

---

## The Multiple Sclerosis North West Therapy Centre

### Volunteer Policy

The overall aim of the North West Therapy Centre is to enrich the lives of people with Multiple Sclerosis by providing in a caring, supportive and positive setting, therapies that will enable them to live fuller lives. The Centre also endeavours to provide advice and support for the families and carers of people with Multiple Sclerosis.

1.1.1 Through the work of Volunteers, we fundraise locally and regionally for essential services that will facilitate social needs and other needs of our Service Users which cannot be fully addressed due to funding constraints. We believe that our services significantly improve the lives of our clients and aim to provide quality services in a supportive and caring manner.

1.1.2 In the MS NW Therapy Volunteers are a major resource and make a vital contribution to our aim outlined above. We intend to encourage, develop and support volunteer involvement in our work. In doing so we recognise that the roles of volunteers will complement and not replace the roles of paid employees.

1.1.3 The time, energy and skills offered by our volunteers benefits our work and help us to achieve our aims. We believe that volunteering also brings benefits to volunteers themselves and to those with whom they work.

1.1.4 In MS NW Therapy, a volunteer is understood to be a person who does voluntary work on our behalf. It is undertaken by choice and it is unpaid. MS NW Therapy undertakes to organise it effectively.

1.1.5 MS NW Therapy have belief that our relationship with our volunteers is one of mutual responsibility and commitment, within which MS NW Therapy and our volunteers both have rights and responsibilities. We hope that volunteers will enjoy their involvement and gain from it in terms of their own personal objectives.

### **1.2 Purpose and Advantages of Policy and Procedures on Volunteers**

1.2.1 MS NW Therapy purpose in adopting this policy is to:

- highlight and acknowledge the value of the contribution made by volunteers
- reflect the purpose, values and standards of MS NW Therapy in its involvement of volunteers
- recognise the respective roles, rights and responsibilities of volunteers and MS NW Therapy
- confirm MS NW Therapy's commitment to involving volunteers in its work
- establish clear principles for the involvement of volunteers
- clarify the roles of volunteers and address the relation between volunteers and those who receive their services
- help to ensure the ongoing quality of both the volunteering opportunities on offer and the work carried out by our volunteers
- acknowledge the current areas of volunteer involvement.

### **1.2.2 The advantages of this policy are:**

- It sees volunteer involvement as a resource which we cannot afford to lose
- It commits the organisation to identify and adequately meet the financial and personnel costs of the volunteer programme and to support volunteering through mainly funding other than core HSE funding.

## **1.3 Statement Of Principles Of Good Practice**

### **1.3.1 General**

In involving volunteers we will be guided by the following principles of good practice:

- the tasks to be performed by volunteers will be clearly defined, so that all concerned with their activities are sure of their respective roles and responsibilities.
- the organisation will comply with the Data Protection Act by the use of Timesheets and by keeping records of the work done by volunteers as a basis for monitoring.
- opportunities will be given for volunteers to represent their views to MS NW Therapy.
- all existing and future policies will be checked as to how they affect volunteers.

- 
- respect for human rights and equal opportunity

### **1.3.2 Recruitment and Selection**

- MS NW Therapy will adhere to its equal opportunities statement when recruiting and selecting volunteers
- To ensure that all volunteering opportunities are widely accessible they will be promoted appropriately i.e. Sligo Volunteer Centre, Local Media
- Volunteers will be required to complete a volunteer's application form.
- Written task descriptions will outline time, commitment, necessary skills and actual tasks and duties.
- Volunteers will be placed in accordance with our written volunteer/employee recruitment procedures.
- We will request written references for volunteers
- We will carry out Garda Vetting on all new Volunteers. Work may not commence until Volunteer has being vetted and the findings are satisfactory to the Company.
- People who offer to volunteer will have their offers dealt with as quickly as is possible. (5 – 7 days)
- We will regularly review the way in which potential volunteers can make contact with us.
- Placements will match the volunteer's skills, talents and interests with the voluntary work to be carried out.
- Once placed, we will expect volunteers to comply with existing policies and procedures.

### **1.3.3 Support for Volunteers**

- 
- MS NW Therapy Volunteers are covered under our Insurance policy. However, if Volunteers use their vehicle as part of their work, they must seek the appropriate cover from their own Motor Insurance Company.
  - Volunteers will be given information on legislation and policies that may affect them e.g. MS NW Therapy Safety Statement. In these respects volunteers will be treated in the same way as paid employees for liability purposes.
  - All volunteers will be offered appropriate access to support and supervision on a regular basis from a named member of the Fundraising Committee, and will be informed whom to contact in an emergency.
  - All volunteers will be offered equal access to appropriate training to enable them to work as Volunteers for MS NW Therapy.
  - The organisation's complaints, grievance and disciplinary procedures will be explained to volunteers and they will be informed of who to contact if they have a grievance about any aspect of their work. Complaints about volunteers will be dealt with in the same way as paid employees.

### **1.3.4 Rights and Responsibilities**

#### **1.3.4.1 In engaging volunteers, we recognise the rights of volunteers to:**

- know what is expected of them and to be given clear information and induction
- have clearly specified lines of support and supervision
- be given respect, confidentiality and privacy
- be shown appreciation
- have safe working conditions
- be insured
- know what their rights and responsibilities are
- have holidays and breaks
- be free from discrimination
- ask for a reference
- be consulted on decisions that will affect what they do
- withdraw from voluntary work within the appropriate notice period

#### **1.3.4.2 Volunteers should:**

- 
- carry out their tasks in a way which corresponds to the aims and values of their respective Leaders (Service Users) and MS NW Therapy.
  - volunteer within agreed guidelines and remits
  - respect confidentiality
  - respect other volunteers, service users and employees
  - respect the human rights of others
  - carry out their tasks with regard to the health and safety of others
  - attend training where appropriate

### **1.3.5 Contracts**

In entering into contracts that involve volunteers we will ensure that:

- the role and rights of volunteers are made clear and that satisfactory arrangements are in place for their management
- the contract provides for the necessary resources for involving volunteers
- arrangements are made to set out the roles and commitments of the volunteers
- the impact of volunteering and its benefits are promoted and acknowledged

### **1.3.6 Local Volunteering Sector**

We will develop relationships with the local volunteering sector on the following principles

- That there is a need for a coherent approach to the development of volunteering locally
- That there is a need to work in partnership with the local Volunteer Centre and others to promote community benefit.

### **1.3.8 Review Policy and Procedures**

- MS NW Therapy will monitor and review this policy and procedures on volunteers on an annual basis.

### **1.3.9 Responsibility**

Overall responsibility for the implementations, monitoring and review of the policy and procedures lies with the MS NW Therapy Fundraising Board and, on a day-to-day basis, with two named individuals of the Fundraising Board of the MS NW Therapy Centre.