This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practice by which the Doctors’ Support Network (DSN) involves volunteers and is relevant to everyone within the organisation as we have no paid staff.

1. **Our commitments**
   We recognise volunteers as an integral part of DSN. Their contribution supports our mission and strategic aims. We aim to encourage and support volunteer involvement to ensure that volunteering benefits the organisation, other members and the volunteers themselves.

   We recognise our responsibility to organise volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer’s time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

2. **Who is a volunteer?**
   Volunteers are individuals who undertake activity on behalf of DSN, unpaid and of their own free choice.

   Trustees are volunteers with responsibility for governance of DSN.

   Volunteers may be involved on a one – off, short term or on a longer term, regular basis. They may be involved:
   - in the direct delivery of our activities
   - on our board of management as trustees
   - in one off events and promotional activities

   Volunteers are valued for:
   - bringing additional skills and new perspectives to the organisations
   - enabling us to be more responsive and flexible in our approach
   - championing our cause within the wider community
   - promoting the wellbeing of members and themselves.

3. **Roles and responsibilities**
   The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, for the volunteer to attend or to undertake particular tasks or for DSN to provide continuing opportunities for voluntary involvement, provision of training or benefits.
However, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the organisation.

The organisation expects volunteers:
• to be reliable and honest
• to uphold DSN’s values and comply with our policies
• to make the most of opportunities given, e.g. for training
• to contribute positively to the aims of DSN and avoid bringing the organisation into disrepute
• to carry out tasks within agreed guidelines

Volunteers can expect:
• to have clear information about what is and is not expected of them
• to receive adequate support and training
• to be insured (regarding DSN activities) and to volunteer in a safe environment
• to be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner
• to receive out of pocket expenses as per DSN’s Expense policy
• to have opportunities for personal development
• to be recognised and appreciated
• to be able to say ‘no’ to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable
• to know what to do if something goes wrong

4. Recruitment and selection
Equal opportunities principles will be adhered to in recruiting volunteers. All DSN members (full, associate and student) are encouraged to consider volunteer roles.

5. Advice
Volunteers will receive informal advice appropriate to the proposed DSN activity.

6. Support and supervision
Volunteers will be offered support and supervision as appropriate and this is discussed when an activity is undertaken. Arrangements will vary according to the volunteer and the role undertaken.

7. Recognition
Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with other DSN members and volunteers.

8. Dealing with problems
DSN aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. It seeks to ensure that volunteers’ views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly.

We will attempt to deal with any problems informally and at the earliest opportunity.

Volunteers will be made aware of the organisation’s complaints policy and how to use it.
9. Expenses
Volunteers will be given clear information about what expenses can be claimed and how to make a claim.

Source: modified from the Wales Council for Voluntary Action website.

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