

Volunteer Stress Management Policy

Introduction

The health, safety and welfare of our volunteers is important to Whistlewood Common Ltd (WCL), and we are committed to ensuring this is met. We are committed to identifying and reducing the causes of volunteer stress, as we acknowledge that this is an important health and safety issue.

This policy is applicable to all volunteers at WCL.

It is the responsibility of WCL to implement the policy, and to provide the necessary resources to support volunteers experiencing stress as a direct result of volunteering with us.

Definition of stress

Stress is defined by the Health and Safety Executive as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”.

There is a distinct difference between stress and pressure, as if managed correctly pressure can have a positive effect on a volunteer, whereas stress can be seen as detrimental to well-being.

The effects of long-term stress can be seen in physical, intellectual, emotional and behavioural signs. These can include headaches, crying, nausea, tiredness, palpitations, worrying, making mistakes, anger, irritability and dissatisfaction.

WCL will aim to identify all volunteer stresses and risk assessments will be conducted to identify the risks and eradicate or minimise the effects of them. These will be regularly reviewed.

When making proposals to prevent volunteer stress - volunteers will be actively encouraged to contribute to reviews and updates.

Responsibilities - Volunteers

As a collective community of volunteers, we all have a responsibility to help each other and highlight concerns if another volunteer appears to be struggling.

Volunteers who are experiencing stress, please reach out for help and advice from fellow volunteers or WCL Board of Directors. There may be actions we can take to alleviate stressors.

This may include:

- providing support to volunteers
- encourage referrals to the relevant agencies if appropriate
- implement recommendations developed from the risks assessments
- ensure there are developmental opportunities available to all volunteers
- monitor volunteer hours to ensure they are not over committing
- ensure that there is a zero tolerance on bullying and harassment
- offer additional support to volunteer who are experiencing stress
- outside of their volunteering role, such as bereavement or separation.

WCL will monitor the policy to ensure it is combatting the effects of stress and promoting volunteer wellbeing.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years by WCL Board of Directors to ensure it remains up to date and reflects the needs and practices of our community.

Approved: WW Board GT, AC, PJ, RD, CG

DATE: 02/09/2025