

Volunteer Learning and Development Policy

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1. Association Vision, Mission, and Values

1.1 Our Vision

A world free from MND

1.2 Our Mission

We improve care and support for people with MND, their families and carers.

We fund and promote research that leads to new understanding and treatments, and brings us closer to a cure for MND.

We campaign and raise awareness so the needs of people with MND and everyone who cares for them are recognised and addressed by wider society.

1.3 Our Values

People with MND, their families and carers are at the heart of everything we do.

We collaborate, and value everyone's contribution.

We achieve excellence through personal commitment and ongoing improvement.

We respect and respond to people's diverse needs, backgrounds and views.

We achieve our aims through building open and transparent relationships.

2. Our commitment to volunteering

The Association's Principles of Volunteering set out key expectations of how volunteering takes place in the Association. These include several key principles that impact on how recruitment and selection take place.

- Autonomy within boundaries
- Collaboration and sharing
- Volunteer friendly communication
- Recognising differing motivations to volunteer
- Diversity
- Supportive
- Making use of volunteer skills
- Opportunity to learn and Develop
- Support of flexible time commitments
- Valuing Volunteers' contributions

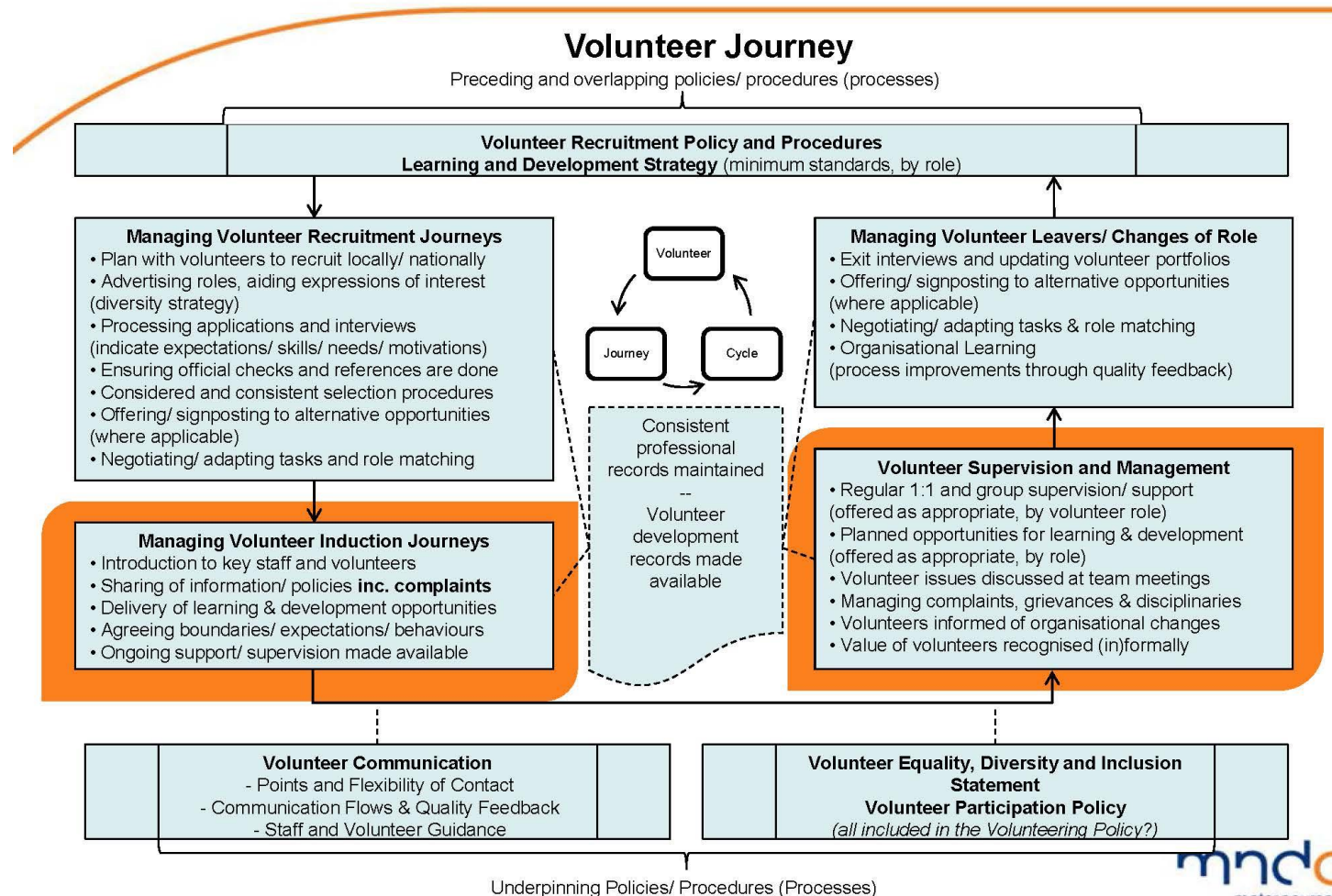
3. Introduction

Learning is an essential part of the MND Association's activity. Effective learning ensures that we deliver services to people affected by MND in the most knowledgeable, skilled and approachable manner. Learning enables us to keep up-to-date with the latest developments and adapt to changes in technology and society, avoiding risks and capitalising on opportunities to the ultimate benefit of people affected by MND.

All volunteers will be given reasonable access to the learning required to assist them in performing their voluntary role(s) to the best of their ability and to meet the needs of the Association and people affected by MND.

4. The Volunteer Journey

The volunteer journey below identifies the stage at which this policy comes into effect



5. Accessibility to learning

Learning and development should where practicable, be flexible to meet the needs and lifestyle of volunteers whilst ensuring learning is achieved to meet any standard required for each role.

The MND Association recognises that people learn in many different ways and as such learning needs to be accessed in a variety of manners such as through classroom learning, e-learning, reading sessions or practising skills. Within the resources of the Association, we will try to ensure this variety of flexible learning.

Learning should be accessible to all based on their needs to carry out their roles. We recognise that individuals have different needs to enable them to learn. So we will carefully consider reasonable adjustments that may help volunteers access the learning they require. For example, we will anticipate and provide large print or braille learning materials for visually impaired volunteers. We will ensure venues are accessible for wheelchairs. We will provide formal training at a range of times and days to accommodate peoples lifestyles and most importantly, we will ask volunteers questions that help us anticipate their needs.

6. Recognising Prior Learning and Skills

The Association recognises that volunteers join us or take on new roles already equipped with a wide range of skills, knowledge and experience. We seek to recognise these skills where practical and not expect volunteers to attend learning for skills they already possess.

Furthermore, we will seek, with individual volunteers' permission to make good use of these pre-existing skills and knowledge of volunteers in the development of learning and development of the Association

7. Continuous Learning

Learning is an ongoing process; not a one off event. We are most effective when we take the opportunities to continuously learn and improve. We will do this through inductions, initial training, and ongoing learning events and by individual reflection on how effective we are at what we do.

We recognise that much is learning by failure and mistakes. Therefore when we make mistakes we will take the opportunity to learn from the experience and therefore improve performance when faced with similar experiences in the future.

We recognise that sharing learning is a very effective and efficient way to improve overall Association effectiveness in helping people affected by MND.

We recognise that learning is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers and of the individual learner. Learning is not just something that happens in a classroom but is an ongoing process that requires focus throughout the delivery of the volunteer role.

We recognise that for key roles, we will offer individual learning plans, that will be monitored through support sessions with staff.

We recognise that some volunteers support comes typically, not from staff, but from other volunteers. We therefore will seek to ensure that branches and groups receive adequate information, guidance and support to allow them to continually learn. This may be through local inductions, development of branch chairs or through provision of clear written literature.

8. Logistics of Learning

8.1 Learning Environment

Learning is more effective when it happens in a comfortable environment. Therefore where practical, effort will be made to ensure that the physical environment for training events are comfortable and accessible. Effort will be made to ensure that learners have a relaxed and fun environment in which to learn and if practical, time and space to reflect on learning.

We recognise that not all training is best delivered by staff, and we will involve volunteers in their delivery of training, coaching and mentoring.

8.2 Evaluation

Where practical, we will evaluate the effectiveness of learning, both formal and informal. This will include not just an assessment of the learning event and the skills learnt on that day, but of the ongoing application and use of the skills and knowledge learned. Appropriate records will be kept electronically of key learning attainments associated to the learning outcomes of key roles

8.3 Record Keeping

The Supporting Staff Member (SSM) responsible for the volunteer should arrange for the volunteer's record on Raisers' Edge to be updated with all learning undertaken and required. The volunteering team will assist with this recording for formal training if notified of details

9. Role Specific Learning

Some roles require specific skills and knowledge to allow volunteers to take on the responsibility. These skills and knowledge are set out in the learning outcomes associated with each relevant role.

Volunteers will normally be expected to articulate or demonstrate attainment and capacity of these learning outcomes prior to taking on the roles.

Some roles such as an Association Visitor require volunteers to be signed off as competent before taking on a role. Others may allow for competency to be slowly developed whilst practicing the role.

The learning outcomes and process for being accredited to take on the roles will be set out in a specific recruitment, selection and learning procedures specific to individual role

