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RAPP108 VOLUNTEER POLICY

Rowan Alba Limited recognises the invaluable contribution volunteers make to the project. Volunteers are people who come of their own volition to give their time and effort for no payment whatsoever to enhance the quality of life for the service users of the project. Volunteers are a valuable asset and are therefore to be treated thus. The aim of the policy is to provide clear guidelines on how staff work with volunteers and what volunteers rights are. These policies are to be used within the structure of Rowan Alba's existing policies and are born through law and basic human rights.

- 1.1 Rowan Alba have created volunteer policies in order that the organisation as a whole will aim to ensure that working conditions for volunteers will be of the highest standard.
- 1.2 Volunteers are entitled to work in the same environmental conditions as paid workers and are required to abide by all Rowan Alba's policies.
- 1.3.1 These policies seek to follow good and fair volunteer management practice, but do not designate any formal contractual employment status concurrent with paid employment upon the role of voluntary work within the project. It is important that all parties involved understand that voluntary work undertaken with the project, is done so on a purely voluntary basis. Managers should recognise that whilst specific expenses will be reimbursed, no volunteer will receive set "payment" or an allowance for work undertaken and similarly the general standards assured by the project should not be misconstrued as being "payment" for services rendered to the project.
- 1.3.2 **No employer-employee relationship exists between the volunteer and the group and no employment rights will be assumed during the period of volunteering.**

2.0 RIGHTS FOR VOLUNTEERS

- 2.1 Everyone has a right to apply to be a volunteer and the right to expect equal treatment from both the organisations they work for and the clients they work with.

This includes:

- The right to open and fair volunteer recruitment procedures.
- The right to an interview based on equal opportunities principles.
- The right to a role description, which is to be clearly defined.
- The right not to be discriminated against by the project, other volunteers or services users irrespective of race, colour, sexuality, gender, religion, age, disability or class.

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- The right to express in an appropriate way views and comments about the work they do and how it could be improved.
- The right to a complaints or grievance procedure based on Rowan Alba's policies.
- The right to join a trade union (if the volunteer wishes).
- The right to have out of pocket expenses met by the organisation.
- The right to say no to inappropriate demands outside the volunteer role description / agreement.
- The right to proper health and safety procedures and insurance cover for the activities undertaken by volunteers.
- The right to proper support and supervision (including the right to know before commencing the role what arrangements have been made for support).
- The right to induction training, on-going training relating to the role, opportunities for skills development and periodic reviews of the work of the volunteer.
- The right to a reference.
- The right not be exploited or be used as substitutes for paid employees.

3.0 RECRUITMENT

- 3.1 Volunteers can be sought from local colleges, universities, community groups, service / and ex-service users of Rowan Alba retirement and pre-retirement groups, religious organisations (of all denominations) libraries and appropriate advertising.
- 3.2 Upon a volunteer contacting a project, the volunteer should be invited to visit the project where they are to be met by the person who supervises the volunteers. S/he will explain what the project is about and what areas of volunteering are used. The potential applicant will then be given a volunteer application pack consisting of a volunteers hand book, which will be scheme specific, an application form (annex 1) guidance notes (annex 2) a summary of Rowan Alba Limited Equality and Diversity Policy and equality monitoring form (annex 6).

4.0 SELECTION OF VOLUNTEERS

- 4.1 Is on the basis of suitability and adheres to certain criteria:
- A person's suitability – not stereotyping.
 - A person's ability to undertake tasks required.
 - Willingness to abide by any placement agreements in force.
 - Ability to provide suitable references.
 - Ability to maintain a regular commitment.
 - Ability to understand and respect confidentiality.
 - A caring and sensitive approach.
 - Ability to attend further learning as required.
 - To be reasonably fit and able to carry out tasks without risk to their physical or mental well-being.



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- Possess such personal qualities as responsibility, sensitivity, maturity and co-operation as are commensurate with the integrity of the service.
- *Criminal convictions – Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions) Order 1975 Volunteers are required to declare all previous criminal convictions whether “spent” or not. Such information will be confidential and will not necessarily prejudice the person being accepted for voluntary work. It is important that such information is known to the person who supervises the volunteers for selection/placement purposes. Volunteers have a duty to inform the person who supervises the volunteers of any subsequent convictions. Under the Child Protection Act 1999 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 it is an offence to knowingly offer work (including to volunteers) to anyone who has been convicted of any of the crimes against children listed in the legislation to work with people under the age of 18. Similarly under the care standards act 2000 to ensure that an individual is not on the vulnerable adults list. See Rowan Alba Criminal Records Bureau policy and Child Protection policy for clarification.
- All volunteer applicants are to be screened through criminal records checks. The details of the applicant are to be sent to personnel at the head office, who will process the volunteers through the appropriate level of disclosure.
- Current service users/ex service users applying for voluntary work will be considered by the same criteria as any other applicant (see volunteer service user policies for more detail).
- Current or ex-users of the mental health service will be considered by the same criteria as any other applicant. If an applicant has received in-patient treatment during the 12 months prior to application, their placement is to be a supportive and non-stressful environment where they are not to be in direct contact with vulnerable people.

5.0 INTERVIEW

- 5.1 It is important that volunteers should not be made to feel intimidated by too formal an interview – they are here to volunteer and they are not coming as an employee. The number of people on the interview panel varies greatly from the person who supervises the volunteers, who interview alone, to other placements whose panel includes the person who supervises the volunteers, a member of staff and in some cases, another volunteer. The decision is largely based on the type of work to be undertaken by volunteers.

6.0 PLACEMENTS

- 6.1 A volunteer file should be set up for each volunteer consisting of the returned volunteer application form (Annex 1), volunteer details (Annex 3), volunteer and placements agreements (Annex 4) and a volunteer induction check list (Annex 5).

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- 6.2 Once the decision has been made to take on a volunteer, the person who will line manage the volunteer is required to complete volunteer starters form (annex 7) and return it to Rowan Alba Limited.
- 6.3 All volunteers are taken on a one-month or four visit trial period. This is to assess whether the placement is suitable for all concerned. The person who supervises the volunteers accompanies the volunteer on his or her first visit to ensure they have a thorough induction using the volunteer induction check list (annex 4). A task description is drawn up using the volunteer details form (annex 2). This is to be primarily done by the person who line manages the volunteers, in conjunction with the volunteer and, where appropriate, relevant staff and clients (depending on the nature of the work). This is to clearly define times, responsibilities, areas and type of work being undertaken. Task descriptions are reviewed regularly and changes made where necessary.
- 6.4 Volunteers should always work under supervision. The person who supervises the volunteers should have the volunteer 'shadow' (observe) them to ensure that the volunteer is clear about how they should work and to set in place a good example of what is expected of them. After this first session let them practice, observe the volunteer and give feedback, work with the volunteer until both parties feel comfortable that the volunteer can work alone, with appropriate supervision and support if needed.
- 6.5 Where a placement is in a group environment, hostel, day centre etc, staff are expected to be specific as to the work required and to be fully aware of the volunteers areas of work and responsibilities.
- 6.6 It is important that volunteers do not undertake tasks whether requested by staff or service users, which are not commensurate with those described in the Task Description.
- 6.7 To enable work to be carried out effectively, volunteer befrienders working on a one-to-one basis with service users should be placed with service users of their own sex. Careful monitoring procedures are to be put in place to limit the risk to both parties. They are expected to have appropriate contact with key workers and to be included in care plans, reviews, etc. and to have been through the criminal records checks.
- 6.7 Volunteers who are placed working with children must adhere to the Child Protection Policy and have gone through the Criminal Records checks - see the Child Protection Policy and Criminal Records Policy for more information.

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7.0 COMPLAINTS OR GRIEVANCES

- 7.1 This can, of course, be a very sensitive area and needs to be handled carefully. Some volunteers feel they cannot say “No” to requests made by (quite often) paid staff and rather than bring the matter to the attention of the volunteer manager, may just leave without explanation. This kind of situation must not be ignored and the matter should be settled properly, either for the volunteer to carry on or to leave not feeling bad.
- 7.2 If the volunteer does not turn up as agreed on a couple of occasions, the volunteer manager should contact them to ascertain whether there is a problem, before too much time elapses. Sometimes, things can be sorted out by a telephone call demonstrating that the organisation cares.
- 7.3 Volunteers should be encouraged to speak to the volunteer manager about any aspect that may be worrying them and causing them to think about leaving. There may be certain circumstances where a volunteer may be asked not to return following a proper consideration and discussions.
- 7.4 Misconduct and gross misconduct are grounds for a volunteer’s dismissal. In such cases the procedures laid out in the personnel policies should be followed.
- If a volunteer is intoxicated whilst at work, drinking with and/or involving service users in drug use, using the groups property for drug transactions. accepting alcohol and /or drugs from service users.
 - Persistent inappropriate reactions and/or behaviour.
 - Persistently not complying with the policies and codes of conduct of the organisation.
 - Persistently deemed to be using the project’s stationary and telecommunications systems for their own means.
 - Offensive behaviour and sexual behaviour/language.
 - Threatening and violent behaviour towards service users/ volunteers/staff.
 - Disrespectful behaviour and language towards service users/ volunteers/staff.
 - Where a volunteer’s work is unproductive and/or detrimental to the organisation and its ethos.
 - Where a volunteer requires more staff supervision and intervention than the placement can realistically offer.
 - A volunteers refusal/failure to leave the organisation when requested or wilful and persistent failure to comply with a reasonable instruction.
 - Where a volunteer discriminates against people for reasons laid out the equal opportunities policy.

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- Where a volunteer persistently and wilfully works in a way that is not commensurate with the Task description without seeking agreement with their supervisor.
- Frequent absence that directly and adversely affect the service users when a scheme was expecting the volunteer's contribution.
- If a volunteer becomes, or is found to have been, involved in a relationship with a service user, the volunteer placement will be terminated.
- Where a volunteer breaks confidentiality and / or failure to report important information to supervisors, this is likely to result in the termination of the volunteer's placement.
- Volunteers who deliberately use their involvement with the organisation towards furthering the aims of any specific ideology, practice or belief other than those embraced by the organisation's mission and practice, is an unacceptable breach of the code of conduct.
- Theft
- Fraud

7.5 When a volunteer leaves, the person who supervises the volunteer is required to fill out the volunteer leavers form (annex 8) and send it to Rowan Alba Limited Head Office.

8.0 REFERENCES

8.1 References for volunteers should always be sought and followed up on by the person who will supervise the volunteer. You can obtain a standard reference format from Head Office. A volunteer can be taken on provisionally pending references, but will need close supervision during this period.

8.2. All volunteers are to be screened through the Scottish Criminal Records Bureau process. Again, this will be conducted through Head Office. Close supervision will be required during the period that you are awaiting clearance (please refer to the SCRB policy for more information).

8.3 Volunteers who are to be placed with children must have undergone Scottish Criminal Records Bureau checks before placing them, (see the Child Protection policy for more information).

8.4 Once a volunteer has worked within the organisation they have a right to a reference. Reference requests should be sent directly to the person who supervises the volunteer, a copy of the completed reference should be sent to Head Office for their approval before the reference is sent out, if in doubt, speak to Head Office for more clarity.



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9.0 TRAVELLING AND SUBSISTENCE POLICIES

- 9.1 Managers must bear in mind the way payments may impact on the volunteers' benefits if they are unemployed.
- 9.2 Rowan Alba will ensure that volunteers are reimbursed for travel expenses between home and the agreed place in which they undertake their duties and any travel costs incurred as part of their duties for the project. Similarly, the project will ensure that volunteers whose usual hours of work include meal times have access to a meal or will be reimbursed expenses for subsistence. This policy will be implemented according to the specific procedures detailed below.
- 9.3 In any situation where a volunteer requires reimbursement or subsistence expenses, receipts should be produced before the expenses can be reimbursed. Expenses must be claimed on the normal Rowan Alba expenses claim form. In specific circumstances the organisation may provide expenses in advance and require appropriate receipts retrospectively.
- 9.4 It is left to the manager's discretion if receipts are not produced, as to whether reimbursement takes place, according to particular circumstances.

10.0 TRAVELLING TO AND FROM PLACE (S) OF WORK

- 10.1 Volunteers will be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred travelling between home and any agreed place in which a volunteer undertakes duties for the organisation. Reimbursement will be available on the same day as the production of receipts.
- 10.2 Travel expenses will usually be agreed at the cheapest rate of travel to and from an agreed place of work. Where economy and logic dictate, the organisation may agree to pay weekly tickets/travel passes. For example, where a volunteer works a frequent number of days.
- 10.3 Travel cards, where appropriate, will not cover any period longer than one week, will only be paid for in relation to the volunteer incurring placement relation costs. They will not, for example, be paid for during weeks where volunteers are absent from placement duties.
- 10.4 Where a volunteer is eligible to have his/her travel expenses reimbursed or partly refunded through alternative eligibility (e.g. participating on a government sponsored volunteering programme, student placement travel expenses from college), the project will not duplicate the expenses, but will reimburse to a level which ensures that the full cost is covered.



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11.1 Travel by Car

- 11.1 Volunteers are discouraged from using their vehicles to come to their work placements, unless the volunteer is registered as Disabled and needs the vehicle for reasons of their Disability. In special circumstances where a volunteer wishes to use their car or motorcycle to get to their work placements then Rowan Alba policies should be consulted for reimbursement.
- 11.2 Journeys are to be agreed in advance with the placement manager and it lies entirely with his or her discretion, the volunteer is entirely responsible for their vehicle, penalty fine notices and parking tickets incurred will be paid by the volunteer.
- 11.3 Under normal circumstances it is advised that volunteers should not transport service users of Rowan Alba in their own cars or any other personally owned car. Where this is not practicable, procedures will be approved through the heads of operations to ensure the safety of both volunteers and service users, this should be through application and adhere to the lone worker policy, health and safety and Criminal Records checks were applicable.

12.0 EXCLUSIONS FROM REIMBURSEMENT

The following may be valid reasons for exclusion from reimbursement:

- a) Where an individual volunteer is consistently unable to produce a valid receipt for an appropriate journey, though it should be borne in mind that some tickets may be lost or swallowed by ticket barrier machines.
- b) Where a volunteer has been given funds in advance and fails to produce a receipt, s/he will be expected to repay the funds to Rowan Alba.
- c) Where a volunteer persistently fails to comply with the travel and subsistence policy, Rowan Alba reserves the right to exclude the eligibility for further reimbursement, furthermore, dependent on the nature of the failure to comply, a practice investigation procedure may be initiated.
- d) See 9.4 and 10.4 of volunteer policies, for discretion of Managers.

13.0 MEALS

- 13.1 Volunteers whose hours will include a meal time, will have access to a meal, where the site at which a volunteer is working has a catering facility, or where more cost effective, this may be in the form of a meal voucher for use in a canteen. The costs

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of the volunteer subsistence costs will be met by the budget of the service in which the placement is located.

13.2 Where the site at which the volunteer is working does not have a catering facility or the volunteer is working off site during meal times, the volunteer will either be provided with vouchers or reimbursed for the cost of a meal, providing the appropriate receipts are produced, according to the policies of the organisation.

13.3 The expectation is that the cost of an individual volunteers travel and subsistence is provided from the petty cash of the service in which their placement is located.

14.0 SERVICE USER POLICY

14.1 Rowan Alba recognises that voluntary work within the organisation will prove attractive and beneficial to service users and ex service users. Rowan Alba welcomes applications from these groups.

14.2 Rowan Alba will ensure that users of the organisation's services have every opportunity to have access to voluntary work within Rowan Alba whilst concurrently ensuring that service users and volunteers are not put at risk. Similarly, the right to privacy of individual volunteers living in supported special needs or hostel housing should not be impinged upon. To this end, the following practices, procedures and expectations apply.

- a) In line with equal opportunities practices, the applications for volunteer work by service users and ex service users of Rowan Alba will be in accordance with the standard volunteer recruitment and selection policy.
- b) Volunteers who are current service users of housing for which Rowan Alba provides services, will not undertake volunteer placements at the site at which they are residing, and up to three months after they have left that site.
- c) Volunteers who are former service users will be expected to inform their supervisors where they encounter current service users who are known to them in a personal and /or social contexts. In such cases it may not be appropriate to have 'Key Volunteer' responsibility for such service users.
- d) Where volunteers encounter difficulties and uncertainty in working relationships with service users, originating from previous personal involvement and/or knowledge of these service user/s. they must gain support and advice from the person who supervises the volunteers.



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- e) Volunteers who are former service users are reminded of Rowan Alba's confidentiality policy. Volunteers in such circumstances are expected not to disclose personal information about the current service users, which they may have gained from previous involvement.

15.0 STUDENTS

- 15.1 Rowan Alba acknowledges that students may be attracted to voluntary work as a means of acquiring relevant (required) practical experience to complement their formal learning.
- 15.2 Wherever the particular volunteer role can accommodate this, and the individual successfully completes the usual volunteer application process, Rowan Alba will be prepared to provide support for the volunteer in relation to their course.
- 15.3 However, in cases where the demands of the course are in conflict with the particular volunteer role, it is advised that the student approach Rowan Alba for access to a formal supervised student placement.
- 15.4 When students are placed with children they must have been through the criminal records checks before starting their placement and they must adhere to the Rowan Alba's Child Protection Policy.

16.0 LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

- 16.1 Most learning will take place in the placement and will begin with an induction to the project, which will be carried out using the induction check list (Annex 5), the person who supervises the volunteers will go through each point on the list and give a full explanation of it relates to the volunteer and the roles they will carry out. Other learning within the placement should follow the basic format of:-
- 'Shadow' (let them observe you)
 - Let them practice, observe and give feedback.
 - Let them do it alone with your support if needed.
- 16.2 Moving from one stage of the basic format to the next will largely depend on the confidence and ability of the volunteer to carry out the role that is being asked of them, it is only when both the volunteer and the person who manages the volunteer feel comfortable to move to the next stage that this takes place.
- 16.3 Volunteers will be required to attend certain learning and development opportunities as part of their role within the organisation. The specific compulsory courses may differ from role to role, dependent on the requirements thereof.



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However, all volunteers will be required to attend learning, which will cover health and safety and confidentiality among others.

17.0 WORK EXPERIENCE VOLUNTEERS

- 17.1 Work experience volunteers may need limited access to confidential information during their placement. However, staff must be clear about the necessity and appropriateness of communicating confidential information. Work experience volunteers must only be given supervised access to service users files, and only with the consent of the service user.
- 17.2 All file entries made by work experience volunteers must be supervised and countersigned by a permanent member of staff until this is no longer deemed necessary by the supervisor.
- 17.3 Due to the type of work we undertake, young people aged under 16 on their school's work experience placements may only be placed in offices, where they are at less risk. They are to be supervised at all times and staff are to abide by the policies and practices laid down by the school. There may be some restrictions placed on your people aged 16-18 working in parts of our schemes. The safety of the young person will be of paramount importance when considering appropriate placements.
- 17.4 When working with children, volunteers must have been through the criminal records checks before starting their placement and they must adhere to Rowan Alba's Child Protection Policy.
- 17.5 See also Rowan Alba's Group Health and Safety policy manual annex 2 section 32.0 Young persons.

18.0 SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

- 18.1 All volunteers will be provided with regular supervision with a designated person who supervises the volunteer; this person will be identified at the commencement of the placement. The person who supervises the volunteers keeps in regular contact with volunteers to enable open informal discussion about any aspects of their work.
- 18.2 All staff are expected to acknowledge and encourage the work of volunteers and ensure that their contribution does not replace the work of paid staff.



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19.0 SUPERVISION FREQUENCY (see also Performance Review and Support Policy)

19.1 It is essential that supervision occurs regularly, consistently and at adequate levels of frequency to ensure that volunteers are adequately supported.

19.2 Monthly supervision is recommended as a minimum requirement, however supervision may be one of the responses to poor performance, to coping with difficult service users or supporting a volunteer during a time of personal difficulty. Under such circumstances, formal supervision might be increased in regularity or become more focused in specificity.

19.3 Volunteers are expected to keep to pre arranged individual supervision times. The aims of supervision are:

- To ensure that the volunteer is aware of his/her role and responsibilities.
- To provide support, guidance and advice of a professional nature for individual volunteers in carrying out of duties.
- To provide a forum for volunteers to discuss and hopefully resolve any difficulties encountered as part of carrying out duties.
- To provide a venue for volunteers to initially submit queries, concerns or complaints relating to any aspect of the placement.
- To provide a forum for the discussion of work undertaken with service users, enabling the supervisor to feel confident that the volunteer holds an adequate level of understanding and competence and that his/her practice is appropriate.
- Where necessary to provide a private forum where the supervisor will raise any concerns relating to unacceptable performance or practice on the part of the volunteer.
- To provide a forum for the volunteer to receive positive feedback relating to his /her work and support from the supervisor.
- To provide a forum in which the supervisor can inform the individual volunteer of any general changes to the service which might impact on his/her work within Rowan Alba.
- To assess the learning needs of the volunteer and take appropriate action.

20.0 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR VOUNTEERS

20.1 Volunteers are expected to take steps to ensure that their private, personal political and religious interests do not conflict with their duties.

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

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maintained on professional footing e.g. volunteers should not tell the service users their address.

- 20.3. Volunteers must ensure that no person shall be treated less favourably because of homelessness, poverty or as a user of services or because of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, culture, appearance, gender, sexuality, marital status, disability, health status, age, religious, spiritual or political beliefs or offending history. They must never use language, which is likely to give offence, such as racist or sexist terms, and they must ensure that their words and actions do not cause a nuisance or harassment to others.
- 20.4. It should be borne in mind that service users are often vulnerable and lonely. They may read more into the actions, words or behaviour of employees and volunteers than is intended.
- 20.5. Volunteers should respect the confidentiality within the project, and should not use information gained during their work at Rowan Alba or pass on confidential information to a third party, such as media (press, T.V, Radio).
- 20.6. Rowan Alba does not take responsibility for personal property left or stored on the premises and no compensation is normally made for loss, theft or damage.
- 20.7. Gifts from service users are not normally accepted unless they are of a perishable nature, i.e. flowers or chocolates, although even these should be discouraged in a polite way. Volunteers should notify their supervisor or team leaders of any gifts that are received by them.
- 20.8. Volunteers should at no time enter into any financial arrangements with service users. All other refund claims for the purchase of work material (to be agreed in advance with the supervisor) and day's travel expenses should be presented to responsible permanent member of staff with receipts for proof of purchase.
- 20.9. Volunteers may access the project on which they have been placed at a time other than that agreed for work, but must ensure that they seek permission from the Manager of the project prior to the visit. Reasons and aims for the visit should be beneficial to the service users of the project. Visiting times must correspond with those highlighted in the visitor's policies and procedures. In the case of coming into the project at a time when they are not normally involved, volunteers should sign in and out as a visitor.
- 20.10. Volunteers must always seek advice / Guidance on issues relating to violence and aggression before taking action in the matter. The staff team are always available to offer support in case of doubt.

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- 20.11. Volunteers may apply to attend learning opportunities geared towards the quality of service provision that is directly related to their role. They will be given enough notice regarding venue, time and topics to be covered.
- 20.12. All information relating to service users' progress and participation must be clearly documented in the appropriate communication files at the end of each session.
- 20.13. Volunteers must consume alcohol on the premises, or during any working hours including lunch breaks. Any volunteer perceived to have been drinking will be asked to leave, and by their actions this will be deemed to put their placement in jeopardy.

21.0 CONFIDENTIALITY

- 21.1 All volunteers will be subject to the Rowan Alba Confidentiality and Code of Conduct policies.

21.0 OTHER POLICIES

- 21.1 All volunteers are to abide by the Rowan Alba policies. For further clarity see also:-

- Adult Support and Protection
- Alcohol
- Drug Management
- Boundaries 1
- Boundaries 2
- Boundaries 3
- Code of Conduct
- Case File recording
- Lone Working Policy
- Disclosure of Information
- Equality and Diversity Information
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Health and Safety
- Induction
- Recruitment of Equal Opportunities Form
- Reimbursement of Expenses
- Risk Assessment
- Rowan Alba Social Communications
- Support and Development
- Volunteer Handbook
- Whistle Blowing
- Complaints

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This list is not exhaustive and a copy of all Rowan Alba policies can be obtained from Rowan Alba Head Office

Insurance Cover

Volunteers receive the same cover as all staff members while carrying out duties for Rowan Alba Limited.