



**Understanding volunteering
with SWAN**

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



Welcome to SWAN!



“First and foremost, I want to say a huge thank you for volunteering with us!

We are proud to be autistic led, so everyone who comes to SWAN knows they are in a place where the people they interact with will ‘get’ them, where the information they receive will be written and informed by the experiences of other autistic women and non-binary people, and where they can be their true selves.

By donating your time, skills and experience as a volunteer, you are helping make all that possible.

You’re enabling us to deliver and extend our services as the only Charity in Scotland led completely by and for autistic women and non-binary people. You’re contributing to our vision of making Scotland a healthier, happier place for us all.

We want to do everything we can to help you settle into your role. This handbook will give you some useful information about volunteering with SWAN. Please do get in touch with our Volunteer Coordinator if you have any questions or suggestions.

Thank you for all your support! ”

Lyndsay Macadam

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

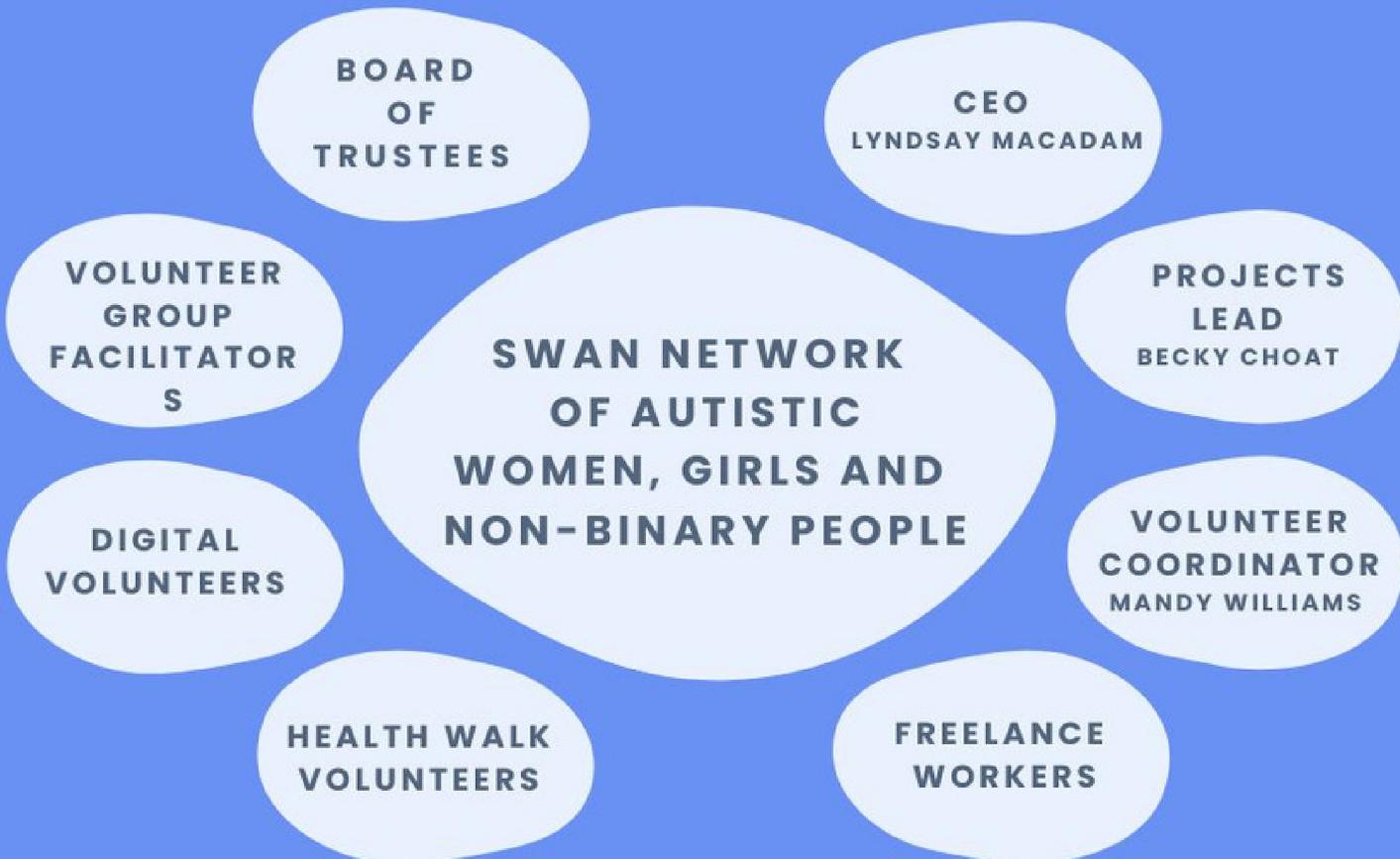
Your guide to volunteering with SWAN!

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Organisational Chart



Mandy is your volunteer coordinator and is here to support you throughout your journey as a volunteer . Email: mandy.williams@swanscotland.org



**Becky is SWAN's Projects Lead
Email: becky.choat@swanscotland.org**

The benefits of volunteering with SWAN

We are so excited that you have decided to join our SWAN team!

Of course, we want you to have a positive volunteering experience so we'll make sure that we:

- Make you feel welcome
- Offer different kinds of opportunities and think carefully about what we ask you to do
- Give you the support you need throughout your volunteering journey
- Talk to you about what you're trying to achieve and help you to reach those goals
- Offer training that may help you when looking for a job
- Help develop social skills
- Cover all your reasonable expenses
- Ask you for feedback
- Provide you with a reference for future work

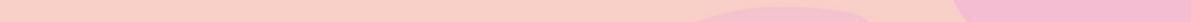


Swan Policies

The next part of the handbook gives you the key information from policies you need for your role.

We also have more detailed policies which you must follow. Mandy will explain these policies during training and will provide you with a copy if you ask for one.

As part of your volunteer training, we will cover these policies in more detail. If you do not understand anything or have any questions, please ask Mandy.



Confidentiality Policy

When we disclose personal information, we all expect that it will be treated with respect.

SWAN's work means that we are trusted with personal information about individuals and volunteers. This policy outlines your responsibilities and how you must treat and protect people's personal information.

Individuals have protection and rights regarding how their personal data is stored and used. SWAN is committed to complying with GDPR Legislation and ensuring that our volunteers and the people we come in contact with feel secure about the personal information we may hold on to them.

This Confidentiality Policy outlines our commitment and details your responsibilities as a volunteer. Separately we also have a Data Protection Policy that details how we record, store, manage and dispose of people's personal information.

Each member of the SWAN team is responsible for keeping personal information secure and processing it following these policies.

What do we mean by personal information?

An individual's personal information includes everything from their name and contact details to their personal history, background, and aspirations. It may include very sensitive information about their health and wellbeing. All of this information is important and must be treated with the same respect.

We may store some personal information given to us on databases, online or in hard (paper) copies.

Regardless of how we receive or store personal information, we must ensure it all remains confidential.

What are your responsibilities as a volunteer?

As a volunteer, all the personal information that you deal with must be treated in confidence. You must not share or pass on to anyone outside of SWAN any information that relates to the people we are in contact with unless there is a legitimate reason for doing so and you have the permission of the individual concerned. Personal information on individuals will normally be shared with or available to relevant staff within SWAN. However, some information may be of such sensitivity that access to it may be restricted to specific individuals.

All volunteers are expected to respect the right to privacy of other volunteers and individuals. Anyone disclosing confidential information outside of SWAN whether in writing, electronically or verbally will be in breach of this Confidentiality Policy and may be subject to disciplinary action. For operational purposes in their normal role, most volunteers will have access to the information contained in SWAN's database(s) and other management information systems.

You must not attempt to access personal information contained on databases unless you have a legitimate reason to do so. Please ask your volunteer coordinator for advice on this.

Are there any exceptions?

When working with individuals, volunteers or staff, it is important to understand that there may be times when information that is given to you may need to be disclosed. Even if the information was given in confidence.

Normally this would only happen when the information relates to an individual being at risk of harm or having been harmed. In such circumstances, it is important to let the person disclosing the information know that you cannot maintain its confidentiality and that you are required to discuss what you have been told with your Volunteer Coordinator.

In the event of information being disclosed to you that may be relevant to the police, you must bring this immediately to the attention of the volunteer coordinator, who will support you and make sure that the appropriate action is taken.



Data Protection Policy

What information do we collect about you?

We collect information when you apply to become a volunteer.

How we'll use this information

We use this information so that we can recruit you for the right volunteering role and give you ongoing support.

We will only pass on your information to third parties with your agreement.

We'll store this information on our internal database which is password protected.

We'll keep your information on file for three years after your volunteering with us ends.

Your rights

You have the right to request a copy of the information that we hold about you. You can ask us to amend or delete your personal information or to stop using it.

If you would like a copy of some or all of your personal information, please email your Volunteer Coordinator.

Email: mandy.williams@swanscotland.org.

Safeguarding Policy

SWAN engages a wide range of individuals and organisations. Everyone has the right to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. Some people who contact SWAN may be vulnerable and could be at risk of harm.

All staff and volunteers play an important part in promoting the safety and protection of the vulnerable people that they are in contact with and meet.

The trustees will ensure that all staff and volunteers understand this responsibility and receive induction and training proportionate to their role.

Trustees are a group of people who help manage charities and make decisions within the charity.

This policy applies to all SWAN volunteers.

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of people and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding includes the right to be free of physical, emotional, sexual and financial harm and neglect

Your Volunteer Coordinator will ensure that:

All volunteers are informed of and understand their responsibilities regarding safeguarding and public protection before any work is carried out in the organisation.

All volunteers receive induction and training on safeguarding and will read and sign the induction information given to them either electronically or in paper form.

Any safeguarding concerns, e.g. incidents or suspicion of harm must immediately be reported to Mandy, who will promptly follow up and report to the CEO, or another trustee if the CEO is not available.

The responsibility to decide whether harm has taken place will be handled appropriately by a staff member and not be placed on you as a volunteer.

All suspected safeguarding incidents should be discussed with the Volunteer Coordinator and trustees and reported to The Police, Social Services, NHS and relevant agencies as appropriate when there is evidence of harm or risk.

Confidentiality will be respected and always maintained regarding any matters of public protection and safeguarding:

- **Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis only.**
- **All written or digital records will always be kept secure and destroyed as appropriate.**
- **Volunteers must adhere to rules of confidentiality and agree to not discuss sensitive information with any other volunteers, staff or people outside of SWAN**
- **The duty to protect vulnerable adults and children will always take precedence over maintaining individual confidentiality if a child or vulnerable adult is deemed to be at risk.**
- **Volunteers should be aware that any information shared with your volunteer coordinator may be passed on to the relevant authorities should abuse or harm be suspected.**

It is the legal responsibility of the SWAN to make a referral to Disclosure Scotland if a volunteer is dismissed or removed from Regulated Work poses a risk to a child or vulnerable adult. It is the responsibility of SWAN to report any concerning conduct or behaviour of a volunteer to the Police.

Equality, diversity & Inclusion

This policy aims to:

Ensure equality, diversity and inclusion practices are integrated into all SWAN does and ensure that volunteers are treated with fairness and respect from each other and from members of the public, Trustees, and contractors.

Require SWAN to implement fair and just volunteer practices ensuring that no volunteer applicant or volunteer will receive less favourable treatment on any grounds.

Ensure volunteers are recruited solely based on their own merit, experience, ability and potential. This applies throughout the entire duration of volunteering as all decisions will be based on only relevant merits.

Provide an environment appropriate to the needs of those from all walks of life and offer a culture that respects and values each other's differences and promotes dignity, equality, diversity and inclusion for SWANs volunteers, employees, trustees, stakeholders and those accessing services.

Training & Development

Equality, diversity and inclusion will apply throughout all training activities and resources. It is crucial that all volunteers can participate and enjoy any training opportunities or activities without discrimination or fear of harassment. Every attempt will be made to ensure that learning materials will provide a positive and diverse image.

As part of the volunteering relationship being covered under this equality and diversity policy, all volunteer agreements will be issued following the volunteer's role. Volunteer terms and conditions will be standard across all volunteers regardless of any of the protected characteristics.

Protected characteristics are a set of qualities that are protected by law to discriminate against, such as age, disability and sexual orientation, to name a few.

Volunteers will not receive less favourable terms and conditions for any reason other than relating specifically to the role and the grade it attracts.

Complaints

Where a volunteer feels they have been discriminated against or victimised or harassed by another volunteer (including managers), the aim should be dealt with it informally in the first instance.

Informal stage

A volunteer should aim to resolve the matter informally as it may be that the discriminatory action is unconscious and quickly resolved once the situation is highlighted. This is often the most efficient way of dealing with such circumstances and helps maintain good working relations.

The volunteer should raise the issue informally with their volunteer coordinator and will speak to the individual whom the complaint is against. If the complaint is against the Volunteer Coordinator, the matter should be raised with the Board of Trustees. If it is found that the behaviour was in breach of this policy, an appropriate level of the sanction will be decided in line with the Disciplinary Policy.

In addition, SWAN will keep a record of the incident on the complaining volunteer's file. This information will only be considered if there are any further incidents. Dealing with the matter informally does not remove the complaining volunteer's right to have the matter dealt with formally.

Formal stage

If the volunteer is dissatisfied with the outcome of the informal stage or the complaint is very serious, they should raise the matter in writing. The formal complaints procedure intends to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly.

The nature of the complaint should be detailed to their Volunteer Coordinator. If the complaint relates to their coordinator, the volunteer should write to the Chair of Trustees.

The complaint should then be dealt with under the Grievance Policy. In line with this process, an investigation into the complaint will be carried out. Volunteers who feel they are being subjected to harassment should raise the issue in line with the Bullying and Harassment policy. To view our Bullying and Harassment policy, contact your Volunteer Coordinator.

If the outcome of the investigation is that a formal disciplinary hearing should take place, this will be conducted in line with SWAN Disciplinary Procedures.

Expenses

At SWAN we believe that no one should ever be out of pocket because they have volunteered with us. We will ensure that we reimburse you for all reasonable expenses. Our expense policy will be discussed in more detail in your induction.

We will email out an expenses form which we ask you to complete each month.

Expenses we normally cover include:

- **Travel to and from the place of volunteering if not remote working.**
- **Postage, telephone calls, etc, are paid for by the volunteer during their volunteering.**
- **Any stationary needed to fulfil the volunteering role.**

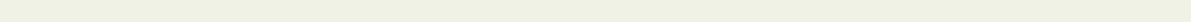
If you have any questions about expenses at any time, Mandy will be able to answer these for you.

Volunteer Agreement Information

SWAN strives to ensure that volunteers are offered a positive experience during their time with SWAN and that the expectations for both parties are met.

To achieve this, the agreement aims to identify the expectations of both parties to ensure an effective relationship during the period of the voluntary role. The volunteer agreement is not a contract or legally binding document.

This agreement should be read alongside the role description for volunteers and our Volunteer Handbook. This agreement is designed to assure you of our appreciation of your volunteering with us and indicates our commitment to do the best we can to make your volunteering experience a positive and rewarding one.



Volunteer Agreement

SWAN agrees to:

- Treat you fairly, with respect and dignity
- Discuss your goals for volunteering and do our best to meet them
- Review your skills with you and provide any training you need appropriate to your role
- Let you know about training opportunities relevant to your role that are available through us and our project partners
- Provide a safe working environment
- Ensure you have a named supervisor who is available to offer support to perform your role
- Ensure you have opportunities to let us know how things are going
- Reimburse reasonable travel costs and other reasonable out of pocket expenses with the agreement of your coordinator
- Give you access to grievance resolution guidelines if there is a problem
- Provide you with a reference when you want to move on

Volunteer Agreement

As a volunteer SWAN wants you to:

- Enjoy volunteering with us!
- Let us know your availability to volunteer
- Keep to any commitments you've made and notify your coordinator if you are unable to attend
- Attend training and briefing sessions that are needed for you to perform your role
- Keep in touch with us, read things that we send to you and ask for
- Treat people as you'd wish to be treated and work to our Equality and Diversity Policy
- Keep any personal information you receive safe and work to our Code of Confidentiality
- Not volunteer while under the influence of alcohol, drugs or other controlled substances
- Raise any concerns or problems you may have with your supervisor
- Give feedback to your supervisor to help us improve the project and our work
- Let us know as soon as possible if you want to stop volunteering

Support

SWAN agrees to fully support you. Your volunteer coordinator, Mandy Williams will organise regular support sessions with you while you are volunteering with us. These will help you get the most from your volunteering allow you to raise any issues you wish to talk about and help identify any relevant training opportunities.

Please note that this is a voluntary agreement only and does not constitute a contract of employment.

I confirm that I have read this volunteer handbook, any specific guidance for the role I'm volunteering for and this Agreement. I also confirm that I have completed an induction for my role with my coordinator.

Name of Volunteer (please print):

Email:

Volunteer signature:

Date:

Volunteer Coordinator signature:

Date:

Once again, we truly appreciate your willingness to volunteer with SWAN!

We are really excited to have you join us.

Please contact your volunteer coordinator, Mandy Williams.

Mandy works Mon – Thurs* and will answer any questions you have about volunteering.

Thank You

Learning Record

My thoughts and learning from volunteering

You can use the box below to keep a record of the things that you've done as a volunteer.

You might want to write down some key points from the training you attended or remind yourself of how to do things in your role.

You could take the opportunity to 'reflect' on things that happen when you're completing a task. By writing down what you liked, what you didn't like, what you could have done differently and what you learned from your experience, you'll gain more from experience.

You don't have to write things down, but you might find it helpful if, for instance, you want to remind yourself of your experience when you're applying for a job.

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