



VOLUNTEER POLICY

Volunteering with Hope 4 M.E. & Fibro Northern Ireland

The support group was set in June 2011 to support the needs of patients suffering from M.E. (Myalgia Encephalomyelitis) and Fibromyalgia. We aim to raise awareness of the very physical nature of the illness within the general population and the medical profession. We actively fundraise for bio-medical research into the cause of the illness/illnesses which will in turn provide a diagnostic test and effective treatments.

We believe the support group provides a safe place where patients can feel secure in the knowledge that other members will fully understand and sympathise with the severe physical disability and effects this can have on all family members and friends.

We encourage self-help and a positive attitude towards living with this chronic illness/illnesses.

There are five active committee members who deal with all internal organisation and we encourage participation from all members if so desired.

We regularly arrange for national and international researchers and specialist doctors and consultants, to bring the most up to date information and cutting edge research directly to Northern Ireland. The monthly meetings cover various topics such as self help management techniques, information, and also some fun nights. There is always an opportunity to speak to other members over light refreshments.

The support group committee are actively involved in an ongoing campaign to lobby government officials to address the lack of adequate NHS services.

The DOH have given us full support by allowing the support group to offer FREE educational booklets and copies of 'Voices from the Shadows' dvd presentation on the NHS GP Intranet on request.

Purpose of our volunteer policy

Our volunteer policy has been created to show our volunteers and potential volunteers that we have spent time and care in planning how volunteers will be welcomed at Hope 4 M.E. & Fibro Northern Ireland. It also outlines that all volunteers will be treated in a fair and consistent way. It should also help our volunteers understand what support is available to them and what they can expect from us.

Our vision and mission for volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to share your enthusiasm, skills and ideas whilst having fun and meeting like-minded people. By volunteering for Hope 4 M.E. & Fibro Northern Ireland you will be making a positive contribution to community development in our area. Volunteers are vital to our work.

Attracting volunteers and volunteer agreement

We have a range of opportunities for volunteers to get involved in. On our Facebook page you can read through our volunteer role profiles. All you need to do then is to request and complete our very short Volunteer Registration Form. Alternatively, you can come along in person and enquire about becoming a volunteer.

Once we receive a copy of your completed registration form, a member of our team will get in touch with more information on specific opportunities and we can decide together which option best matches your interests and time availability and also our needs. Your help will be greatly appreciated and really will make a difference.

Access Ni Checks

Some volunteer roles will require an Access Ni check to inform Hope 4 M.E. & Fibro Northern Ireland of any criminal convictions that a person wishing to volunteer may have. For example, any volunteer position which involves regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults will be subject to an Access Ni check.

Induction and training

It does not matter how much you already know, as there will be opportunities to learn, and we have roles to suit every level of expertise.

There will be an induction prepared and delivered by one of our staff. This will include:

1. Some information about Hope 4 M.E. & Fibro Northern Ireland, our vision, mission and our future plans.
2. The role of the volunteer.
3. Introduction to some volunteers.
4. Tour around our facilities and see some of our initiatives.
5. A copy of all relevant policies, including this Volunteer policy, our Health and Safety, Expenses, Equality, Diversity, and Conflict Management.
6. Essential procedures such as timekeeping and rota.
7. Information about training and ongoing learning opportunities.

There will be a trial period of four weeks to give Hope 4 M.E. & Fibro Northern Ireland and you time to discover if you are suited to each other. A review will be made midway through the trial period and also at the end. This is not an assessment, it is just so that we can be sure that you benefit the most from the volunteering experience and maximise the time you are giving freely.

Support

Our Volunteer Manager/Co-ordinator will offer support to you. They will remain your key contact throughout your volunteering with us. This will include regular meetings with you to discuss how you are getting on, discuss any training needs and deal with issues arising. This will also ensure that Hope 4 M.E. & Fibro

Northern Ireland are doing all we can to make your volunteering experience an enjoyable and meaningful one.

Recognition and reward

We could not do the work we do without our volunteers. To acknowledge this we will always say thank you and show appreciation for a job well done. There will always be a listening ear or shoulder to lean on.

We will hold social events each year to celebrate our achievements; this might be a certificate presentation for volunteers or a celebration at Christmas. During these events you will get an opportunity to meet other volunteers and supporters of our work and share in our plans for the future.

We will take opportunities on our Facebook page, annual general meetings, and local and national press to praise the achievements of our volunteers. Each year we will hold a volunteers week where volunteers will get the opportunity to come along to presentations.

Expenses

We value our volunteers and want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. All reasonable out of pocket expenses, if required, will be reimbursed including expenses for travel and meals (if working more than 4.5 hours in one session). In order to claim expenses, an Expenses Form must be completed, a valid receipt provided and this should be handed in at the finance office/to the volunteer co-ordinator.

Insurance, Health and Safety, accidents and risk assessment

Hope 4 M.E. & Fibro Northern Ireland has a valid insurance policy so that volunteers are covered by public liability insurance, which you are advised to read. It covers the volunteering activities you will be doing. We will keep reminding you of our Health and Safety Policy and give simple instructions on how to perform each task safely. We have clear procedures for accidents and emergencies and will always have a first aider on field sites..

Resolving problems

We hope that you will have a very enjoyable experience volunteering with us. However if your role as a volunteer does not meet with your expectations or with the commitments we have made to you, we want you to feel comfortable about letting us know. First of all, talk to the person who leads the team where you volunteer and he or she should be able to sort it out with you before it becomes a problem. If you do not feel this will resolve things you can speak to the Volunteer co-ordinator.

Confidentiality

We expect all volunteers to adhere to confidentiality guidelines which will be explained to you before you begin volunteering with us and this also includes use of social media and contact with any press.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Hope 4 ME Fibro is committed to embracing diversity and promoting equality and inclusion. When representing Hope 4 ME Fibro as a volunteer we expect you to support our commitment to promoting equality.

Volunteering whilst on benefit

You can still volunteer with us if you are receiving benefits provided that we follow the legal guidelines. We have information from the Jobs and Benefits Department which we can talk through with you regarding the hours you can do and what you can claim for expenses incurred through volunteering.

This is the volunteer policy of Hope 4 M.E & Fibro Northern Ireland.

It will be reviewed every three months.

Date of next review:

Signed:

