



Centacare
FAMILY SERVICES

where people matter

Volunteer Information Handbook



Centacare Family Services
3 Maitland Street, Geraldton
9921 1433
cvs@centacaregeraldton.org.au

Introduction

Welcome to the exciting world of volunteering!

This may be your first go at volunteering or you may be seeking a new role in your community. Either way, this handbook will help you get the most out of your experience in participating in the life of your community.

Most of us volunteer in some way in our communities—either in a formal role—such as meals on wheels delivery—or in the less formal way such as assisting at the local footy club or in your child's class. Communities without this widespread active participation suffer greatly and become less inviting places in which to live and work. Whatever way you choose to volunteer, you will find that you also learn new skills, find new people and gain new experiences and more!

Whatever community organisation or group you choose to work for, it is their responsibility to help make sure you are safe and happy in your role. But as volunteering is two-way, you will have to play your part in contributing to the organisation and group as well.

Centacare Volunteer Service welcomes you and wishes you all the best in whatever role you choose as a volunteer. Along with a vast network of volunteering support around the state, we are here to help you and make sure that volunteering is a positive, satisfying part of your life.

Centacare Volunteer Service

Centacare Volunteer Service is one of the services which Centacare Family Services offer to the Geraldton community. We are a Volunteer Resource Centre who are able to help potential volunteers in a number of ways. Our staff provide information to volunteers on available roles within local not-for-profit and community organisations. We will discuss with potential volunteers their background, experience, areas of interest and the commitment they are willing to make. We help potential volunteers choose the right voluntary role for them and refer them to their chosen agency.

A Guide for Volunteers

Choosing a Volunteer Position

Ask the right questions when deciding where you will volunteer, such as:

- ❖ Does the purpose of the organisation match your own values and beliefs?
- ❖ Does the organisation offer the sort of work that interests you?
- ❖ Does the organisation have a written volunteer policy explaining your rights and what you can expect from them? Is it available for you to read?
- ❖ Is there a written position description for the volunteer position you want?
- ❖ Does the organisation have a Volunteer Manager or Co-ordinator who supports and supervises volunteers?
- ❖ Will you receive adequate training and orientation to perform your job?

Volunteering Definition:

“Volunteering is time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain”

The term ‘volunteering’ covers a wide diversity of activities in Australian society. It includes formal volunteering that takes place within organisations (including institutions and agencies) in a structured way and informal volunteering, acts that take place outside the context of a formal organisation.

While the vast majority of volunteering is undertaken by individuals, entities also donate employee time and this is included within this definition of Volunteering.

Consideration of the term volunteering needs to also note best practice guidelines. Volunteering should not be exploitative, or be used to replace paid employment. While volunteering provides substantial benefits to society, importantly it also provides significant benefits to the volunteers themselves. The personal benefits of volunteering need to be recognised and fostered.

Source: Volunteering Australia July 2015

Checks & Protection

Some community organisations screen staff and volunteers before offering them roles. Screening is a standard procedure: it is a safeguard and does not imply distrust. Screening helps to:



Protect service users

The law and ethics ensures that organisations and their activities do not expose people to abuse or harm.

Support volunteers

In case something goes wrong and a volunteers behaviour is called into question, recorded screening clearance can be used as a reference to their background. Screening can therefore be a means of protecting volunteers and thus increasing their confidence amongst volunteers.

Protect organisations

Organisations have a duty of care to protect staff, volunteers & service user from harm. Organisations must honour this duty when choosing volunteers. Some services, such as childcare, thorough screening of staff and volunteers is mandatory.

These are some of the most common checks organisations conduct:

Reference checks; to verify that a volunteer is of good character and has the skills required for a volunteer position

Working with Children Check: to determine if a volunteer has a criminal record, an Apprehended Violence Order or any employment proceedings related to young people.

Background/Police Checks: to determine if a volunteer has any criminal record, an Apprehended Violence Order or any employment proceedings related to the field in which the volunteer is seeking a volunteer position.

A Guide for Volunteers

Volunteers have a right

- ❖ to be recognised as a valued team member
- ❖ to be adequately covered by insurance
- ❖ to be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses
- ❖ to be given a copy of the organisations volunteer policy
- ❖ not to fill a position previously held by a paid worker
- ❖ to have a job description and agreed working hours
- ❖ to have access to a grievance procedure
- ❖ to be provided with orientation to the organisation
- ❖ to be provided with sufficient training to do the job

Volunteers have the responsibility to

- ❖ make a commitment to their chosen volunteer position
- ❖ be punctual and reliable
- ❖ notify their host organisation in advance of any changes to their availability
- ❖ accept responsibility for their own actions and behaviour
- ❖ notify the host organisation if they become aware of potential hazards or dangerous situations
- ❖ abide by their host organisations volunteer policy
- ❖ deal with complaints in the appropriate manner
- ❖ respect the rights and privacy of others
- ❖ carry out the duties listed in the Volunteer Position Description
- ❖ undertake training as requested
- ❖ ask for support when needed
- ❖ value and support other team members
- ❖ give advance notice before leaving voluntary work



Principles of Volunteering

- ❖ Volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer
- ❖ Volunteer work is unpaid
- ❖ Volunteering is always a matter of choice
- ❖ Volunteering is not compulsorily undertaken to receive pensions or government allowances
- ❖ Volunteering is a legitimate way in which citizens can participate in the activities of their community
- ❖ Volunteering is a vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs
- ❖ Volunteering is an activity performed in the not-for-profit sector
- ❖ Volunteering is not a substitute for paid work
- ❖ Volunteers do not replace paid workers nor constitute a threat to the job security of paid workers
- ❖ Volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others; and
- ❖ Volunteering promotes human rights and equality

Source Acknowledgement:
Volunteering Australia



A Guide for Volunteers

Confidentiality

Protecting privacy is essential for all organisations. Staff and volunteers must always comply with policies and procedures intended to keep personal details private.

Private information must be kept secure, with limited access. Discussions must be considered as information given in confidence and not to be repeated. Private information cannot be shared unless consent has first been given by those involved.

If information is of concern, or requires action, volunteers can report it to someone with authority to act on it, such as the Volunteer Supervisor.

Code of Conduct

A Code of Conduct is a guide detailing requirements for responsive and ethical behaviour. Such a code must be consistent with legislative requirements. A Code of Conduct may also reflect the philosophy of an organisation.

Volunteers and staff will be expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with an organisation's philosophy.

Volunteers are required to observe a Code of Conduct.

Complaints & Suggestions

Complaints: in some cases, serious issues may arise and if a volunteer is unhappy, then they should let the organisation know and their concerns should be heard and action should be taken.

Suggestions: if critical of an organisation, express this in a constructive way.

Criticism is most helpful when accompanied by suggestions about how things could be done better. Discuss this with the supervisor.

Enjoy!



Centacare Volunteer Service

Volunteering, You can make a difference

Agency #1 Name

Agency #1 Address

Agency #1 Phone No

Volunteer Manager

Agency #2 Name

Agency #2 Address

Agency #2 Phone No

Volunteer Manager

Agency #3 Name

Agency #3 Address

Agency #3 Phone No

Volunteer Manager

The Agency will contact you ☐ You will contact agency ☐

Your Centacare Volunteer Service Referral Officer is:

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*Your kindest compliment is your recommendation of us
to your friends and family.*



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Centacare Volunteer Service

The Centacare Volunteer Service is provided by Centacare Family Services and funded by the State Government through the Department of Local Government and Communities.