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VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

1.0 GENERAL CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS

1.1 Volunteers are expected to carry out their role according to the Volunteer code of conduct. This means they are expected to perform their duties so that an efficient and acceptable standard of service is provided to Rowan Alba Limited, its service users and the public. It is important that all volunteers act in a professional manner and do not bring the organisation into disrepute.

2.0 CONFIDENTIALITY

2.1 Volunteers shall not knowingly use information gained during their volunteering for Rowan Alba for their own purposes or pass on confidential information to a third party.

2.2 Volunteers shall not publish any information about the service users of Rowan Alba or the operation of the organisation without the prior agreement of the Chief Executive. Enquiries from the media (press, TV, radio) must be passed to the Chief Executive.

2.3 If an enquiry is received from the police, the service manager should be informed and will be responsible for deciding whether any information could or should be given. If there is any doubt, a senior manager should be contacted for clarification.

2.4 Personal information, including private telephone numbers, about present or former volunteers, will not be divulged unless there is a statutory requirement to do so.

3.0 PERSONAL FILES AND DETAILS

3.1 Personal files containing personal and employment details are the confidential property of Rowan Alba. Volunteers are entitled to inspect their own personal file and computer records during normal office hours, after giving reasonable notice. An individual's master file, i.e. the file located in Head Office, will remain confidential to the Chief Executive and the individual. No other person will have access to the complete file although relevant managers will have access to certain information at the discretion of the Chief Executive.

3.2 It is the volunteer's responsibility to check that details in the file are correct. Volunteers who are dissatisfied with the information in their file should write to the Chief Executive in the first instance.

4.0 PERSONAL INTEREST

To protect Rowan Alba and its volunteers, the Chief Executive keeps a register of personal interests. Volunteers are expected to take steps to ensure that their private, personal, political and financial interests do not conflict with their professional duties. Both volunteers and Management Board members are required to disclose any interests they may have by entering them in this register.

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Such interests include, for example, family relationships with the Rowan Alba's contractors, suppliers and consultants, private work and membership of statutory bodies and other voluntary groups. There is a separate code of conduct relating to the personal use of contractors, suppliers and consultants by staff and members. If any volunteer has to deal with any matter in which they have a private interest, however slight, they must inform the Chief Executive of it in writing. Failure to do so will be in breach of Rowan Alba Policies.

4.1 Volunteers are expected to ensure that they do not benefit from their connections with the organisation and they must prevent themselves from getting into a position where their duty to the organisation might conflict with their own personal interests. Rowan Alba has adopted the standards set out in Schedule 1 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, which details circumstances in which such conflict might arise. This states that no payments or benefits should be made to staff, staff who have left Rowan Alba less than 12 months ago, their close relatives, or businesses in which staff or their close relatives may be involved other than under the terms of employment of an officer or employee.

5.0 PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

5.1 Due to the intensive nature of the work within Rowan Alba, volunteers and service users come into close daily contact. Whilst Rowan Alba encourages a friendly, respectful attitude to service users, it is important that relationships are maintained on a professional footing.

5.2 A 'professional' relationship is not easy to define. As a general principle, volunteers must perform their duties conscientiously, without favour and with regard to the interests of Rowan Alba and their colleagues as well as to those of the service users themselves. They must not discriminate against any individual or group on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. They must never use language which is likely to give offence, such as racist and sexist terms, and they must ensure that their words and actions do not cause nuisance or harassment to others.

5.3 It should be borne in mind that service users are often vulnerable and lonely and may read more into the actions, words or behaviour of volunteers than is intended.

5.4 Seeking Advice

In order to protect both volunteers and service users, volunteers should seek advice on their relationships with service users where this seems appropriate. For example, if any volunteer feels that they have a relationship with a service user that steps outside the boundaries of their professional role, they should discuss this with their line manager, who will try to give advice to the individual on Rowan Alba's expectations. Similarly if it is felt that a service user wishes to extend the relationship beyond professional boundaries the volunteer should also seek advice on how to proceed.

5.5 Personal Relationships

If a personal relationship between a volunteer and a service user develops at any time, or existed before either party came to Rowan Alba, then this should be made known to the line manager or head of the team. The Chief Executive should be approached if the volunteer has difficulty discussing the relationship with his/her line manager.

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5.6 Volunteers should at no time enter into any financial arrangements with service users.

5.7 Volunteers should not befriend or make contact with service users online, including all social media sites (Facebook, Twitter etc.) Any contact attempts or requests from service users must be declined.

6.0 GIFTS

6.1 The utmost discretion must be exercised by all volunteers in their relationships with outside individuals or firms, particularly contractors. Any gifts offered should normally be declined unless they consist of inexpensive (value of less than £10) calendars or diaries. Any gift, offer or irregular suggestion made in connection with a contract or with the aim of obtaining preferential treatment must be reported to the Chief Executive immediately.

6.2 Gifts from service users are not normally accepted, unless the gift is a collective one to be shared among staff or an individual gift of a perishable nature, flowers or chocolates, which has been approved by the Chief Executive.

6.3 Volunteers must notify the Chief Executive of any gifts, which are noted in the Rowan Alba's gift book.

7.0 HOSPITALITY

7.1 A distinction should be made between authorised attendance in an official capacity at a function, and the acceptance of hospitality from a private individual or firm standing to benefit from the goodwill of Rowan Alba. In general, to avoid any misunderstandings, this second type of invitation should be declined or a reasonable financial contribution made for any meals. Before attending any function organised by an outside body, volunteers should consult their line manager.

8.0 USE OF PREMISES

8.1 Rowan Alba's premises are not to be used for the business or purposes of any other organisation without the express permission of the Chief Executive.

9.0 PERSONAL PROPERTY

9.1 Rowan Alba does not take responsibility for personal property left or stored on the organisation's premises. Personal property is not insured under Rowan Alba's insurance policies and no compensation is normally made for loss, theft, or damage.

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10.0 EMPLOYMENT OF CLOSE RELATIVES

10.1 Close relatives of volunteers may be offered employment subject to their undergoing the normal application process in competition with other applicants. Anyone involved in the recruitment process where a close relative or friend is an applicant must declare his or her interest.

10.2 Existing volunteers and applicants are required to declare their known relationship with any existing employee or Management Board member.

10.3 Close relatives of existing Management Board members, as well as committee members themselves, cannot be employed until 12 months after their resignation.

10.4 Close relatives include a person's partner, parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, brothers, and sisters.

Please note that where policy refers to staff and/or volunteers, this also covers individuals representing Rowan Alba, such as volunteers and/or consultants.

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