

# Code of Conduct for GMFA Volunteers

## 1. Purpose of this code of conduct

- 1.1 To contribute towards a constructive and pleasant atmosphere in which to volunteer.
- 1.2 To ensure that all volunteers know what behaviour they have a right to expect from other volunteers.
- 1.3 To ensure that all volunteers know what behaviour is expected of them whilst volunteering for GMFA.

## 2. Introduction

- 2.1 The Board of Directors want GMFA to be a constructive and pleasant organisation for both volunteers and employees. The conduct of volunteers is one of the main contributors to creating a productive organisation, and the impact of an individual's behaviour can affect GMFA, its ability to succeed in its mission and the people within GMFA. This policy is meant to give guidance to volunteers with regard to the behaviour that the Board believes will contribute to GMFA's success.
- 2.2 GMFA's vision and mission statements are:
  - Vision GMFA wants a gay community where individuals are able to make informed choices about their health, and a society that embraces equality and respects the right of people to make informed choices.
  - Mission Improving gay men's health by increasing the control they have over their own lives.
- 2.3 The main expectation that the Board of Directors has for volunteer conduct is that volunteers help GMFA with its mission and that a volunteer does this by following GMFA policies and without negative behaviour which impacts on GMFA, other people within GMFA or members of the public.
- 2.4 There is no expectation that all volunteers will know the detail of all GMFA policies nor do they need to as all work done within GMFA will have a member of staff working with volunteers (and employees are also obliged to work within GMFA policies). All volunteers can access GMFA policies on request.
- 2.5 Again, a volunteer doesn't need to be able to list the behaviour that GMFA considers negative behaviour in order to comply with 2.3 as most behaviour that GMFA considers to be negative is widely understood and accepted as negative behaviour in society.

### **3. Be reliable and constructive**

- 3.1 The nature of volunteering is that a person is free to decide what activities s/he wishes to do. Consequently no volunteer can be obliged to do any activity s/he doesn't want to. However, if a volunteer takes on a task or a role within GMFA, s/he will be expected to do that task or role and comply with any guidelines or procedures that it requires. Failing to do this may result in a volunteer not being offered similar tasks or roles in the future. Different roles within GMFA require different levels of reliability and so the seriousness of not doing a task or fulfilling a role will vary.
- 3.2 In addition to being reliable, volunteers are expected to work constructively with other volunteers and employees. Consequently, when a volunteer takes on a task or role, s/he is expected to do it in a way which doesn't create excess work or unnecessary tension for others or unacceptable delays to the task in hand. Volunteers should also respond constructively with reasonable requests made to them from other volunteers or employees.

### **4. Be honest**

- 4.1 GMFA places a lot of trust in its volunteers both in its internal business and during interventions with the public. Employees and volunteers need to trust other volunteers if they are to work productively together and so GMFA expects volunteers to be honest whilst volunteering for GMFA.
- 4.2 Honesty is both presumed and expected at times where a volunteer is contributing to projects, when completing Expenses Claim Forms and any monitoring/reports, or when discussing issues that have occurred inside GMFA.
- 4.3 Making any statement to the detriment of GMFA or the people within GMFA and knowing it to be false or without regard as to the validity or falseness of the statement will be considered dishonest.
- 4.4 Dishonesty of a serious nature will be considered gross misconduct

### **5. Allow other people to express themselves**

- 5.1 In order for people to contribute fully in GMFA, they need to feel that GMFA is a safe space, where they are allowed to express themselves without fear or intimidation. This creates an organisation where it is acceptable to have different viewpoints and allows for full debate so that the best conclusions can be made.
- 5.2 Consequently GMFA expects volunteers to interact with other volunteers, employees and members of the public in ways which do not make other people feel threatened. This includes no bullying or harassment, physical or threatened physical assault, ridicule and humiliation.

- 5.3 Abusive behaviour, offensive language directed at people and making malicious or unfounded allegations of a serious nature against people are also considered to be threatening behaviour.
- 5.4 GMFA has a policy which protects volunteers and employees from having to tolerate bullying and harassment and such behaviour will usually be considered gross misconduct.

## **6. Challenge constructively**

- 6.1 As stated in 5.1, GMFA welcomes different viewpoints and at times a volunteer will disagree with a decision made at meetings or the content of policies. In these situations, GMFA expects volunteers to behave constructively.
- 6.2 GMFA has put in place policies which allow both decisions regarding interventions and all GMFA policies to be challenged constructively. These are the only acceptable ways of challenging decisions that have been agreed.
- 6.3 If a volunteer is in a minority view with regard to a decision, it is not acceptable to undermine the decision through obstructive behaviour nor to attempt to overturn the decision through shouting or badgering.

## **7. Treat other people fairly and equally**

- 7.1 GMFA expects volunteers to treat all people fairly and will not tolerate discrimination against volunteers, employees and members of the public based on a person's age, race, nationality, religion, disability, gender, sexuality or HIV status.
- 7.2 All forms of deliberate or persistent discrimination will be considered gross misconduct.

## **8. Keep confidentiality when necessary**

- 8.1 At times GMFA volunteers will come across or are entrusted with information, either about GMFA, clients of GMFA or people within GMFA which is confidential. People's trust in GMFA will be undermined if any of GMFA's representatives unnecessarily discuss issues that should not be publicly discussed.

## **9. Do not misuse or abuse GMFA property**

- 9.1 This includes theft, deliberately damaging property and misuse of any information which a volunteer has due to his/her involvement in GMFA.

## **10. Follow policies**

10.1 Policies are the most effective way that the Board of Directors (who ultimately control GMFA) can communicate what they want to happen inside GMFA. All the policies that GMFA has put in place are there for a reason. Accidentally not following a policy will not be considered misconduct.

## **11. Represent GMFA positively when in public**

11.1 Volunteers will often be the public face of GMFA. Consequently, whilst volunteering or identifying themselves as a GMFA volunteer, volunteers should represent GMFA in a way which will enhance and not harm the reputation of GMFA.

11.2 Behaviour which may harm the reputation of GMFA includes a failure to effectively carry out activities whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol and other misconduct of a serious nature which brings the organisation into disrepute, negative behaviour towards members of the public and making unauthorised statements to external agencies regarding GMFA's business.

## **12. Be safe**

12.1 You must comply with all health and safety regulations at all times when volunteering at GMFA. This helps to ensure that you, members of the public and other GMFA volunteers or employees are not harmed.

## **13. Gross misconduct**

13.1 Gross misconduct is defined as an incidence of misconduct which destroys the relationship between GMFA and the volunteer. In such cases GMFA may not wish to continue the volunteering relationship. Gross misconduct is normally restricted to objectively serious offences. Volunteers who are guilty of gross misconduct will be expelled. Examples of gross misconduct could include but are not limited to:

- 13.1.1 Physical assault by a volunteer on any other person
- 13.1.2 Theft, misappropriation or unlawful destruction of property: GMFA's, an employee's or volunteer's
- 13.1.3 Serious infringement of safety rules or negligence which causes unacceptable loss, damage or injury
- 13.1.4 Supplying security access codes to any unauthorised person
- 13.1.5 Unauthorised disclosure of information or misuse of trust of a serious nature
- 13.1.6 Making malicious or unfounded allegations of a serious nature

- 13.1.7 Deliberate falsification of any documents or claims, including expenses claim forms, monitoring information etc.
- 13.1.8 Misconduct while volunteering for GMFA or outside GMFA of such a serious nature as to bring into disrepute either the volunteer's position or GMFA's
- 13.1.9 Discrimination on the grounds of age, gender, race, sexuality, religion, disability and HIV status
- 13.1.10 Harassment of a serious nature
- 13.1.11 Persistent alcohol and drug abuse that impacts a volunteer's ability to conduct his/her volunteering

#### **14. Criminal offences**

- 14.1 GMFA may need to conduct CRB checks for some volunteer roles. Role descriptions for volunteer roles will specify when a CRB check is required.
- 14.2 If a CRB check is required, volunteers will be offered the opportunity to volunteer any past behaviour that may be problematic.
- 14.3 A volunteer will not be expelled or otherwise disciplined simply because s/he has been charged with or convicted of a criminal offence. The consideration will be whether the charge or conviction warrants action because of its volunteer implications or the reputation of GMFA.
- 14.4 Where any charge or conviction requires GMFA's prompt attention, there will be no need to await the outcome of the prosecution before taking reasonable action, which may include suspension during the period of such prosecution.

#### **15. Dealing with misconduct and failure to follow this code of conduct**

- 15.1 Project Managers are responsible for advising volunteers if their behaviour is in breach of the Volunteer Code of Conduct, and may ask for a volunteer to amend his/her behaviour.
- 15.2 All investigations into volunteer misconduct will be conducted by the Chief Executive unless the volunteer is a member of the Board. In this case the Chair will take on the investigation.
- 15.3 The Chief Executive / Chair will decide what action to take if a volunteer is found guilty of misconduct. Actions include requests to follow this code of conduct, prevention from performing some volunteer roles and expulsion from GMFA.
- 15.4 Appeals against the findings of investigations or actions that result from investigations are made to the Chair or the Company Secretary.

## **16. Dissemination of policy**

16.1 This policy will go to all staff and volunteers and be included in any volunteer induction.

## **17. Review**

17.1 This policy will be reviewed every four years

17.2 This policy was passed on 26/08/04

17.3 This policy was reviewed and amended on 27/08/08

17.4 This policy was revised on 22/10/08