

North East Council On Addictions, (NECA), promotes and encourages the participation of volunteers in all areas of its work. NECA recognises the different but equally valuable contribution of Volunteers in complementing the work of its employees.

We believe that an investment should be made in our Volunteers in terms of their personal development. To this end we will provide regular and on-going support, supervision and training to enable Volunteers to enhance their volunteering work and to provide employment opportunities in the wider community. All staff vacancies are advertised internally and NECA welcomes applications from Volunteers who have the knowledge, experience and where appropriate qualifications, to become members of staff.

All NECA volunteers can expect fair and equal treatment including payment of travel expenses, access to all relevant policies and procedures and involvement in a variety of the decision-making bodies and processes.

What can volunteers expect from NECA?

All volunteers are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect nor discriminated against on the basis of their sex, sexual orientation, race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality (within current legislation), disability, marital status, caring or parental responsibilities, age, or beliefs on matters such as religion and politics.

As a volunteer you can expect to:

- Be given accurate information about NECA and its Volunteer Placement Scheme Policy.
- Be protected from exploitation by NECA staff or any service users.
- Have a meaningful role in the organisation that enhances the work of the service but does not act as a substitute to paid work.
- Be given adequate information about the tasks you are to undertake and to play a part in deciding these.
- Have a safe working environment with adequate Health and Safety information and insurance.
- Have the opportunity for self-development in your volunteering role, through training, support and supervision.
- Have a named person you can go to for advice and support.
- Know who you are accountable to.
- Receive regular constructive feedback on your work.
- Say no without feeling guilty.
- Have reasonable out-of-pocket expenses reimbursed.
- Be treated with respect and without discrimination.
- Access all policies and procedures relating to your work with the organisation.
- Have the right to complain.
- Be respected with regard to holiday and personal commitments.

What NECA expects from its volunteers.

As a Volunteer we expect you to:

- Be reliable and punctual.
- Notify a member of staff at NECA as soon as possible if you are not available.
- Respect the rights of those people you are in contact with.
- Respect confidentiality within NECA guidelines.
- Work towards fair and equal practices.
- Negotiate and undertake a manageable workload and reasonable time commitment within your capacity.
- Ask for support when and where it is needed.
- Carry out only agreed tasks.
- Exchange information and give feedback to the member of staff supporting you.
- Undertake relevant training where necessary.
- Be open to change and request support to deal with change if necessary.
- Comply with NECA policies.

Recruitment and selection procedure

We aim to have an open, fair and inclusive recruitment policy for Volunteers as detailed in our Equal Opportunities Policy.

Interview

This will be an informal meeting benefiting both NECA and the potential volunteer. The aims of the interview are:-

- To inform potential Volunteers about the work of the Project.
- To establish if the Volunteer has the skills or the potential skills after training that would be useful to the project.
- To provide information to the Volunteer about what is expected of them and what training, support and supervision will be given so they can make an informed decision about being a Volunteer with NECA.

This is a two-way process, both the interviewer and the Volunteer will be gaining and giving impressions of each other and the work of NECA. At the end of the process the Volunteer should have a clear idea of the tasks they will be involved in and the interviewer, an understanding of the potential Volunteer's strengths and limitations.

Following interview NECA to decide if appropriate to offer a Volunteer placement and if so to agree a review for both parties to discuss future arrangements.

References / Criminal Records Bureau Screening

NECA will obtain two independent references and a Criminal Record Bureau Check. Checks or screening of any kind can appear a very intrusive process but is applied equally to potential employees and is necessary for a number of reasons:-

- It takes account of responsibility NECA has to its funders.

- It gives assurance to users of NECA Services.

NECA is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and all convictions resulting from any criminal convictions must be declared on applying to be a Volunteer.

Volunteer applications will be considered from persons who have a conviction that is not 'spent'. Decisions relating to such applications will be at the discretion of NECA. Volunteers recruited in this category will be monitored in such a way as to ensure their interests and those of clients they may encounter in the course of volunteering, are maintained, serving the best interests of NECA's service provision and those of Volunteers in question.

Training, Supervision And Support

Volunteers will have effective supervision, support and training to encourage their interest and motivation. This will include:-

- Advice and information about the role they do.
- Support and understanding for any problems, concerns or difficulties.
- Ongoing review of work.
- Training, where appropriate.
- Opportunities for self-development in line with their volunteering role.

Expenses

NECA will pay reasonable travelling expenses, either bus fares or 40 p per mile, from the Volunteers home to their allocated project on each day volunteering is undertaken. (Where for whatever reason a Volunteer is allocated to a Centre / Project which is further away than a Centre / Project closer to their home, only the shorter distance may be claimed).

Where previously authorised, NECA will pay reasonable expenses incurred whilst undertaking voluntary tasks, either bus fares supported by a receipt or mileage rate, currently 40p per mile, if travel undertaken by car.

Insurance

The following main areas of insurance are the responsibility of the Volunteer and although not mandatory need to be considered by Volunteers, Public Liability, Personal Accident, Personal Loss or Damage and Motor Insurance, (mandatory). Volunteers who use their own motor vehicle for NECA business must ensure that they are adequately insured for business use in respect of any authorised tasks they undertake for NECA.

Volunteers will be covered by the same level of insurance as NECA employees for the role that they undertake.

Review Of Placement

The volunteering placement will be continually reviewed to enable NECA and the Volunteer to discuss any issues. A review date should be agreed with the Volunteer during their induction and thereafter at six month intervals. At any time the Volunteer can choose to leave the organisation. Similarly, NECA can end the placement at their entire discretion.

Complaint Process - If you have a complaint

If you have a complaint, wherever possible problems should be resolved through informal means. Volunteers are encouraged to raise any concerns they may have with the Area Operational Manager or the Human Resources Manager. Volunteers should also use support and supervision sessions to discuss any concerns they may have and possible solutions.

Where you feel that your complaint has not been resolved through informal discussions, then as a last resort you should put your complaint in writing to the Area Operational Manager. (Where the complaint is against the Area Operational Manager, the written submission should be forwarded to the Human Resources Manager, Headquarters). The timescale / procedure thereafter will follow that set out in NECA's Grievance Procedure.

Complaint Process - If someone has a complaint against you

It is the aim of NECA to ensure high standards of conduct and performance in all aspects of its work. The organisation is committed to ensuring that volunteers receive adequate support to carry out their placement through induction, training, support and supervision.

It is the responsibility of both Volunteer, Area Operational Manager and where appropriate the Human Resources Manager to highlight any recognised area of conduct or work that may require further support or training, wherever possible. Another solution may include the reassignment of a volunteer to a new role.

Where problems around a Volunteer's work or conduct are of a more serious nature and results in a complaint being made against you, then this will be dealt with by the Human Resources Manager.

- The Human Resources Manager will interview all parties, record the facts and reach a decision.
- Should a complaint be unfounded the Human Resources Manager will inform both parties of the decision and provide the Volunteer with the necessary support.
- Where a complaint against the volunteer is upheld, the Human Resources Manager will discuss possible solutions with the volunteer. This may include further training and support or the reassignment of the volunteer to a new role.

- Where a complaint is upheld and is of a serious nature the volunteer will be asked to leave NECA immediately. Examples may include sexual offences, physical assault, dishonesty, theft, racist activity, serious breach of NECA policies and procedures, falsification of records. This list is not exhaustive.
- If the Volunteer is dissatisfied with the Human Resources Manager's decision, then the Volunteer may appeal to the Chief Executive.

Volunteer Data Protection

NECA holds information on potential Volunteers expressing an interest in taking part in voluntary activity for the reasons listed below. The collection of this information enables NECA to assist potential volunteers in their search for volunteering opportunities by:

- monitoring the interests of Volunteer applicants and ensuring that suitable opportunities are available (business need).
- monitoring Volunteer applicants according to different student/staff groups.
- contacting Volunteer applicants about the availability of suitable Volunteering opportunities.

In addition information may be used for Equal Opportunity monitoring purposes.

All information provided by the Volunteer applicant will be treated as confidential, and will not be given directly or indirectly to any other person(s) or organisation(s) except NECA staff who are involved with Volunteers, or relevant community projects in partnership with NECA, for the sole purpose of assessing the suitability of Volunteers.

Any further disclosure of information will not take place without the individual's consent to do so.

Information will be held both manually and electronically in secure files accessible only by designated staff. In addition to this policy, information related to CRB Disclosures will be handled by NECA's Human Resource Department. Where appropriate any such disclosure may be discussed with the Area Operational Manager

All information will be kept on file as long as the Volunteer applicant is actively participating within NECA. When a Volunteer ceases their placement, their paper files will be destroyed after seven years. Electronic files will be deleted when the Volunteer ceases their placement. All Unsuccessful Volunteer applicants' files will be immediately destroyed.

This Policy and any subsequent offer of a Volunteer Placement is not binding in any way, nor is a contract of employment.