



VOLUNTEER POLICY

Forest Pulse volunteers are at the heart of our organisation, and make an invaluable contribution to the work of the charity. This document defines the terms and sets out the principles, practices and procedures which Forest Pulse will follow in the appointment, supervision and management of volunteers.

Volunteers are individuals who give their experience, knowledge and skills to an organisation, free of charge, with the primary aim of helping the organisation to achieve its service objectives and or with the primary aim of bringing some benefit to the organisation (Forest Pulse).

We involve volunteers for a number of reasons which include:

- To benefit from the skills and perspectives volunteers bring with them.
- To offer our volunteers opportunities to develop new skills and become involved in new experiences.
- To ensure that our services meet the needs of those individuals we aim to support.
- To maximize the opportunities for disabled young people to take part in activities of their choice.

Forest Pulse recognises that the activity of volunteering can provide an individual (volunteer) with experiences and opportunities for self and career development. In accordance with Forest Pulse's Equal Opportunity Policy, volunteer placements at Forest Pulse will be open to individuals irrespective of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age or marital status.

Volunteers are there to assist the staff in the tasks they are undertaking, whether it is looking after a child in a one-to-one situation, keeping an eye on a small group of young people, being in charge of a specific activity or assisting with administration.

Volunteers under the age of 18 must complete a volunteer form (Ofsted DC2 compliant) with personal details and information on any relevant police records, but will be required to undertake DBS check when they reach 18 years of age, or if they are likely to have unsupervised contact with children/vulnerable adults. All new volunteers over 18 years of age are required to supply two references and undergo an enhanced DBS check.

Forest Pulse undertakes to observe the following principles in relation to its own volunteers:

- Clear and accurate information will be provided about the nature of the volunteering opportunity.
- Forest Pulse will aim to support any volunteer to overcome barriers that may make it difficult for them to volunteer with Forest Pulse.
- Forest Pulse will operate its Equality and Diversity Policy at all times in relation to both recruitment and support of volunteers.
- Forest Pulse's volunteers will not be introduced to replace paid staff.

All volunteers will be made welcome by Forest Pulse staff.

All volunteers will complete a structured induction period designed to familiarise them with Forest Pulse's work in general and the setting in which they will be a volunteer in particular. Volunteers will participate in appropriate activities, e.g. activity Sessions and trips. Volunteers will welcome the children and create a warm and friendly atmosphere

Teamwork

Committed and reliable volunteers enable the charity to offer a varied programme of activities. It is therefore very important that volunteers and staff alike let senior staff know if they are unable to attend an activity they have previously agreed to attend. Volunteers must understand the importance of confidentiality and will have been briefed in the importance of maintaining confidentiality. Volunteers are acting alongside professionals and must act in a professional manner.

Confidentiality

Volunteers may be in receipt of important information about children and families which should only be shared with senior staff and should not be discussed outside the charity. Volunteers should not exchange any personal information (e.g. telephone numbers, email addresses) with children/young people who are members of Forest Pulse, or their parents (unless they have express permission from Charity or Activity Manager), and should not accept either of them as 'friends' on Facebook. Volunteers should not take photographs of Forest Pulse members on personal devices, and should not post information about any Forest Pulse members on social media.

Attitude

Volunteers need a tolerant and accepting attitude towards the children and young people, staff members and other volunteers. If a volunteer disagrees with how something is dealt with they are encouraged to raise this issue, but away from the children and young people and other volunteers.

Discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated. Volunteers should not be discriminated against on the grounds of gender, race, sexuality, age, class, disability, history of illness, culture or religion. In turn volunteers must not discriminate against others.

Volunteers are responsible for their own valuables and are encouraged not to bring mobiles, large amounts of money or any other personal possessions of any value. If they do so they are encouraged to leave their possessions in the designated area.

Support and Supervision

- All new volunteers will be sent an induction pack with information about Forest Pulse and an outline of their role and will also be offered an introductory session with senior staff.
- All volunteers will receive regular support and supervision from a named Forest Pulse staff member who will undertake to listen and respond to the individual volunteer's comments and needs. The staff member will aim to help them overcome any obstacles they may encounter. Supervision is provided to individuals on an ongoing basis during the course of activities, and where possible volunteer supervision sessions are made available.
- Volunteers' approved out-of-pocket expenses will be met by Forest Pulse. Travel expenses will be met either by reimbursement of public transport fares or by a mileage allowance (payable at a rate set by the Forest Pulse Management Committee). Volunteers will be entitled to travel expenses, and subsistence allowance, but may not receive payment for any other reason
- Forest Pulse will ensure that volunteers are made aware of health and safety procedures and requirements, and will, as far as is reasonably practicable, provide a safe environment for all volunteers.
- Forest Pulse will ensure that it has insurance cover for volunteers while they are engaged in Forest Pulse's work.
- Volunteers will be encouraged to express their views on matters concerning the organisation. Their opinions will be sought concerning any changes or developments which may affect them.
- Forest Pulse will respect the confidentiality of any volunteers who use its service and will not release any information about them without their agreement.
- Forest Pulse will supply a reference for any volunteer seeking other voluntary work or paid employment.
- All volunteers will be made to feel welcome, valued for what they offer and thanked for the contribution they make to the organisation.

Approved by Trustees 8th November 2017

Signed on Behalf of Charity

Name/Role