



Volunteer Policy

Written: March 2017, review May 2018

Introduction

Volunteers at Yada contribute their skills, personality and experiences to support and enable the work of Yada with women involved in the sex industry. Yada believes that volunteers can make a positive difference to the organisation, the community and themselves. As a local voluntary sector organisation, we are committed to enabling and encouraging this process. We understand that people volunteer for many reasons and we value their contribution, commitment and participation. Their involvement complements the work our organisation undertakes, but cannot replace the work of paid staff members.

We aim to ensure that volunteers are as involved as possible in the part of the organisation which is relevant to their role. Volunteers and/or volunteer representatives are invited to join relevant staff team meetings, and paid staff are expected to work positively and inclusively with volunteers in their teams.

We will allocate adequate resources to enable volunteer involvement in our organisation, but the level of this depends on available funding and other work commitments and priorities. We will aim to ensure that no volunteer is out of pocket as a result of their volunteering with Yada.

Recruitment

Yada aims to recruit volunteers from a diverse range of backgrounds to reflect the makeup of the local community. We are committed to ensuring that volunteering opportunities are open to everyone and that our recruitment process is fair and transparent at all stages. We welcome the personal experience that some of our volunteers have around issues of addiction but will require that volunteers must have been free from addiction to illegal substances and/or alcohol for two years prior to volunteering for Yada. In addition we require that volunteers must have a minimum of two years without accessing support from any relevant addictions services (excluding recovery groups such as NA, AA or counselling) prior to volunteering.

Every volunteering opportunity will be accompanied by a clear volunteer role description, and potential volunteers' suitability for the role will be decided in relation to this.

We will use appropriate means to advertise for volunteers locally or within Yada, which take into account the principles of our Equal Opportunities. As part of Yada's Safer Recruitment policy, potential volunteers will be asked to complete an application form, with help given if necessary. Potential volunteers will be invited to have an informal interview with the appropriate person according to the role, and if this is successful, two references will be taken up.

For some volunteer roles, successful completion of core training is a requirement of recruitment. Yada may make a decision not to recruit volunteers or to ask an existing volunteer to cease volunteering at Yada if they work (paid or unpaid) with Yada's service users

in a professional environment where this is likely to create a conflict of interest. Yada requests that potential and existing volunteers inform Yada if this situation arises in order that Yada is able to assess the situation and make an informed decision.

Volunteers may be required fill out a self-disclosure form, and may be required to complete a DBS check – role dependant. See Safer Recruitment Policy.

Induction and Training

All volunteers will have access to all policies relevant to their position.

Yada is committed to providing volunteers with training which will enhance and widen their skills, and which will benefit both the individuals and Yada. Training will be tailored according to the volunteer role.

Members of staff should be aware of the need to continually assess the training needs of a volunteer and should support volunteers to obtain relevant qualifications as well as update their skills. It should be noted that the additional training of volunteers will depend on appropriate and available resources.

Where possible, Yada will provide opportunities and support volunteers to achieve relevant awards and or recognition for their demonstrated voluntary commitment.

Expenses

It may be possible for volunteers to claim expenses, related to their volunteering. This will be agreed in advance by the office manager and will be confirmed in writing.

All reimbursement of volunteer expenses must be agreed in advance with their line manager. In order to claim expenses, an expenses form must be completed and given to their line manager. Except in the case of mileage claims, volunteers must keep receipts of all expenses and attach these to the expenses claim form. Expenses will be reimbursed as quickly as possible to minimise inconvenience to volunteers.

As much as possible all expenses will be paid electronically.

Volunteers who are receiving benefits should seek advice as to their rights and obligations to engage in voluntary work and any impact that this may have on their benefits. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to inform the benefit office about their commitment to volunteering, although Yada would be happy to write to the benefits office if necessary to confirm that the volunteer is only receiving out of pocket expenses.

Volunteers should ensure that they are clear as to what they can and cannot claim for, as expenses will not be reimbursed if they do not fall within this policy or have not been agreed with their line manager.

Supervision and Support

All office-based volunteers will receive regular supervision.

All front line volunteers will be expected to complete pre and post shift briefings / debriefings and offered regular supervision meetings.

~~Team Leaders on out of hours outreach can also call the “On Call” staff member for support or advice for any questions or concerns they have relating to incidents or issues arising while they are on outreach.~~ [Not currently in use]

Insurance

The organisation has a valid insurance policy which volunteers are welcome to see on request.

All volunteers are covered by Yada’s insurance policy whilst they are on Yada’s premises, or engaged in agreed work as a volunteer for one of the projects or off-site.

While it is not envisaged that volunteers would be asked to use their private motor vehicles for carrying out their volunteer tasks, if the need arises and by agreement with their line manager, the volunteer should inform their motor insurance company that they are using their car in the act of volunteering. If the insurance company makes a charge for change of use, then the volunteer may be able to claim any reasonable charge back as expenses. In the event that a volunteer does use their car, they should be aware that any damages to parties directly involved, and to third parties or third party property will be settled between the volunteer’s own insurance policy, and the insured party of any other vehicles involved.

Yada has full employee and public liability insurance. Yada is not able to provide insurance relating to private motor vehicles as this must be in the vehicle's owner's name.

Health & Safety

A copy of the complete Health and Safety policy is held as a separate document, and is available on request.

Problem Solving Procedures

If a volunteer is dissatisfied with any aspect of their duties they should:

1. Initially explain the dissatisfaction to their line manager.
2. If that does not resolve the concern, then a meeting with a director will be held.
3. If, after this, the volunteer’s dissatisfaction remains unresolved, and we are unable to resolve this, then it would be inappropriate for the volunteer to continue in their voluntary role. They will be informed of this in writing within two weeks of their meeting with the director
4. If the volunteer feels unable to have the initial discussion with their line manager they can contact one of the directors directly.

At all times volunteers will be freely able to state their case, and can have a friend to accompany them.

If an individual’s role as a volunteer does not meet with the organisations’ standards, the situation will be managed in the following way:

Serious Issues

There are certain actions, which may be deemed serious enough to justify asking a volunteer to cease volunteering for Yada immediately until the concern has been resolved to Yada’s satisfaction. These are actions that are deemed to threaten Yada’s ability to maintain our

agreed standards of service to its service users, or may cause a threat to the safety of the volunteer concerned, other volunteers, employees or services users.

The following are examples of such actions (the list is not complete or exhaustive):

- Refusal to accept and act on reasonable instructions from a member of staff or a volunteer team leader
- Serious negligence that could or does result in unacceptable loss, damage or injury
- Fighting, assault or threatening / bullying behaviour and / or any violent act
- Theft, fraud or any dishonesty involving Yada, its volunteers, employees, service users or authorised visitors or attempts to commit such offences
- Deliberate or reckless damage to the property of Yada, its volunteers, its employees, service users or authorised visitors
- Being unfit to volunteer through use of alcohol, illegal drugs or other prohibited substances.

Depending on the nature of the issue, the volunteer will be invited to a meeting with the line manager or a director who will explain the organisation's concerns. If at this meeting the volunteer cannot refute or explain her actions to the line manager/ director's satisfaction, and no agreement can be reached as to how the volunteer can reach the standards required by Yada, the volunteer will immediately be asked to stop volunteering. We would confirm this decision in writing, with a full explanation of the reasons behind the decision.

For less serious issues

1. Depending on the nature of the issue, the volunteer will be invited to a meeting with their line manager or a trustee who will explain the organisation's concerns.
2. If this does not resolve the concern within an agreed time period, then a further meeting with their line manager or director will be convened and a review period agreed.
3. If the person volunteering still does not meet with our standards by the end of the agreed review period then we shall have to stop using their services. We would confirm this decision in writing, with a full explanation of the reasons behind the decision.

At all times volunteers will be freely able to state their case, and can have a friend to accompany them.

Complaints Procedures for Volunteers

If a volunteer has a complaint about another volunteer or any staff member, they should refer to Yada's Complaints Policy.

Ending the Volunteer Agreement

Apart from ending a volunteer agreement due to incompetence, inappropriate behaviour or unsatisfactory performance, volunteers should provide adequate notice (min. two weeks) for finishing their volunteering at Yada if they have agreed duties on the current rota.

Volunteers who leave for any reason will be invited to an exit interview or asked to complete an exit questionnaire. This procedure is designed to help improve the support given to volunteers and to record their achievements and provide statistical information.

References

Yada will provide a reference after the volunteer has been actively involved with the

organisation for three months.

Equipment

Please ensure equipment (books, resources etc) are returned to us unless otherwise agreed.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff and will be provided with a copy of the confidentiality policy.

Personal details of staff, volunteers and service users are treated in the strictest confidence. Information of a confidential nature should not be disclosed to anyone outside Yada, without prior permission from a trustee, and explicit consent of the individual concerned, except in the circumstances set out in the policy.

For more information on anything mentioned in the Volunteer Policy, volunteers can refer to their line manager.