

Volunteering for everyone standard

Making sure everyone feels safe and included to volunteer.



Making sure everyone feels safe and included



Volunteering is and should be for everyone.

A person is **volunteering** when they give their time to things they care about in their local community

Volunteers are not paid.



You can expect to be treated with respect, dignity and kindness by other volunteers and Sustrans **employees** when volunteering.

Employees are people who have paid jobs with an organisation.



This standard supports everyone to understand:

- how we can all help everyone feel safe, welcome and included
- our **values** and the **behaviour** we expect of everyone



Values are the things we believe are important in the way we work.

Behaviour is how we act, particularly how we act around other people.



- how to recognise when behaviour is not acceptable and needs to be reported.



Everyone involved with volunteering is expected to support and follow this standard.



Unacceptable behaviours can affect people very badly.

We can all help to stop unacceptable behaviour by knowing what to do if it happens.



By supporting the volunteering for everyone standard you are also helping to make it easier for everyone to walk, wheel and cycle.



You are helping your local community to treat people equally and fairly.

What are our values?



Our values are:

Include everyone

Try to understand and accept:

- what other people have experienced
- how they feel
- what they think.



Make sure everyone can take part in things.

Remember there is always more than one way to do things.



Be brave to ask questions

This includes asking yourself questions about what you think and how you do things.



Think about how you speak to people.

Do not speak loudly or shout.



Always listen to what other people think about things and try to understand their point of view.

Realise that the things you say might affect other people.



Do not ignore helpful suggestions

Do not decide that you know what someone means or thinks

Always check that you have understood someone correctly.



Do not ask about something that is private

Someone may not want to talk about something that is very personal.

Act local and think big

Try to find ways to use everyone's ideas.

Help other people see things more widely than just from their own point of view.

Always think about how it could affect other people before you decide to do something.





Work together to get things done

Welcome different opinions and listen to them.



Get information and advice from people who are **experts**.

People are **experts** when they know a lot about a subject.



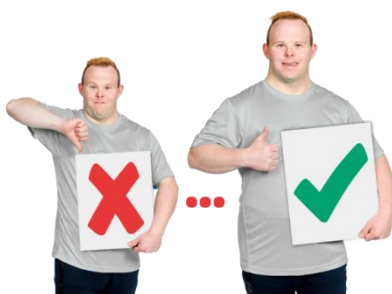
Find ways to share what everyone knows.

Find ways to make decisions together.



Do not weaken or threaten anyone else's work.

Do not say one thing and do another.



Always learning

Listen when someone tells you what they think.



Be willing to be involved in making things better.

It is ok if you do not get it right the first time, as long as we work to make things better.

There are always things to learn from any experience.

What we expect from each other



We expect everyone who takes part in volunteering to help make sure spaces are safe and welcoming.

The volunteering for everyone standard will support this to happen.

It will help make sure people:

- are heard and respected
- feel safe
- feel included.



Volunteering is amazing because it brings together people from different backgrounds who have different views.

This makes it even more important to be aware of what we think about things and how it can affect other people.



It is important to remember each person is responsible for their own behaviour.

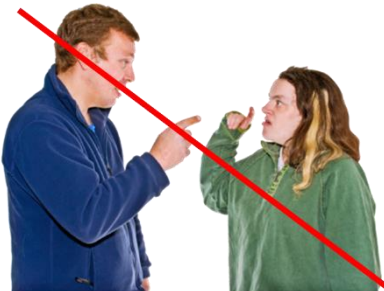
Everyone can expect that:

- We are **friendly, polite and kind** to each other.
- We treat each other with **dignity and respect**.



Think about your tone and body language when communicating with people.

This means:



- thinking about the way you speak to someone
- thinking about how you look when you are speaking

For example, do you look angry or have you turned away from someone who is talking?



Respect other people's physical and emotional limits.

Do not stand too close to someone when you are talking to them.



Think about what you are talking about.

The other person might not be comfortable with what you are saying.



Always ask someone if they are comfortable with you touching them.

For example, ask before you shake their hand or hug them.



Think carefully about telling people your personal views.

This could be:



- in meetings
- on social media
- by email or text
- or using any other communication method.

Everyone can expect that:

- We do not **make assumptions** about each other.



Making assumptions means thinking you know something is true without checking or having proof.

This can include:

How people identify



If you are not sure what someone's pronouns are (he, she, they), do not be afraid to ask.

If you are not sure, use their name or **they**. For example, 'I need to find out what **they** want to work on today' – not he or she.

Individual needs



Check what people would prefer and what they need.

Make sure people are prepared and know what will be happening on the day of volunteering.

Personal abilities



Some people may not feel comfortable to tell you if they have any hidden disabilities or conditions straight away.

Make sure people feel included without having to share information until they are comfortable to.

Remember that your behaviour can affect other people

We care about how a person's behaviour and words can affect other people when volunteering.



It is not acceptable to behave towards someone in a way they do not want.

It does not matter if you were:

- joking
- meant it to happen
- did not mean it to happen



If someone is offended by your behaviour or something you say, it can have a very big effect on them.

We need to respect and accept that this is how they feel.



The first action we expect is for someone to apologise to the person who has felt the negative impact.

We do not accept behaviour that treats people unfairly or behaviour that is abusive



It will go against the volunteering for everyone standard if any volunteer behaves in any of these ways:

Abusive behaviour

Abusive behaviour can be:

- physical
- done without saying anything
- seen by other people rather than the person it happened to.



Bullying

Bullying is any behaviour that is:

- offensive – makes you feel upset or annoyed
- intimidating – makes you feel frightened or threatened
- malicious – is done to harm you or to make you feel embarrassed
- Insulting to another person.





Bullying happens when someone uses their power in a bad way to hurt or embarrass someone, or to make them feel stupid or small.

Bullying can be physical - for example hitting or pushing.



A person can bully someone without saying anything.

For example, by not including them or always making them work on their own.

Harassment

Harassment is when a person or a group keeps behaving in a way that you do not want.

This includes being:

- annoying
- threatening
- demanding – always asking you for something.

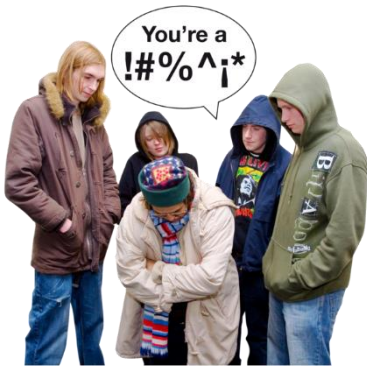


Discrimination

Discrimination means treating a person or group of people unfairly or worse than other people for some reason.

This can be because of:

- who they are
- how they look
- their background.



People with **protected characteristics** are covered by the Equality Act.

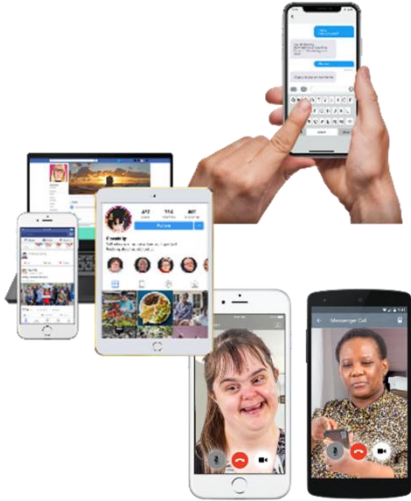
You can find Easy Read information about **protected characteristics** [here](#).

How can you recognise these behaviours?

We have more examples of the above behaviours and how to recognise them in our **Examples of unacceptable behaviour document**.

Abuse, bullying, harassment, discrimination or threats can happen face to face or in other communications like:





- letters and notes
- photos and images
- emails and text messages
- videos
- social media
- over the phone.



Nobody should ever put up with abuse, bullying, harassment discrimination or threats against themselves or anyone else when volunteering.

How can I report them?



If you have experienced any of the behaviours or have seen them happen to another volunteer or Sustrans employee, please read our [Reporting a concern document](#) on how to report this.



You can report unacceptable behaviour to your local volunteer coordinator or another Sustrans employee.



You can also report it in a form without giving your name.



You can also tell us about an incident or behaviour that has already been sorted out with the person or group.

Do you have any questions about the volunteering for everyone standard?



If you do, please email the Sustrans Volunteering Team at:

volunteers-uk@sustrans.org.uk



Prepared by Sustrans, based on a resource by Disability Equality Scotland