

KCLSU Volunteering Guidance & Strategy

Introduction	2
1. Recruitment and selection	3
1.1. Publicity.....	3
1.2. Minimum age	3
1.3. Recruitment	3
1.4. Task descriptions.....	3
1.5. Volunteer screening and probation	3
1.6. Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)	3
1.7. Prospective volunteers with a criminal conviction	4
2. Training and development	4
2.1. Training for one-off projects and events	4
2.2. Training for ongoing opportunities.....	4
2.3. Evaluation of training	4
3. Supervision and evaluation	5
3.1. Supervision.....	5
3.2. Complaints, grievances and disciplinary procedures	5
3.3. Length of service & exit procedures	5
3.4. Evaluation	5
4. Support and recognition	5
4.1. Reimbursement of Expenses.....	5
4.2. Equipment and materials	5
4.3. Volunteer Recognition.....	6
4.4. Mutual Support.....	6
5. Management procedures.....	6
5.1. Maintenance of Records.....	6
5.2. Confidentiality.....	6
6. Rights and responsibilities	6
6.1. Volunteers have the right.....	6
6.2. Volunteers have the responsibility	7
8. Review of this document	7
Appendix 1: Community Action	8
A1.1. Project selection	8
A1.2. Placement	9
Appendix 2: Health and safety	10
A2.2. Projects and events directly managed by KCLSU	10
A2.3. Partnership projects.....	13
Appendix 3: Working with vulnerable groups	14
A3.1. Introduction	14
A3.3. Welfare	15
A3.4. Rights.....	15
A3.5. Selection.....	15
A3.6. Planning activities to minimise harm.....	16
A3.7. Raising awareness of dangers.....	16

Introduction

KCLSU strongly encourages volunteering and supports both students and staff who wish to take up volunteering opportunities. KCLSU believes that through volunteering, we can encourage member-led activity, focus on the personal development of students and staff, increase participation and develop strong links and a positive profile beyond KCLSU.

KCLSU supports volunteering to benefit the community, both within King's College London and local society. KCLSU is committed to developing partnerships with London-based organisations to foster good local relations and community participation.

Volunteering also brings many benefits for volunteers themselves, by exposing them to new situations, people and experiences. Through volunteering, skills are developed, employability is improved and an increased sense of community is developed.

KCLSU aims to offer students the opportunity to become actively involved in their local communities by offering a range of voluntary activities and events across London, as well as the support to facilitate initiatives of their own. The programme is committed to helping students to find an activity that suits their interests, aims and skills, and to working with each volunteer to enhance their experience.

This strategy shall apply to the involvement of anyone who is a student or staff member at, or who is involved with, King's College London and KCLSU who carries out, or intends to carry out, work on a voluntary basis. KCLSU currently supports a wide range of voluntary activities:

- Student Activity Group Leaders (including club committees, society committees, student-led project leaders, Medsoc committee and RAG committee)
- College Panel Volunteers
- Democratically Involved Students (including student trustees, Council members and chair, Scrutiny Committee members and convenor)
- Lay trustees

1. Recruitment and selection

1.1. Publicity

Volunteering will be promoted throughout the academic year using a range of media. Some publicity will target the whole student body. Some publicity will aim to target specific groups, particularly those underrepresented in volunteering.

1.2. Minimum age

Volunteers will usually be over 16. There is no upper age limit. Some community projects are not able to involve volunteers under the age of 18. An alternative will be sought should a volunteer under the age of 18 wish to apply to a project which cannot involve them.

1.3. Recruitment

Prospective volunteers are expected to follow the advertised KCLSU application process, which varies across departments.

1.4. Task descriptions

Volunteers are entitled to a clear explanation of their responsibilities and the tasks they will be asked to undertake during an activity. This applies to both ongoing projects and one-off opportunities. Volunteers will not be expected to commit to an activity until they are clear about their obligations.

1.5. Volunteer screening and probation

Ways in which volunteers are screened and selected for different opportunities include: application forms, formal or informal interviews, election, character references, police disclosures, a probation period, on-project supervision, or volunteer 'buddying' or partnering.

1.6. Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)

1.6.1. Disclosures & references

References and/or a disclosure from the CRB will usually be requested where volunteers are working with vulnerable clients, children, carrying out unsupervised tasks or working with money. Partner organisations will be responsible for administering these checks where possible. For projects run by KCLSU, volunteering staff will be responsible for carrying out these checks.

CRB disclosures and references will always be subject to strict guidelines on confidentiality. Further information on the procedure for obtaining and using these checks is available on request.

A CRB disclosure should never be the sole method of screening a volunteer.

1.6.2. International students & the CRB

It is possible for international students to be checked by the CRB for the time they have been in England. Some projects or groups may request that this check is carried out. A very small number of organisations may not accept international volunteers when a CRB disclosure is required. In this case, an alternative placement will be sought.

1.7. Prospective volunteers with a criminal conviction

Volunteers with a conviction are not automatically unsuitable to become a volunteer. Only a very small number of convictions would preclude a volunteer from involvement .

The decision about taking on a volunteer with a criminal record is made by the member of staff responsible for the recruitment and supervision of volunteers in the specific activity. Following guidelines issued by the CRB, factors such as the relevance of the crime to the volunteer role and the seriousness of the offence are considered in reaching a decision.

2. Training and development

2.1. Training for one-off projects and events

Prior to the event, volunteers participating in this kind of work will be provided with:

- a role description detailing what they will be expected to do whilst volunteering;
- directions to the volunteering location;
- a contact name and details of the person who will be responsible for them on the day;
- a checklist of what information they should be informed of or find out before they start volunteering; and
- a copy of the KCLSU expenses procedure if the group they are volunteering with does not cover expenses for one-off volunteering.

Once at the event or project it is a volunteer's responsibility to listen to or read the briefing, information or training materials they are provided with.

2.2. Training for ongoing opportunities

Volunteers will be expected to follow the induction or training programme for their specific activity. This may include information on health and safety and other policies or procedures, orientation with the project or organisation, and support on specific issues applicable to the role.

KCLSU staff will seek to ensure that, either through KCLSU or the group(s) with whom they are volunteering, volunteers receive adequate training for the specific tasks they have been asked to perform.

Ongoing training will often be available and is sometimes required by volunteering opportunities. KCLSU will endeavour to make the requirements clear before volunteers commit to a project.

2.3. Evaluation of training

Within KCLSU, comments on training sessions will be asked for and monitored, and staff will attempt to adapt and improve sessions on the basis of this evaluation.

With external projects KCLSU will ask for and monitor comments about the quality of training received, and where necessary make arrangements for additional support either through the project or KCLSU.

Volunteers are encouraged to speak to KCLSU staff if they feel unhappy about the level of training they have received for the volunteering role they have been given, either within KCLSU or with an external project.

3. Supervision and evaluation

3.1. Supervision

Any volunteering opportunity promoted by KCLSU will have an activity co-ordinator who will take responsibility for volunteers during the activity, and who will contact them on a regular basis about their work. In addition staff are available to offer advice or support.

It will be made clear to volunteers how they can contact both their co-ordinator and a representative at KCLSU. Volunteers have a responsibility to bring any questions or concerns to the attention of KCLSU and will be informed of this responsibility.

Volunteers will be offered more formal supervision and feedback opportunity by KCLSU during the year by way of appropriate channels.

3.2. Complaints, grievances and disciplinary procedures

KCLSU takes any complaints made by its volunteers or its partner organisations seriously. Procedures are designed to provide support to volunteers in making a complaint and in improving their conduct should their actions be the cause of a grievance.

The procedures of the partner organisation will apply in the first instance. KCLSU will mediate if requested to do so by both parties and provide support if requested by either party. Complaints about the work of KCLSU should follow the KCLSU Complaints Procedure.

3.3. Length of service & exit procedures

The minimum period of commitment to an activity will be established with the volunteer before the volunteer is selected for the activity.

Volunteers who wish to resign from their placement are asked to provide adequate notice in advance. The notice period will be confirmed prior to their activity.

3.4. Evaluation

At the end of an academic year, or when a volunteer leaves an activity, KCLSU will request that an evaluation form is completed. Information from this evaluation will be used to develop and improve KCLSU services and the range of opportunities it provides.

4. Support and recognition

4.1. Reimbursement of Expenses

Volunteers are strongly encouraged to claim reasonable expenses incurred while carrying out their duties in the course of their volunteering, following the approved procedures outlined by the KCLSU Expenses Policy or that of their activity, as applicable.

4.2. Equipment and materials

Volunteers will be provided with the necessary facilities, equipment and materials to enable them to perform their duties effectively. Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) will be made available when required.

4.3. Volunteer Recognition

KCLSU recognises the work of its volunteers as extremely valuable. It aims to support volunteers and others to appreciate this by:

- providing training sessions on recognising and maximising the skills gained while volunteering;
- providing space and time to record volunteers' activities and achievements;
- informing volunteers of relevant King's College London Careers Service events and services;
- supporting volunteers who let us know that they wish to have their work counted towards award schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Awards or the Millennium Volunteers programme;
- providing references for volunteers after three months of involvement, provided that they keep accurate records of their activities;
- organising an annual celebration event to thank volunteers for their work; and
- working towards a programme of accreditation which meets volunteers' needs by asking how they would like to have their work recognised.

4.4. Mutual Support

Opportunities for volunteers to meet or communicate with other volunteers will be provided in order for volunteers to discuss issues of common interest.

5. Management procedures

5.1. Maintenance of Records

Clear, written records of volunteer registration and activity, and of projects and organisations with whom KCLSU works, will be kept in paper or electronic format and updated as appropriate.

5.2. Confidentiality

KCLSU respects the right of anyone submitting personal information to have that information treated as confidential. All information provided by volunteers will be stored and used in accordance with Data Protection regulations.

6. Rights and responsibilities

6.1. Volunteers have the right

To be safe: not working in unsafe or unhealthy conditions and having a suitable level of insurance cover while volunteering.

To be prepared: receiving a clear description of your role and project and appropriate training for the specific tasks you are asked to do; knowing to whom you are responsible while volunteering.

To be supported: choosing voluntary work you want to do and not being pressured into taking responsibilities you don't want; having named contacts to talk through any concerns or problems with; having your basic expenses covered.

To be informed: understanding the Volunteer policy and procedures, and those of your project; being consulted over any proposed changes to your work and kept up to date with activities and developments.

To be valued: not being discriminated against, used in place of staff or exploited; being asked about your volunteering to ensure the programme is matching your needs; having your voluntary activities and achievements recognised.

6.2. Volunteers have the responsibility

To be committed: remembering that they have made a commitment to volunteering with KCLSU and the client(s) you work with; showing respect for other people they meet while volunteering; representing King's College London and KCLSU in a positive way.

To be reliable: turning up when they have agreed to and giving warning if they will be unavailable.

To be responsible: undertaking the induction and training required for the volunteering role; respecting confidentiality and professional boundaries; knowing about and abiding by the policies and procedures relevant to the project.

To communicate: keeping Community Action up-to-date with what and how they're doing; reporting any problems or complaints as soon as they occur; letting KCLSU know if they want to leave a project; passing on constructive criticisms and suggestions about the programme to KCLSU.

8. Review of this document

This document will be reviewed in March 2007.

Appendix 1: Community Action

A1.1. Project selection

A1.1.1. External

All projects which KCLSU includes in its Community Action programme are screened to assess their suitability. KCLSU volunteering staff will speak in detail with the Project Co-ordinator and, where possible, will visit the location of volunteering.

Projects are asked to provide written information on:

- contact details and location of volunteering;
- project's aims and volunteer roles;
- time commitment required/duration of volunteering;
- the type of volunteer they are looking for, if applicable;
- interview and screening procedures;
- induction training, ongoing training, supervision and evaluation;
- volunteer supervisors, support and recognition;
- equal opportunities arrangements and provision for disabled volunteers;
- health and safety arrangements; and
- any additional policies.

These details are available from KCLSU volunteering staff .

Projects which are not able to offer suitable information in these areas will not be advertised by Community Action. Community Action may offer support to projects to develop appropriate practice or policy where possible and if invited to do so by the project.

Projects and partner organisations commit to keeping KCLSU informed of changes and developments to their activities.

A1.1.1.1. Health and Safety

An appropriate representative from the project or partner organisation is required to sign a declaration which confirms their duty of care towards volunteers while they are engaged in voluntary activities within their project or organisation's remit. This also confirms their conformance with the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974).

Projects must also provide written details of the insurance cover they have for volunteers engaged in their activities.

A1.1.2. Internal

A1.1.2.1. New initiatives

KCLSU is committed to developing new initiatives which involve King's College London students in their local communities, in addition to placing them with established projects and organisations.

Staff and students of King's College London and KCLSU are encouraged to bring ideas and plans for new initiatives to the Volunteering Dept for consideration.

A1.1.3. Application process

Students who wish to develop a project must follow the application process. Clear, comprehensive plans should be submitted to the relevant committee for approval before funding or administrative support for a project can be provided. Advice and guidance is offered throughout this process. Staff will report to the committee on a regular basis.

A1.1.4. Health and safety

Any new Community Action project, whether staff or student run, must conform with both KCLSU's Health and Safety Policy and the Community Action statement on health and safety (see below).

Particular attention should be paid to adequate risk assessment, training for leaders and volunteers, and reporting and monitoring procedures. Appropriate insurance cover for volunteers on Community Action projects must be in place before any activity is advertised.

All health and safety arrangements for new activities must be developed with and approved by the relevant staff.

A1.2. Placement

KCLSU Community Action has a policy of non-rejection in the recruitment of student volunteers. This means that every effort will be made to source an appropriate alternative opportunity for a volunteer who is not able to pursue their first choice of project.

Appendix 2: Health and safety

KCLSU regards the promotion of health, safety and welfare as an essential objective. Our policy is to provide and maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy workplace and a safe working environment for all our employees. We also accept our responsibility for the health and safety of other people who may be affected by our activities.

The following statement relates the KCLSU Health and Safety Policy to volunteering activities undertaken by students, staff and elected officers through KCLSU.

A2.1. External partner organisations, groups and projects

A2.1.1. Duty of care

Where volunteers are involved with projects not directly managed by KCLSU, the partner project has responsibility for the health and safety of the volunteer while they are engaged in its activities.

An appropriate representative from the project or partner organisation is required to sign a declaration which confirms this duty of care. The declaration also confirms their conformance with the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974).

KCLSU has a responsibility to satisfy itself that proper arrangements are in place. KCLSU also undertakes to provide all volunteers with general information on health and safety information at their induction or training.

A2.1.2. Documentary Evidence

Prior to the project being advertised to potential volunteers, the partner project must provide:

- documentary evidence of adequate health and safety policy, procedures and training relating to volunteers;
- documentary evidence of suitable insurance for volunteers; and
- confirmation that they have suffered no major accidents or incidents in the past 3 years.

This information will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis by KCLSU and as new opportunities are added within a project or organisation.

A2.1.3. Reporting Accidents and Incidents

External projects also commit to reporting any accidents or incidents involving volunteers recruited by KCLSU to KCLSU staff.

A2.2. Projects and events directly managed by KCLSU

A2.2.1. Duty of care

Where KCLSU is responsible for the management of a volunteering opportunity, it recognises that it has a particular duty of care to avoid exposing volunteers to risks and danger and to ensure the safety of volunteers and others involved with the project.

This duty of care extends to projects run directly by KCLSU and to those facilitated by students whose project applications have been approved by KCLSU.

A2.2.2. Planning

No project will be approved without the provision of clear and detailed plans. Support will be provided during the application process to ensure that potential Project Leaders are aware of their responsibilities with regards to health and safety.

A2.2.3. Risk assessment

All activities undertaken and venues used by KCLSU volunteering projects must be risk assessed by the Project Leader and KCLSU staff, following the KCLSU guidelines for risk assessment. Copies of risk assessments will be held by KCLSU and made available on request. Volunteers will be informed of the risks involved in the activities they are asked to undertake and of the measures in place to control these risks.

A2.2.4. Insurance

Appropriate insurance for the activities undertaken and venues used by KCLSU volunteering projects will be arranged before an opportunity is advertised. Copies of this insurance will be held by KCLSU and made available on request. Volunteers will be informed of the level of insurance cover they have while volunteering.

A2.2.5. Selection

Appropriate methods of recruitment and screening will be used and may include: application forms, formal or informal interviews, character references, police disclosures, a probation period, on-project supervision, or volunteer 'buddying'. Which methods are used will depend on the nature of the volunteering role. Community Action will endeavour to make the requirements clear before volunteers commit to a Community Action project.

References and/or police disclosures will be considered appropriate in any project where volunteers are working with vulnerable clients or children, and where volunteers carry out unsupervised tasks or work with money.

A2.2.6. Training

All volunteers will receive basic health and safety training or information in their general induction.

Additional project specific health and safety training will be provided in the induction to the volunteer role. The training will cover First Aid, emergency and fire arrangements and training related to any specific hazards arising out of the nature of the activities.

A2.2.7. Project Leader and staff training

KCLSU recognises that staff or volunteers who lead or involve volunteers on projects run by KCLSU may require an additional level of training in health and safety. KCLSU will endeavour to provide this additional training where necessary.

A2.2.8. Participant selection

Where applicable, appropriate methods of recruitment and selection of non-student participants in a KCLSU project will be used. Advice and input will be sought from an appropriate contact in a relevant community or institutional setting.

For work in schools, a named school staff link will be recruited to work with KCLSU on identifying participants and where relevant, obtaining parental permission for their involvement in the project and its promotion.

A2.2.9. Support and supervision

Some volunteer activities may require on-project supervision from a staff member, community or institutional representative or more qualified volunteer. It is the responsibility of KCLSU to provide an appropriate level of suitably qualified supervision for volunteers engaged in KCLSU volunteer activities.

A2.2.10. First Aid

A qualified First Aider or appointed person and an adequate First Aid kit should be present or accessible during all KCLSU volunteer activities. This person and equipment may be provided by KCLSU or by the venue where activities are scheduled to take place.

Volunteers should be made aware of whom the First Aider or appointed person is, how to find them in an emergency and the location of the First Aid kit before they start their activities.

A2.2.11. Fire safety

Volunteers and participants will be informed of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire alarm during their activities, including the location of identified assembly points and the importance of signing in and out of premises if asked to do so.

A2.2.12. Person Protective Equipment (PPE)

Volunteers will be provided with the necessary facilities, equipment and materials to enable them to perform their duties effectively. Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment will be made available if required, on the advice of the KCLSU Facilities Manager.

A2.2.13. Emergency procedures & contacts

KCLSU will be subject to the emergency procedures for any student engaged in activities organised by KCLSU. Prior procedures, including contact details. This document will be made available to all volunteers by KCLSU.

A2.2.14. Accidents & incidents

KCLSU will be subject to the accident and incident procedures for any student engaged in activities organised by KCLSU. Prior to leading an activity, volunteer project and event leaders will be made aware of the procedure for recording details relating to an accident or incident and for reporting that accident or incident to KCLSU. Where appropriate, these procedures will be communicated to any KCLSU volunteers.

A2.2.15. Evaluation and feedback

Volunteers are asked to formally reflect on and evaluate their volunteering opportunity twice a year. This evaluation includes a consideration of health and safety arrangements and related training.

Volunteers are strongly encouraged to bring any concerns regarding health and safety to the attention of their Project Leader or KCLSU staff, as soon as possible.

A2.2.16. Regular review

KCLSU recognises that risk assessment is a dynamic process in which all project participants, including volunteers, project leaders and staff have a part to play.

A schedule will be set to review risk assessments and Health and Safety arrangements for a specific project. Volunteers and Project or Event leaders will be made aware of the need for ongoing vigilance and communication in this area.

KCLSU reserves the right to change any aspect of this statement at any time and will amend and develop its content in line with changes within KCLSU. The statement will be formally reviewed on an annual basis.

A2.3. Partnership projects

A2.3.1. Written Agreements

Where KCLSU has joint responsibility for co-ordinating an event or project with another organisation or other organisations, including other higher education institutions and student groups, a written agreement will be approved and signed by the contributing parties to ensure that responsibilities are adequately agreed and understood.

A2.3.2. Approved procedures

Where KCLSU undertakes responsibility for health and safety in a partnership arrangement, the actions outlined in section A2 above will be followed.

Where KCLSU does not undertake direct responsibility for health and safety in a partnership arrangement, the actions outlined in section A1 of this document will be followed.

Appendix 3: Working with vulnerable groups

KCLSU values and encourages the involvement of children, young people and others who may be vulnerable, both in its own work and in the work of other organisations. Through this statement KCLSU lays out the ways in which it is committed to promoting their well-being and to protecting their health, safety and general welfare while in the company or care of KCLSU staff or volunteers.

A3.1. Introduction

A3.1.1. Intention

Children, young people and other vulnerable people may be involved in community volunteering projects for which KCLSU has responsibility. Where this is the case, KCLSU aims to take reasonable steps to:

- provide a friendly secure and comfortable environment for the benefit and enjoyment of children, young people and others who are vulnerable;
- keep them safe from harm while in the care of its staff or volunteers;
- comply with relevant statutory requirements; and
- support and protect the interests of staff and volunteers who have contact with, or access to, children, young people and others who may be vulnerable.

A3.1.2. Content

The statement aims to combine a clarification of the principles on which activities with children, young people and others who are vulnerable are based and guidelines on best practice which should be followed when working with these groups.

A3.1.3. Scope of statement

The statement applies to all staff, officers and volunteers working with the Community Action volunteering programme who have contact with children, young people and those who may be vulnerable through projects for which KCLSU has responsibility.

A child is anyone under the minimum school leaving age (just before or just after their 16th birthday).

A young person is anyone under the age of 18.

A vulnerable person may include anyone with special needs who may or may not need extra support and consideration because of this, such as someone with a physical, or learning disability or someone with a mental health problem.

It should be noted that this policy does not apply to volunteers placed with 'external' projects to which volunteers are referred. Any project for which KCLSU does not have responsibility where volunteers work with children or vulnerable people will be required to demonstrate that it has its own appropriate policies and procedures in place.

A3.1.4. Implementation of the Statement

The statement, its principles and/or its guidelines will be made available to all staff and volunteers to whom it is relevant.

Training will be provided for all volunteers involved in projects which work with children, young people or people who are vulnerable prior to the start of volunteering activity. Written information will be provided in addition to face to face guidance.

The statement should be implemented in conjunction with other statements relevant to the Community Action programme, in particular those relating to health and safety, disclosure, and recruitment.

A3.2. Principles

In working with vulnerable groups KCLSU aims to:

- promote their general welfare;
- recognise their rights as individuals and treat them with dignity and respect;
- consistently apply fair and objective methods of selecting employees and volunteers.
- plan activities involving vulnerable people with care to minimise risks to health & safety;
- raise awareness of the dangers to which vulnerable people may be susceptible; and
- develop appropriate procedures for responding to accidents, incidents and alleged or suspected harm.

A3.3. Welfare

KCLSU aims to provide a friendly, safe, secure and enjoyable experience for all of its volunteers and other people involved in its community projects. Whenever the interests of vulnerable groups are involved, the welfare of these participants should be considered paramount and all staff and volunteers should be strongly encouraged to work towards this aim and be carefully informed of their responsibilities towards these participants.

A3.4. Rights

KCLSU recognises the need to be aware of and sensitive to each person and group's needs and capabilities. KCLSU seeks to implement procedures which support an individual's right to talk about any worries they may have, as well as the right to be protected if they are in danger, or at risk of harm. Participants and volunteers should be informed of these procedures and made to feel comfortable about approaching KCLSU for help without fear of recrimination or difficulty.

A3.5. Selection

KCLSU will take appropriate steps to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with young and vulnerable people. The procedures outlined in the KCLSU Volunteering Guidance & Strategy and Disclosure Statement will be adhered to in the recruitment and selection of volunteers for projects working with young and vulnerable people.

Particular care should be taken to implement a varied range of recruitment and selection activities – including an application form, formal or informal interview, declaration, references, an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosure and a trial or probation period as is appropriate to each volunteering role.

A3.6. Planning activities to minimise harm

The section of the KCLSU Health & Safety Policy relevant to Community Action activities must be adhered to in the planning and delivery of any community projects within the programme. This includes the completion of risk assessments for project activities.

Where projects work with young or vulnerable people, issues concerning the appropriate level of supervision and support for volunteers and participants should particularly be considered. The selection of young or vulnerable participants should also be made in conjunction with a body (a school, statutory agency or community group) which has a full knowledge of those participants.

Training should be provided to volunteers prior to their involvement in activities which involve young and vulnerable people. Written information appropriate to the specific role and/or project will also be provided.

A3.7. Raising awareness of dangers

A3.7.1. Types of Harm

Physical - where young people receive physical hurt or injury.

Neglect - where adults fail to care for young people and to protect them from danger, seriously impairing their health, well-being or development.

Emotional - where young people are harmed by a constant lack of love and affection or intimidated by threats or taunts.

Sexual - where young people are encouraged or forced to observe or participate in any form of sexual activity by adults or other children. This also includes the use of sexualised language.

A3.7.2. Who can harm

An abuser is often known to the person being abused, whether a parent, sibling, other relative, family friend or neighbour. Not only adults can harm. Children and young people can also suffer abuse from their peers. Sometimes the abuser may be an adult who holds a position of authority over young person. There is no certain way of identifying a would-be abuser, they can be people of any background and do not appear different from the rest of society.

A3.7.3. Informing volunteers

This statement in conjunction with appropriate training for volunteers, seeks to ensure that KCLSU provides staff and volunteers with the knowledge and confidence to:

- know the types of harm to which young people are susceptible;
- be alert to behaviour, which suggests something may be wrong;
- be able to talk to someone if they become aware of anything, which causes them to feel uncomfortable; and
- know how to deal with alleged or suspected harm.

A3.7.4. Responding to accidents and incidents

Volunteers and Project Leaders should be made aware of the Health and Safety Policy which applies to volunteers and the Accident Report Form which needs to be completed for accidents or incidents which occur during activities for which KCLSU has responsibility. KCLSU should seek to ensure that there is adequate first aid cover for any activity or event and that participants know how to access that first aid cover.

A3.7.5. Responding to alleged or suspected harm to children and young people

Should all information discussed between volunteer and a child with whom they volunteer remain confidential?

As a rule, if the child confides in you, you should respect this and not share this information with anyone else. If the child starts to tell you something that you feel uncomfortable discussing, then you should make this clear. Dependent upon the issues raised, you may feel that you cannot keep this information confidential and you will need to explain this to the child so they understand this.

The exception to confidentiality is where a child under the age of consent discloses abuse or harm. Legally, you are under an obligation to report this to the school and you need to inform the child why you cannot treat this disclosure in confidence. All groups that work with children will have guidelines for dealing with this situation.

What should I remember if a child discloses a case of alleged abuse?

- Stay calm. Try not to transmit shock, anger or embarrassment.
- Reassure the child. Tell them that you are pleased that they are speaking to you.
- Never enter into a pact of secrecy with the child. Assure them that you will try to help but let them know that you will have to tell other people in order to do this. Inform the child who this will be and why.
- Believe the child and tell them that you believe them. Children rarely lie about abuse but they may have tried to tell others and not been heard or believed.
- Tell the child it is not their fault.
- Encourage the child to talk but do not ask leading questions or press for information. Listen to what they say and remember.
- Check that you have understood correctly what the child is telling you.
- Praise the child for telling you. Let them know they have the right to be safe and protected.
- Do not tell the child that what they have experienced is dirty, naughty or bad.
- Do not comment upon the offender or their behaviour – bear in mind that it may be someone the child loves.
- Be aware that the child may retract what they have told you. It is essential to report all that you have been informed.
- As soon as possible after speaking with the child, make a detailed record of the conversation using the child's own language. Try and include any questions that you have asked and do not add any opinions or interpretations.
- Do not deal with this yourself. The information must be reported to Social Services by the Link Teacher or Coordinator using the correct procedures.
- You will be supported and should not be uncomfortable about approaching staff, even if you are feeling unsure.
- If you feel worried or upset by what the child has told you, please tell your Project Leader or the KCLSU Volunteer Staff, who will ensure that you can assess the advice or support you need. Again you should not be uncomfortable about approaching someone if you feel affected by listening to a disclosure of abuse.

A3.7.6. Responding to alleged or suspected harm to vulnerable adults

Although the guidelines above are written with children and young people in mind, volunteers should respond using the same process of listening, reassurance, reporting and recording when faced with a situation of alleged or suspected harm when working with vulnerable adults.

A3.7.7. Dealing with alleged or suspected harm

If a young person or other person who may be vulnerable has talked about harm, or harm is suspected, the volunteer must notify a member of KCLSU volunteer staff or the member of staff who supervises their volunteering directly as soon as possible so that they can then inform and liaise with the relevant authority (Social Services/Police/NSPCC).

Where it is suspected that a KCLSU employee or volunteer may be involved in the abuse, employees and volunteers or staff should let their line manager or project supervisor know as soon as possible. The employee or volunteer should be immediately removed from access to young people, but be assured that no presumptions have been made and that the allegation will be fully investigated by the relevant authorities.

If gross misconduct is reasonably suspected, it may be appropriate to ask them not to attend the office or property at all while the matter is under investigation. The senior manager for personnel should be consulted before any action is taken relating to staff members.

In dealing with incidents of harm, employees and volunteers should not

- act alone;
- start to investigate; or
- make any assumptions of guilt or innocence.

Any employee or volunteer who is involved in a disclosure of any kind may feel that they need to speak to a child care professional to reassure themselves that they have done the right thing. The NSPCC operate a 24 hour help line for anyone concerned about a child or young person. It is primarily for use by adults and can be used anonymously: 0800 800600.

A3.7.8. Confidentiality and sensitivity

When dealing with personal and emotive details of this nature, confidentiality must be maintained at all times since the allegations or suspicions may prove to be unfounded. Notes and records should be kept in a secure place and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation.

A sensitive approach should be taken with the accused to explain why an investigation has to take place and to reassure them that the matter will be handled discreetly and even-handedly by KCLSU.