

Volunteering and Activism Policy

Definition of Volunteering and Activism

The Aberdeenshire Community Recovery define volunteering as “The voluntary giving of time, experience, skills and enthusiasm by individuals to help Aberdeenshire Community Recovery to achieve goals, while the volunteering experience should be rewarding, enabling to improve on skills and knowledge.”

Activists are people with lived experience who volunteer their time to participate in Aberdeenshire Community Recovery activities or the recovery community with the aim to promote recovery, raise awareness and enact social or political change.

A policy on volunteering and activism -

- Outlines clearly to forum membership and all stakeholders, how and why volunteers and activists will be involved.
- Defines the roles, rights and responsibilities of volunteers and activists.
- Prevents decisions being made based on unwritten rules, prejudice and/or favouritism.
- Clarifies what is expected of volunteers and activists, e.g. confidentiality, commitment.
- Clarifies what volunteer’s and activists rights are, e.g. insurance, expenses, support, access to training.
- Gives volunteering and activism status.
- Clarifies boundaries between paid staff, volunteers and activists.
- Can be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.

Why promote volunteering and activism

Aberdeenshire Community Recovery depend on volunteering involvement and activism of membership for their governance, representation to other community groups and partnerships, and for facilitation of community events, awareness raising activities and community consultations.

Without activists and community volunteers the forums would not be what they are – a voice for people affected by and in recovery from substance use.

We value the involvement of Volunteers and activists as they make positive contributions to our community. They bring energy, enthusiasm, skills and experience, while providing a valuable link to the community.

Our Volunteering Commitment

The Aberdeenshire Community Recovery aim to:

- Involve community volunteers and activists when planning and reviewing
- Encourage community volunteers and activists to accept and undertake our values
- Encourage community activist and volunteer involvement in the governance of the forum
- Provide opportunities of training for skills needed
- Ensure volunteers and activists possess the appropriate knowledge and skills
- Provide necessary support and resources
- Treat all volunteers and activists with respect
- Recognize the volunteering contribution and the influential role of activists.

Planning for Volunteering and Activism

We recognise the importance of planning, to ensure we have the resources and capacity to effectively support volunteers and activists whilst ensuring safety.

Aberdeenshire Community Recovery strive to –

- consider community volunteering and activism when creating action plans and relevant policies
- develop clear role descriptions for all volunteering activities with the forums detailing the purpose of the role and specific requirements
- provide an appropriate induction, training and support to help volunteers and activists meet the responsibilities for their role.
- have supporting staff who will provide tailored support to forum volunteers and activists
- offer a safe environment in accordance with the Health & Safety policy.
- offer cover by appropriate insurance to members undertaking voluntary work and pursuing activism.
- reimburse out of pocket expenses to activists and volunteers.
- deal with any problems, grievances or difficulties that arise in the course of volunteering and activism in a fair and just manner.

Engagement and Selection

Aberdeenshire Community Recovery recognise the importance of engaging with volunteers and activists from a diverse range of backgrounds, whilst ensuring that they share our values.

- Engagement and selection will be consistent and fair, driven by agreed procedures and acknowledging and addressing common barriers

Induction and Training

The Aberdeenshire Community Recovery pledge to ensure that volunteers and activists have the relevant information and support required to take on the role and that they will provide opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills.

- All Volunteers and Activists will be given an induction appropriate to the Forum and their role/task.

Support

Aberdeenshire Community Recovery recognise the importance of providing ongoing support to Volunteers and activists and will ensure that all volunteers and activists have the knowledge and resources to fulfill their roles effectively.

Aberdeenshire Community Recovery recognize their duty of care for volunteers and activists linked to the forum.

- Steps will be taken to identify and limit risks to a volunteer's or activists mental wellbeing, recovery and safety
- All volunteers and activists will be offered access support 1:1 or in groups via the CLD and ADP forum development support workers . This will allow them to reflect and respond to their experience and look at ways to move forward.
- Volunteers and activists will be encouraged to claim for out of pocket expenses
- The forums will respond to all concerns or complaints by or about a Volunteer or activist in a fair and consistent manner.

Recording

Aberdeenshire Community Recovery recognise the importance of protecting the personal information of volunteers and activists and are committed to using it only for purposes agreed with them.

- All personal information will be stored securely, either electronically or within a secured cabinet.
- Personal contact details will only be used for communication purposes.