



Aims of MDI:

MDI's primary objective is to provide support to persons affected by muscular dystrophy and their families through the provision of a range of support services such as counselling, freefone, respite care, holidays, youth activities, independent living and training opportunities. It also funds medical research.

Statement of Volunteer policy: The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on all aspects of volunteering with MDI. It supplements other MDI policies and procedures, as well as our definition of volunteering, our objectives and values.

These procedures apply to all volunteers who undertake tasks on behalf of and at the direction of MDI.

Definition of volunteer:

A volunteer is anyone who without compensation or expectation of compensation beyond reimbursement of expenses incurred in the course of his or her volunteer duties, performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the organisation. A volunteer must be officially accepted and enrolled by the organisation prior to performance of the task.

Eligibility: Volunteer must be over 18 years.

Working Conditions: should they be treated as full members of team. They should be treated as equally and fairly as paid staff and are included in the organisation functions and decision making processes wherever practical and appropriate. All volunteers will receive a contract, setting out their agreement to volunteer with MDI.

Working Times: to be discussed with the director of MDI.

Appropriate Behaviour:

- Should abide by all policies and procedures of MDI. Appendix A (include all policies etc. relevant, should include child protection policy, health and safety policy and grievances policy etc.)
- demonstrate a clear working knowledge of their individual duties and to fulfil the expectations of their role
- demonstrate a clear acceptance and knowledge of whom they are accountable to and for whom they are accountable.
- ensure that their contact with members is of the highest quality, in the interests of the members.
- volunteers will respect at all times the dignity of the members.
- members' individuality will be respected and volunteers will consider at all times the members' scope for choice and independence.
- volunteers will act in all times to safeguard the interested and well being of members.
- volunteers will report to their supervisor of any circumstances, which might significantly jeopardise a service-user's physical, psychological or social well being.
- volunteers will raise practical and personal issues, which are of concern to them, either formally or informally, with their supervisor.
- volunteers should not consume alcohol or illegal drugs while working with MDI.

Confidentiality: Volunteers are expected to adhere to MDI's confidentiality policy.

Volunteer's Rights and Responsibility: Volunteers are a valuable resource to MDI, its staff and its members. Volunteers shall be extended the right to be given meaningful assignments, the right to be treated as equal co-workers, the right to effective supervision + support from MDI and the right to recognition for the work they do. MDI have the responsibility to ensure that the volunteers' personal aspirations with regard to the work in MDI are met.

Maintenance of records. a system of records will be maintained on all volunteers, including dates and times of service, duties performed and evaluation of work. Appendix B –time sheets and feed back forms like the youth club one?). Volunteer records are accorded the same confidentiality as staff records and a supervisor should monitor their work.

Volunteer Training: all volunteers should receive induction training when they start work with MDI, which consists of an introduction to the organisation, their duties and purpose and familiarisation with MDI's policies and procedures. Also they should receive on the job training e.g. lifting for carer/youth group assistants, which will provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their tasks well. Volunteers should be encouraged to identify training courses and seminars, conferences etc. which would help to them perform their roles better. Requests for training will go through individuals supervisor and be approved by the Administration Manager. Volunteers will be required to follow the same procedure as paid staff, as set out in the Training Days Plan.

Volunteer Supervision:

Each volunteer will have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for direct management of that volunteer and guidance of the work of the volunteer and should be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance.

Volunteers will meet monthly with their supervisor and reviews will follow the format of the staff supervision and review policy.

This can be a chance to review the volunteer, their responsibilities, support them, seek recommendations/suggestions from them in order to assure our members get the best from the service we provide. The session can also serve as an opportunity for future tasks/jobs.

Constructive feedback is welcome and supervisor should encourage it. A written record should be kept of each session, as set out in the MDI staff supervision and review policy.

Absenteeism

Volunteers are expected to perform their duties on a regular agreed schedule. When expecting to be absent from a scheduled duty, the volunteer should inform their staff supervisor as far in advance as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Dismissal

Volunteers who do not adhere to the organisations policies and procedures or who fail to perform their volunteer assignment satisfactorily may be subject to dismissal. Volunteers will be subject to a 3 stage dismissal process:

Stage 1: Discussion of problem performance, agreeing performance objectives.

Stage 2: Monitoring of performance

Stage 3: Dismissal if agreed performance standards have not been met.

Recruitment and Screening:

Application Forms:

The use of an application form simplifies the collection and storage of necessary information about volunteers. Volunteers will be required to fill out an application form prior to interview with MDI. (Appendix C).

Job description: volunteers require clear and accurate description of tasks and responsibilities they are expected to undertake. Prior to the volunteer assignment/recruitment a role description must be developed for each voluntary opportunity. This should include hours, place of work, name of supervisor and tasks to be undertaken etc.

It should include that there is a probation period of one month at which point, volunteers may continue in their current role, be reassigned to more suitable role or be asked to leave.

Interviews:

Suitable candidates will be invited to attend an interview with the Administration Manager and staff who will be working with the volunteer. (Refer to the recruitment and selection policy for interview guidance. Final assignment of potential volunteer should not take place without approval of appropriate staff with whom volunteers will be working.

The interviews should determine the qualifications of the volunteer, their commitment to fulfil the requirements of the position and should answer any questions that the volunteer might have about the job.

Interviews should be regarded as a two way process, in which the organisation and the volunteer can find out about each other's suitability.

Interview checklist appendix D.

References:

MDI should ask for two references from every volunteer. They must be from non-relatives. A simple reference form or telephone reference checklist ensures consistency, is easy to complete and also guarantees that difficult issues are not avoided deliberately. (Appendix E).

References are always checked. Volunteers should be told in advance that these checks are being done.

Screening:

As appropriate for the position, especially those working with MDI youth group, should be required to submit a garda check or give permission to employer to obtain one.

Any volunteer who does not agree to the background check may be refused the assignment.

Garda Checks:

'Garda clearance' is a procedure, which vets healthcare and similar workers, if their work involves substantial access to children and other vulnerable persons. It operates within strict Department of Health and Attorney general guidelines and may take many weeks.

Most voluntary and community groups are therefore excluded from this process.

However, an individual can make a request under Section 4 of Data protection Act 1988 (this text must be included in the request on behalf of individual volunteers, provided that they issue their consent (for example, by signing a form). The following information is required:

- full name (and details of previous names, if applicable)
- address (and details of previous addresses, if applicable)
- date of birth

Please remember that this system is by no means foolproof (for example, a volunteer may have committed offences abroad or may have offended but not have been convicted).

Also remember that evidence of a criminal conviction does not necessarily mean that someone cannot volunteer; it depends entirely on the nature of the voluntary work.

Health checks:

In certain instances, you may need to ask potential volunteers for medical evidence or require them to go for a health check. Examples might include:

- if they will be lifting clients
- if they will be travelling abroad and need immunisations
- if they have suffered from a mental or physical illness, are they now ready to volunteer?
- due to a lot of bereavement in MDI are they able for it.

Appointments:

Formal appointments are made only after the job description has been agreed and all checks have proved acceptable.

Volunteers once appointed will be required to sign a volunteer agreement form (Appendix F) which should state the hours and days volunteer will work, the name and position of the person who will supervise the volunteer, the responsibilities of the volunteer as on job description, the volunteers consent to comply with all relevant policies of MDI, the training to be provided, the level and type of support to be offered and details of the grievance procedure.

Expenses: volunteers will be reimbursed all expenses due to work with MDI once receipts are kept.

Expectation of organisation of volunteer.

Volunteer relationship with members: should be purely professional.

Concerns and grievances:

- volunteers have every right to complain about anything that causes them concern in the course of their work. All complaints must be fully investigated.
- any volunteer who wishes to make a complaint should, in the first instance, raise the matter with his/her supervisor.
- the supervisor will advise the volunteer of the complaint procedure and name the person to whom the volunteer may make a written complaint.
- complete confidentiality should be observed during the investigation of any complaint.

Insurance: All volunteers and staff members of MDI are insured when working with MDI.

Recognition-appendix G (thanking and supporting volunteers)

Volunteers should be recognised and rewarded for the work they do in MDI. MDI staff are responsible for thanking all volunteers informally on a regular basis for their valuable contribution. There should also be formal recognition at key times e.g. Christmas.

APPENDIX D:

VOLUNTEER INTERVIEWS:

- Ask them why they want to be a volunteer with MDI.
- Ask about the time and commitment they are able to give.
- Ask about their background in voluntary youth work or work with children
- Ask for response to a typical problem faced by staff in MDI with members. The best way to do this is to give a brief scenario of the problem/situation and ask them how they would deal with it. Their response will tell you a lot about their attitude.
- Ask about their skills, hobbies, and interests of volunteer.
- Ask what they seek to gain from their voluntary work with MDI.
- Tell the volunteer about the commitment you will expect from them in terms of time and regularity etc.
- Do not keep them waiting around if you feel they are unsuitable, this can be very demoralising. Tell them you are unable to involve them at the present time.

