

Volunteer Policy

Purpose

This Volunteer Policy has been developed with a purpose to streamline the short listing, induction, contribution and involvement of any prospective Volunteer of foreign origin into the work spheres of LEPRA Society: Health in action. The policy specifies the terms of reference for recruitment, induction, accommodation, legal framework and other issues related to Volunteering.

Objectives

- Volunteers will help raise the profile of the organisation, as per the LEPRA Society's strategy.
- Volunteers would fill the skill gaps in the field or provide support in different areas.
- The volunteer programme will encourage the young people to become more involved and aware of health development issues

Definition of “Volunteer”

A ‘volunteer’ is anyone who without compensation or expectation of compensation performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of LEPRA Society. Unless specifically stated, volunteers shall not be considered as ‘employees’ of LEPRA.

Standard Operating Procedure for Inducting Volunteers

Process of selection:

LEPRA UK will undertake the process of selecting the volunteers. LEPRA Society will, in turn, provide the list of skill gaps which needs to be filled; through the use of volunteers. Based on the information, LEPRA UK will screen all candidates who would meet those conditions.

Candidates will be requested to submit an application form and CV. If this information is relevant they will be invited to an interview at LEPRA UK. If shortlisted, they will be assigned to a project according to their skills and the need in the field, which will be communicated by LEPRA Society. All volunteers will sign an agreement that clearly states the terms and conditions

of the placement, including a commitment to cover all their costs during the placement.

LEPRA Society will be provided with an induction and supervision pack before the programme begins. This will contain the relevant induction, supervision and exit forms to be filled by the project coordinator of the project the volunteer will visit. The pack will contain detailed instructions on how to fill the forms and their purpose.

There will be constant communication between the UK and India throughout the process, to ensure all the relevant people are kept informed and involved. Communication will also ensure that the laid down procedures are followed, so that the impact of the policy can later be measured.

Categories of Volunteers

1. Short term volunteers – 2 to 6 weeks

Profile

- Short term Volunteers are those who have a specific purpose in mind, which may include short term studies/research as well as assistance in capacity building of the staff. Such volunteers can also contribute in developing project proposals or documentation.

2. Medium term volunteers – 6 weeks to 3 months

Profile:

- Medium term Volunteers could be Final year students of Public Health/Physiotherapy/Medicine/Social Communication/Documentation or allied disciplines who would like to apply knowledge and skills in a different and challenging environment. Young professionals, with experience might as well be interested in Volunteering, to apply their attained knowledge. Such volunteers may contribute in research, documentation, field coordination, management support etc.

3. Long term volunteers – 1 to 3 years

Profile

- Long Term Volunteers are generally experienced professionals who may contribute in developing training manuals, policy framing, HR review, Proposal development, fund raising, long term research, programmatic support etc.

Rights and responsibilities

Volunteers are engaged to perform a specific task and LEPRA Society agrees to provide the volunteer with a worthwhile and rewarding experience. Therefore each has the right to some basic expectations of the other.

Volunteers have the right to:

- Be treated and valued as a team member
- Have a clear, written Terms of Reference
- Be supported by the administration staff throughout the volunteering period.
- Be kept informed of any organisational changes which affect the volunteer's role
- Have a place to volunteer and appropriate tools to undertake their volunteering
- Be free from discrimination

Responsibilities of the Volunteer

- To fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the volunteering role
- To accept the demands of the role, for example timelines and commitment
- To become familiar with the relevant policies in LEPRA Society including equal opportunity, anti-sexual harassment, vulnerable adults and child protection policy and to attend any relevant training offered in this respect.
- To promote the best interests of the society in carrying out the volunteering duties.
- To respect confidentiality.

Responsibilities of the staff with whom the volunteers would be working

- Such staffs are responsible for defining roles for volunteers, arranging appropriate induction and training, and supporting them in their roles.

The Administration Manager and F&AO's at offices/projects will be the nodal officers and would be available to advice and support the volunteers.

Necessary Documentation after arriving in India

- Volunteers visiting India have to be necessarily covered under Overseas Medical Insurance Policy and they would be responsible for their own health needs.
- Administration department to ensure that the Volunteers have properly undergone Police Verifications, as per the local laws
- Volunteers will be provided with the TOR (Terms of reference) which would clearly state the expectations from the organization and specify the kind of work they would have to undertake.
- Volunteers will be provided sufficient information about the country and cultural sensitivities.

- Volunteers will be provided with details regarding approximate expenses of their stay in India.
- Volunteers will be given a brief regarding the specific programme as well as a glimpse into LEPRASociety's work in India

Registration

- Mandatory police verification is done through the Registration of Foreigners Rules 1939 (Form – C, Foreigners Arrival Report as per Rule 14). A copy is enclosed as "ANNEXURE I"
- If the Volunteer of foreign origin stays in any of the Guest Houses of LEPRASociety, the society has to fill up this form, duly signed by Administration Manager and submitted to the local police station
- If the volunteer stays in any Hotel, then it's the Hotel's responsibility to fill up the aforesaid form.

Accommodation

- Volunteer may be provided an accommodation in LEPRASociety guest house, subject to availability only, and on payment basis, which will be communicated in advance. However, the volunteer shall be assisted in finding a suitable accommodation, depending upon the duration of voluntary work and the boarding and lodging expenses are to be borne by the Volunteer only.

Channels of Communication

- There will be continuous flow of communication between LEPRASociety UK and HR department, LSHO regarding recruitment, induction, sharing skill gaps related to Volunteer Programme.
- Administration Manager, LSHO will communicate with the volunteers and organize accommodation, give a brief about the probable expenses and all statutory obligations.
- The Administration department of the region/division would be the nodal centre of communication and would liaise with other regions/divisions if there is a movement of Volunteers across divisions/regions.
- If the Volunteers are visiting projects in different districts, then the Project officer concerned will be responsible for the movement, field visits, interactions with the community etc, at the projects.
- If any volunteer undertakes any personal trips, including that of sightseeing/visiting relatives/travelling to other cities in India, the same has to be approved by the appropriate authority.

Confidentiality

- Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves a single staff, volunteer, client, or other person or involves overall LEPRAs activities.
- Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination of the volunteer's relationship with LEPRAs Society or other corrective action.

General Rules

- As representatives of LEPRAs Society, volunteers, like staff, are responsible for presenting a good image to clients and to the community. Volunteers shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties.
- Volunteers will follow the prescribed office timings and use the facilities and office equipments during work hours, for official work only.
- Smoking and consumption of liquor, on duty, is not permissible at all and LEPRAs Society follows "NO SMOKING" in all its offices and projects.
- Volunteers will adhere to Anti-Sexual harassment policy, Child Protection Policy and Vulnerable Adults policy

Absenteeism

- Volunteers are expected to perform their duties on a regular scheduled and timely basis. If expecting to be absent from a scheduled duty, volunteers should inform their staff supervisor as far in advance as possible so that alternative arrangements may be made. Continual absenteeism will result in a review of the volunteer's work assignment or term of service.

Discipline

- In cases of indiscipline on part of any Volunteer, the same would be investigated by a team or individual assigned for such investigation and if proved, there would be a provision for cancellation of the Volunteering work and the same will be communicated to LEPRAs UK.

Reporting & Review

- Every Volunteer is expected to submit a report before leaving to his/her country of origin. The report has to be submitted to the supervisor, with whom the volunteer has been attached and shall include the work done, experience sharing and broad suggestions, besides other focussed reports related to particular assignments or tasks.

Implementation of the Policy

- This Policy is applicable in all regions/divisions/offices/projects/units of LEPRA Society. Responsibility of Implementation lies with Head – HR, LSHO, in coordination with Administration Manager, LSHO and Regional/Divisional Directors.

Review of Policy

- Director – HR & Admin will monitor and review this policy on an annual basis, in discussion with the senior staff.
