or vulnerable adult must be CRB checked and your CRB policy should state how often you will re new your CRB checks as there is no official guidance though every 3 years is considered good practise.

Discussions took place around position of power, who deals with CRB issues (this would come down to policy of organisation); a record of the number must be kept.

Discussion around documentation for refugee and asylum seekers, i.e. not having documents, bills not in their names etc. Linda from British Red Cross gave information about the fingerprinting system that they use. The volunteer Centre is currently producing a good practise guide which includes information regarding the fingerprint method specifically when supporting refugee and asylum seekers who cannot produce ID for the CRB process

ISA

Karen gave an overview of why the ISA has been brought in, who has to go through it, when and how often.

ISA is a lifetime number which is portable, it does not cost for volunteers - though volunteer involving organisations may have to pay an admin charge to their umbrella body. If the volunteer then goes on to paid work, then the full charge for an employee ISA will have to be paid.

This is not replacing other safeguards, but is an extra level of safeguarding.

A presentation about the ISA is available on the Volunteer Centre Newcastle website www.volunteercentrenewcastle.org.uk/documents/ISAmarch2010.ppt

Any organisations who would like further information about the ISA can attend a free ISA information session on Wednesday 21st April at either 10am-12pm or 2pm-4pm. Please contact Karen to book your place. kwatson@csv.org.uk

Date and time of next meeting:

Policies and Procedures: Wednesday 9th June: MEA House Rooms 5 and 6 on the 5th floor 2pm – 4pm. If you haven't already confirmed your place.

please do so by calling one of the team on 0191 232 6616 or email
info@volunteercentrenewcastle.org.uk