09. Volunteer Policy

Volunteering England Recommendations

Volunteering England recommends that groups and organisations don't ask volunteers to sign an agreement to avoid the perception that a legally binding relationship is being created. It is important to avoid any suggestion that the volunteer is under an obligation to carry out the role.

It is also important to say 'thank you' to volunteers. It is an easy way to show appreciation, especially if we get into the habit of saying it at the end of every session that the volunteer attends. By thanking volunteers individually, we are acknowledging their contribution and recognising that they are making a difference.

Importance of Volunteers to Woking Strokeability

The nature of Woking Strokeability means that we have some members who are severely affected by a stroke. Our primary focus is to provide support, aerobic and aqua aerobic exercise and social events for stroke survivors and their carers. To achieve this objective we rely on the help of volunteers.

Volunteers are a crucial part of Woking Strokeability, without their support we could not continue. Their expertise and help can cover a wide range of activities:

Fund raising

This can range from helping with a collection tin to organising a complete fundraising event such as a quiz social and fundraise evening. It could also entail undertaking activities such as a sponsored run/walk, garden party or barbecue etc.

Assistance at the Gym

This will primarily be helping members as they carry out exercise guided by our trainers. It may range from a simple ball game to gentle badminton returns helping members to improve their coordination. It can also involve helping members onto and off equipment, ensuring that safety cord is used on walking machines. It can also include helping get the room ready, setting up equipment and putting away at the end of session. The help needed at any meeting will depend upon the members attending and the direction of our trainers.

Assistance at the Pool

This may be general help for members in the water but it should be noted that any member requiring one-to-one assistance will normally be supported in the water by a dedicated carer. It could also be acting as a lifeguard at the pool. In all cases the exercise activities at the pool will be directed by one of our trainers.

Organising events

We organise social events for our members and partners / carers which can range from coordinating with other charities for activities such as gliding, sailing and general sports to organising a dedicated Woking Strokeability event. These dedicated events have in the past included our regular Christmas and summer lunches, the theatre, canal trips and outings to places of interest.

Marketing

Assisting with marketing material, its deployment and subsequent activities. This could include developing the material, publishing it and following up with other charities and healthcare or commercial organisations. Circulating hardcopy information to doctors surgeries and pharmacists etc., assisting with the management and control of electronic communications including social tools such as Facebook and Twitter. In all cases whenever any marketing activity has proved successful there will be an opportunity to follow up and develop relationships and general contact with other organisations.

Supporting Volunteers

As a group we very aware that we need to make sure that we effectively support and manage the involvement of our volunteers. To ensure that we have a clear policy and guidance for all involved especially our volunteers a statement of intent has been drafted 'Volunteering with Woking Strokeability" as attached to this document. The statement is available on our website.

Dated: 18 January 2021

Volunteering with Woking Strokeability

As a group Woking Strokeability are very aware that we need to make sure that we effectively support and manage the involvement of our volunteers. This document provides some information on our activities, organisation and the support that volunteers can provide.

Initial Interest

When you are interested to join as a volunteer we will give you an introduction to the organisation, let you know what activities volunteers support and recommend that you come along to one of our Saturday sessions to meet members and gain an understanding of how we work and the of activities we undertake.

Deciding to Volunteer

After deciding to volunteer with Woking Strokeability we will ask for the contact details of both yourself and an emergency contact. Our primary communication channel is email and we will add your email details to our general circulation list. This list is used for communicating information to all active members containing details of meetings, events, and general points of information for stroke survivors. Your details can be removed from this list at any time by contacting our Secretary and will in general be removed after we have not had any contact with a volunteer for over 12 months.

- We will not use your email address for aims beyond the scope of Woking Strokeability or share it with third parties. Volunteers should be aware that contact details will generally be freely available to other members of the group.
- From time to time we photograph our training sessions and other events. If any volunteer does not wish pictures to be used in association with our charity please advise the photographer at the time and make our secretary aware of your decision

Volunteering Opportunities

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The level of assistance provided by volunteers to our members at the gym does not require formal training to any great extent. However if you are assisting members on any equipment you should be instructed by a trainer or suitably experienced member how the equipment is set up and used. If a volunteer are unsure of the best course of action at any time they should refer to a trainer or a member of our management committee.

Assistance at the Pool

This may be general help for members in the water but it should be noted that any member requiring one-to-one assistance will normally be supported in the water by a dedicated carer. It could also be acting as a lifeguard at the pool. In all cases the exercise activities at the pool will be directed by one of our trainers.

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Formal Training

If more formal training is necessary or required, for example first aid or lifeguard training it can be arranged through the management committee.

Volunteering

Safeguarding

Everyone has a right to live their lives free from fear, abuse and neglect and working with vulnerable adults, we all have a responsibility to protect their safety and basic human rights. As a volunteer, you may witness a person being abused or treated with a lack of compassion or empathy. If you identify any concerns, raise them at once with a Trustee / manager or the trainer leading our session. Any issue raised will be dealt with confidentially.

If you are interested in finding out more about the safeguarding of vulnerable adults, we can arrange on-line training and signpost other organisations that can provide further information

Continuing to Make a Difference

We are conscious that volunteers join our group for a variety of reasons, examples are using professional skills and experience to help others less fortunate, undertaking Duke of Edinburgh charity work, gaining experience of helping people with disabilities prior to formal education or social care activities. We are also aware that a volunteer's original motivation for joining is not always the same as their reason for staying.

- To help us understand what motivates our volunteers and which parts of their support that they enjoy we may ask for feedback to help ensure that volunteering is not only be of benefit to Woking Strokeability but also to the volunteer.

Our volunteers make a significant difference to Woking Strokeability and we hope that in return they will have a pleasurable experience and enjoy being part of a successful local charity making a real difference to the lives of stroke survivors.