

Women's & Children's Health Network

Volunteer Handbook





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Welcome

Over 260 people volunteer their time and energy to support the Women's and Children's Health Network's (WCHN) programs and services. Our volunteers come from all walks of life; business people, community leaders, students, parents and retirees.

Volunteers are an important part of our organisation and we want to make sure you have an enjoyable, safe and supportive volunteering experience.

This handbook provides you with general information relevant to all our volunteer programs. If you have any specific questions that relate to the duties that you are undertaking, or the program that you are in, please refer to staff in the Volunteer Unit or your workplace supervisor/ volunteer coordinator.

We hope that your time with us is enjoyable, rewarding and meets your expectations.



volunteer

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WCHM VOLUNTEER
Volunteer Code

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Clipboard with document

About Volunteering

The Women's and Children's Health Network recognises the importance of building our communities' capacity for volunteering.

We support volunteering to:

- > develop and strengthen the links between the Women's and Children's Health Network and our communities
- > provide personal development opportunities for individuals in our communities
- > tap into the skills, experience, talents, energies, ideas and knowledge of people in our communities
- > extend and enhance services to our patients, families and clients
- > enable people to play an active role in our services.

A volunteer is a person who:

- > benefits the organisation and themselves by participating in volunteer programs
- > provides their services of their own free will
- > does not receive any monetary reward (reimbursements of out of pocket expenses are not regarded as monetary reward)
- > undertakes activities which complement, but do not replace the services provided by paid staff.

Benefits of volunteering

- > meet new people, expand your networks and increase personal wellbeing.
- > be involved in activities and programs that make a real difference to our communities.
- > gain new skills and experience in an area of interest that can create a pathway to employment.

Volunteering Opportunities

The Women's and Children's Health Network offers a wide variety of volunteer opportunities both in the Hospital and at community sites across South Australia.

There are many areas in which you can get involved such as:

- > administration assistance
- > child minding
- > guide team
- > delivering home equipment
- > family support
- > assisting Play Therapists



The best way to not feel hopeless is to get up and do something. Don't wait for good things to happen to you. If you go out and make some good things happen, you will fill the world with hope, you will fill yourself with hope." - **Barack Obama**

Volunteer responsibilities

As a volunteer you have a responsibility to:

- > adhere to all policies, procedures and guidelines which apply to volunteer positions
- > adhere to all relevant legislation such as Equal Opportunity, Disability, Discrimination and Work Health Safety Act
- > notify your supervisor or coordinator if you sustain a work related injury immediately
- > report any unsafe working conditions and potential hazards to your supervisor or coordinator immediately
- > maintain confidentiality regarding organisational business, program information or any sensitive, private information you come across during your volunteer duties
- > operate under the direction of your supervisor or coordinator and within the boundaries of your position description
- > undertake required training to assist you in your volunteer role
- > be punctual and reliable and undertake your volunteering duties on the agreed days and time
- > dress appropriately for your volunteer role
- > inform your supervisor or coordinator if you are unable to undertake your duties
- > raise issues with your supervisor or coordinator when they arise
- > communicate openly and honestly with your supervisor or coordinator and other volunteers.



WCHN

Organisation rights

WCHN has a right to:

- > make decisions about appropriate placement of our volunteers
- > review volunteer performance according to organisational policies and procedures
- > expect volunteers to adhere to A Guide to Maintaining Confidentiality in the Health System
- > expect volunteers to perform the given tasks to the best of their ability
- > expect volunteers to be punctual and reliable
- > expect volunteers to be respectful and courteous towards all clients, families, consumers, paid and voluntary staff
- > set the parameters and guidelines of the volunteer positions
- > dismiss a volunteer if deemed unsatisfactory.

WCHN Organisation responsibilities

There are many areas in which you can get involved such as:

- > recognise the different roles, rights and responsibilities of volunteers
- > create a culture of mutual respect
- > ensure volunteers are covered by appropriate insurances
- > provide a clear outline of volunteer duties
- > provide orientation and necessary training
- > set clear lines of communication about complaints and conflict resolution procedures
- > provide safe, healthy working conditions
- > include volunteers in relevant decision making processes
- > provide supervision and support
- > provide emergency procedure guidelines
- > provide required documentation relating to the volunteer work to be undertaken
- > recognise volunteer contributions

Your volunteering

Our approach to involving volunteers is based upon the Volunteering Australia National Standards for Volunteering. We are a large organisation with many different departments and functions which involve staff and volunteers.

The following staff work together to make sure that we provide good leadership, management and support of our volunteers.

Volunteer supervisors or coordinators

- > Day to day coordination, support and supervision of volunteers in their work area.

Volunteer Unit Staff

- > The Manager WCHN Volunteers and the Coordinator WCHN Volunteers lead volunteering across the network, assure compliance with volunteering standards and continuous improvement, advocate for volunteers, promote, recruit, train and place volunteers. This work is supported by a part time Administration Officer.

Orientation

The Women's and Children's Health Network delivers 'volunteer orientation' sessions which provide an overview of our approach to volunteering.

All new volunteers are required to attend. The session is a pre-requisite to your volunteering and is a great opportunity to meet with other volunteers in a relaxed and informal atmosphere. These sessions also include mandatory training that volunteers are required to complete before commencing their role.

During your first few weeks your volunteer supervisor or coordinator will help you to become familiar with your volunteering duties, settle in and feel part of the team.

Orientation is a two-way process; you are the best person to identify your needs. If there is anything that you are not sure of, please have a chat to your supervisor or coordinator.

Position description

All volunteers require a current description of the duties and responsibilities of the position they are undertaking. Position descriptions will be reviewed annually and updated whenever the work involved in the position changes substantially.

Supervision and support

A trial period of three months applies when first undertaking a volunteer role. This allows time for both you and your team to get to know each other. During this time you or your supervisor/coordinator may decide that the role is not suitable. We will endeavour to refer you to another suitable volunteer role if this is appropriate.

It is ideal for each volunteer and their supervisor or coordinator to undertake a mutual review on a regular basis. This allows you the opportunity to reflect on your volunteering, identify highlights, future training needs and your volunteering goals for the coming year.

The Volunteer Unit staff is available for on-going support and are always keen to hear your feedback. If there are any issues you feel you cannot discuss with your supervisor or coordinator please take an opportunity or make an appointment to speak to the Manager or Coordinator WCHN Volunteers.



Wherever you turn, you can find someone who needs you. Even if it is a little thing, do something for which there is no pay but the privilege of doing it. Remember, you don't live in a world all of your own." - **Albert Schweitzer**



“

I am the only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what cannot interfere with what I can do” - **Edward Everett Hall**

Communication

Your team will have its own way of keeping you up to date with what is happening in your area. This may include:

- > newsletters
- > notice board information
- > memos, bulletins
- > team meetings
- > morning or afternoon tea get-togethers
- > advisory groups
- > email, messages or letters.
- > We encourage you to keep open communication with all appropriate staff.

Personal information and privacy

We have a volunteer database that contains each volunteer's name, address, telephone number, emergency contact and the program in which they volunteer. This information is secure and only authorised staff can access the database.

Attendance

Your volunteer contribution helps to support many of our programs, services and activities. When making a commitment to volunteer it is important to be punctual and reliable. As a courtesy to volunteer colleagues, staff, clients and consumers, please let the Volunteer Unit know as soon as possible if you are running late or unable to attend a shift. We will contact your supervisor straight away.

It is important that you sign on when you arrive to undertake your volunteer duties and sign off at the end of your roster. This assists us to know where you are in case of an emergency and to make sure that we record your attendance for insurance purposes.

We also collect the number of volunteer hours contributed, to recognise our volunteers' contribution and for reporting requirements.

Training

It is important that we provide you with the necessary training to undertake your volunteer role. Some training will be a legal requirement to ensure the safety of volunteers, staff, patients, families and consumers. Other training provides you with opportunities to refresh skills and to learn more about the program for which you are volunteering.

Holidays

An important part of self-care is taking holidays. Please let your volunteer supervisor or coordinator and Volunteer Unit staff know in advance so that your program area can be prepared.

If leave is over three months, your shift may not be guaranteed on your return as we will need to change rosters to maintain program service levels. We will endeavour to arrange a suitable alternative.

Resignations

A volunteer may decide to finish their volunteering for a variety of reasons. Your resignation should be communicated as soon as possible, preferably two weeks' notice. ID badges, uniforms and safety items are to be returned at the time of resignation.

If you are finding that your volunteering role is no longer fulfilling your needs, but you would like to continue volunteering with the Women's and Children's Health Network, please let your volunteer supervisor or coordinator and the Volunteer Unit staff know. We may have other positions available and you may want to try something different in another area, or we may be able to assist by referring you to other volunteer opportunities elsewhere.

If you do decide to move on, the Volunteer Unit will arrange an informal meeting to reflect on your volunteering journey. We will also seek your feedback as it helps us to identify areas in which we can improve our services and is an important part of developing our volunteering programs.

Volunteering with children and vulnerable people

The Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Women's and Children's Health Network require all volunteers to complete a Working With Children Check. Some volunteers may also be required to complete a Vulnerable Person screening. These clearances are facilitated Women's and Children's Health Network and are free to volunteers.

Volunteers cannot commence their role these clearances are completed and returned. You will be required to renew these clearances at the time nominated by the DHS.

All Women's and Children's Health Network staff and volunteers are required to complete 'Protecting Children Is Everyone's Business' training. This training is done online and can be facilitated by the Volunteer Unit if volunteers do not have internet access at home.

Orientation is a two-way process; you are the best person to identify your needs. If there is anything that you are not sure of, please have a chat to your supervisor or coordinator.

Information Sharing Guidelines

The Information Sharing guidelines (ISG) is a state wide policy framework approved by the state government; it sets the overarching approach to information sharing that is being adopted by relevant government agencies and non-government organisations in South Australia

The state government acknowledges that ‘Volunteers contribute significantly to the care and protection of children in many settings and activities’ and will continue to recognise their role in reform initiatives.

Volunteers make substantial contributions in health, recreational and social services. The work of volunteers often brings them in close contact with children, young people and their families and many are directly involved in providing different forms of support to them. The observations of volunteers in these kinds of roles are highly valuable and should be acknowledged and utilised. For this reason, it is essential that volunteers who play a role in directly supporting children, young people and their families are clear that any matter of concern must be raised with the manager of the area. A volunteer’s involvement with information sharing must always be conducted under the direct supervision of a staff member and never undertaken alone.

Safety and wellbeing

Work health and safety

The Women's and Children's Health Network offers a healthy and safe workplace to all staff and volunteers. Everyone has a duty of care to all persons in the workplace as far as is reasonably practicable.

As part of your orientation to a volunteer role, you will be instructed in safe work procedures and provided with appropriate personal protective equipment.

Volunteers and staff have a duty to be mindful of their own safety and the safety of others around them. Any incident or near miss involving a volunteer must immediately be reported to your supervisor or coordinator. Please ensure that you also report any hazards to your volunteer supervisor or coordinator.

General safety issues:

- > If you are unsure of a particular task or do not feel safe do not proceed. Discuss the issue with your supervisor or coordinator as soon as possible.
- > Be aware of leaving items such as bags or equipment where people could trip over them.
- > Look after your back by lifting items correctly. Use lifting equipment or lift with another person.
- > If you are feeling unwell, notify your volunteer supervisor or coordinator and stay home. We would much rather you take some time out to get better, than 'soldier on'.
- > If you have an infectious illness such as a respiratory infection or gastro please take time off from your volunteering role. If you have had a gastro infection please stay away until you are clear of symptoms for 48 hours. Remember you are working closely with children and families and we do not want them to share your illness.

Equity and diversity

Equal Opportunity law is applicable to all staff, volunteers, agency personnel and work experience students. We respect diversity in others such as different values, beliefs, opinions and ways of doing things. We are firmly committed to creating a workplace environment which is safe from discrimination, sexual harassment and workplace bullying. Please speak to your volunteer supervisor/coordinator or the Volunteer Unit staff if you have any issues.

Discrimination

Unlawful discrimination means treating someone differently and less favourably because of the person's sex, sexuality, marital status, pregnancy, race, disability or age.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment covers many forms of unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature or having sexual connotations. It is important to note that the key word in this type of harassment is unwelcome. Both men and women can sexually harass or be harassed. Humour, friendship and relationships based on mutual consent are not sexual harassment.

Workplace bullying

Sometimes discriminatory behaviours are referred to as bullying. Bullying is behaviour which causes a person to feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. Workplace bullying involves the persistent ill treatment of an individual at work by one or more other persons. Legitimate comments on performance or work related behaviour is not unfair treatment.

Victimisation

Victimisation is treating people unfairly for complaining, or supporting others to complain, either within the Women's and Children's Health Network or to the Equal Opportunity Commission. If you feel you are being treated unfairly, please discuss the situation with the following staff before deciding what action you want to take:

- > your volunteer supervisor or coordinator; or
- > Manager or Coordinator WCHN Volunteers.

Principles of Conduct

The Principles of Conduct for Women's and Children's Health Network volunteers is based on the core values of the organisation and is cross referenced with the SA Health Code of Ethics. This document encompasses the issues already raised and intended to assist volunteers to answer the question, when it arises. "What is the right thing to do?" It is not possible for this document to cover all circumstances so volunteers are encouraged to speak to their supervisor/coordinator or Volunteer Unit staff if they are uncertain in any particular situation.

It is mandatory for all volunteers to sign a Principles of Conduct document before they commence their role.

Smoke free workplace

We are obliged by the Work Health Safety Act to provide a safe and healthy working environment. Under this framework smoking is not permitted in any SA Health owned building or vehicle.

Insurance

The Volunteer Protection Act 2001 protects volunteers from personal liability for loss, injury or damage caused as a result of an action on their part while performing volunteer duties. Exclusions are applicable in cases where a volunteer has been deliberately negligent and can include the following:

- > defamation
- > liability covered under compulsory third party motor vehicle insurance
- > volunteers affected by recreational drugs
- > volunteers acting outside of their prescribed role.

If you are using your own vehicle as part of your volunteering role, you will be required to complete the appropriate paperwork supplied to you by the Volunteer Unit.

The Women's and Children's Health Network volunteers are covered for personal accident insurance by SA Health. Benefits are paid on an out-of-pocket basis after other entitlements are used. A volunteer is required to first claim on Medicare, private health cover, personal insurance, superannuation, employment sick leave entitlements, compulsory third party bodily injury insurance etc.

The government's insurer then meets any non-recompensable expenditure in regard to:

- > medical costs
- > reasonable rehabilitation costs
- > costs of loss or damaged apparel or personal effects.

Volunteers are required to sign on and off so that a record of attendance may be kept and used for insurance purposes.

Looking after yourself

It is important to stay healthy while you are volunteering. If you are not feeling 100%, either physically or mentally, you won't be able to do your volunteer work as effectively as you would if you were feeling well.

There are a variety of ways you can ensure you feel up to volunteering. These include making sure you look after yourself both at work and at home.

The following are a few tips:

- > avoid over commitment of your volunteering time – your home and personal life is important
- > be realistic about your goals and ambitions
- > avoid setting unrealistic deadlines for yourself
- > when your role is no longer fulfilling, change role or move on
- > learn to accept that there are some things you may not be able to change
- > ask for help from others when you need it
- > if your volunteering role is stressful, debrief with your volunteer supervisor or coordinator
- > if you are sick or due for holidays, it's OK to take time off from your volunteer role
- > give yourself plenty of time to relax and unwind
- > keep things in perspective, have fun and remember to laugh!
- > access counselling through the Employee Assistance program (EAP).

A growing body of research indicates that volunteering is good for both physical and mental health.

As well as the social benefits, volunteering contributes to:

- > lower rates of depression in later life
- > less incidence of heart disease
- > greater functional ability.



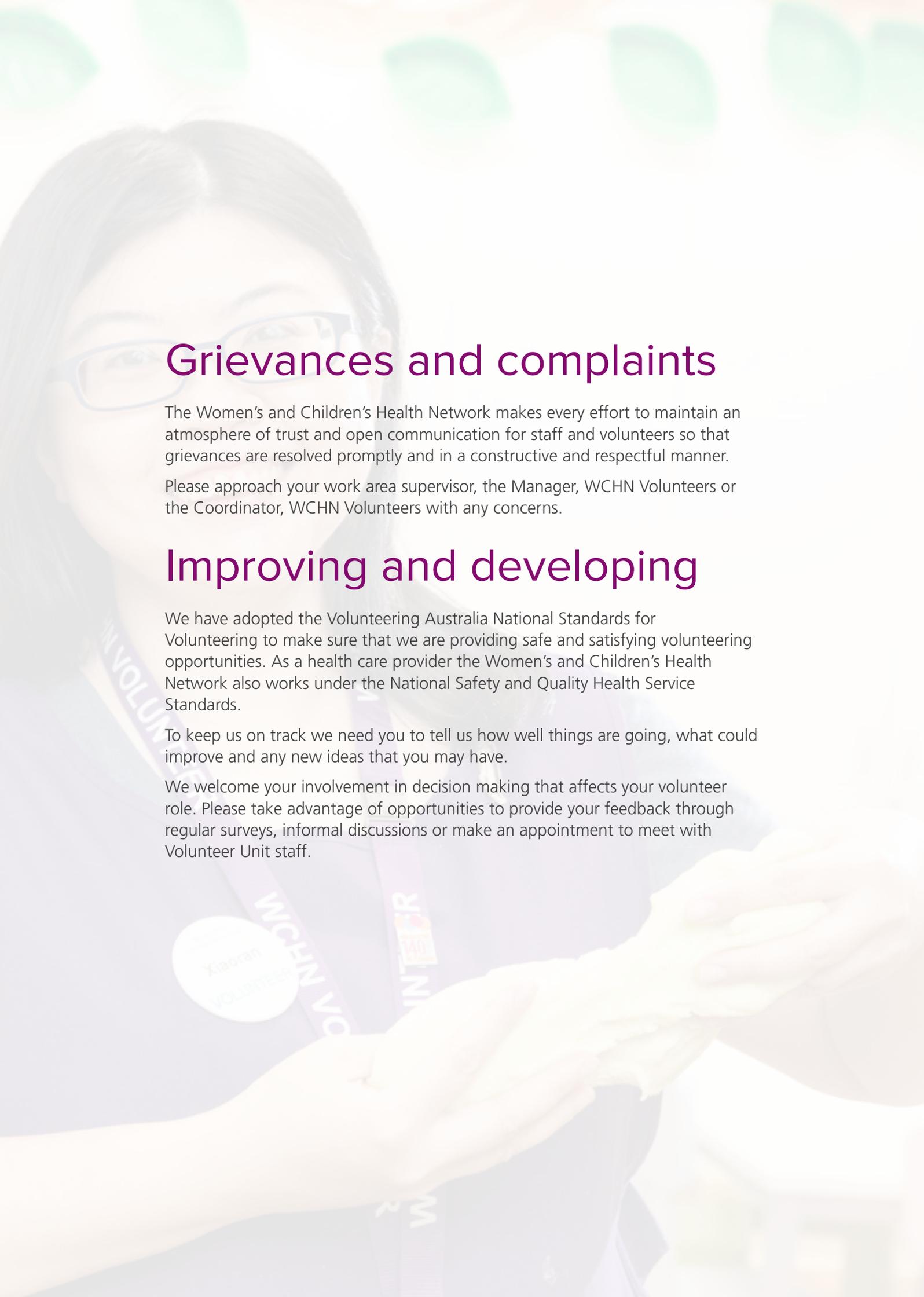
Unsatisfactory performance and unacceptable behaviour

We have a responsibility to ensure that our staff and volunteers maintain high standards of conduct and performance and that we carry out our duties in accordance with the values of the Principles of Conduct, SA Health Code of Ethics, and relevant policies and procedures. Unsatisfactory performance or unacceptable behaviour will be managed in a fair, reasonable and timely manner and in accordance with the Procedure: Volunteer Engagement and Management.

Breach of Principles of Conduct

The following list does not cover all types of misconduct, but is intended as a guide to what may constitute serious misconduct and result in termination of a volunteer position:

- > any deliberate unsafe act committed as a volunteer of the Women's and Children's Health Network
- > deliberate vandalism, sabotage or damage to Women's and Children's Health Network property
- > physical, psychological or verbal abuse by a volunteer against any other volunteer, paid staff, client or member of the general public during the course of duties (including threatening behaviour or other forms of harassment)
- > discriminating against, or giving preference to, any person wishing to make use of Women's and Children's Health Network services
- > breaching confidentiality of patient, client, staff and customer information
- > being under the influence of alcohol or using illicit substances whilst undertaking volunteer work for the Women's and Children's Health Network
- > theft of Women's and Children's Health Network property or stealing from staff, clients, patients or other volunteers
- > unauthorised use of a Women's and Children's Health Network vehicle
- > unauthorised private use of Women's and Children's Health Network equipment or facilities.

A woman with long dark hair and glasses is smiling. She is wearing a blue lanyard with 'WCHN VOLUNTEER' written on it and a circular badge that says 'Xiaoran VOLUNTEER'. Her hands are clasped in front of her. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with green foliage.

Grievances and complaints

The Women's and Children's Health Network makes every effort to maintain an atmosphere of trust and open communication for staff and volunteers so that grievances are resolved promptly and in a constructive and respectful manner.

Please approach your work area supervisor, the Manager, WCHN Volunteers or the Coordinator, WCHN Volunteers with any concerns.

Improving and developing

We have adopted the Volunteering Australia National Standards for Volunteering to make sure that we are providing safe and satisfying volunteering opportunities. As a health care provider the Women's and Children's Health Network also works under the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards.

To keep us on track we need you to tell us how well things are going, what could improve and any new ideas that you may have.

We welcome your involvement in decision making that affects your volunteer role. Please take advantage of opportunities to provide your feedback through regular surveys, informal discussions or make an appointment to meet with Volunteer Unit staff.

Thank you

We hope that this handbook has provided you with useful information to support you in your volunteering role. Every day people make an extraordinary contribution in their communities by supporting many valuable projects and services.

We genuinely thank you and wish you every success in your volunteer role.

If you love your volunteer role with the Women's and Children's Health Network, spread the word, we are always looking for dedicated volunteers.



For more information

WCHN Volunteers

72 King William Road

North Adelaide SA 5006

Phone 8161 6437 or 8161 7471

Fax 8161 7405

wchnvolunteers@health.sa.gov.au

www.wch.sa.gov.au



Interpreter

If you do not speak English, request an interpreter from SA Health and the department will make every effort to provide you with an interpreter in your language.



www.ausgoal.gov.au/creative-commons

