



# Volunteer Program Policies and Procedures Manual

(Updated January 2014)



## Contents

Introduction	- 1 -
Volunteer Involvement	- 2 -
Volunteer Inquiries	- 3 -
Recruitment	- 4 -
Placement	- 5 -
Certificate of Ability	- 6 -
Orientation	- 7 -
Training and On-the-Job Training	- 8 -
Code of Conduct	- 9 -
Equity and Non Discrimination	- 10 -
Privacy	- 13 -
Confidentiality	- 14 -
Personnel Records	- 15 -
Conflict of Interest	- 16 -
Lines of Communication	- 17 -
Leave and Absenteeism	- 18 -
Volunteer and Staff Relationships	- 19 -
Performance Appraisal	- 20 -
Performance Counselling	- 21 -
Dismissal	- 22 -
Resignation and Exit Interviews	- 23 -
Grievances, Complaints and Disputes	- 24 -
Occupational Health & Safety	- 25 -
Critical Incident Response	- 26 -
Risk Management	- 28 -
Security	- 30 -
Insurance	- 31 -
Motor Vehicle Use	- 32 -
Recognition	- 33 -
Succession Planning	- 34 -
Continuous Quality Improvement	- 35 -

## Introduction

Potential volunteers are recruited by UnitingCare Geelong (UCG) on a pro-active basis, with the intent of encouraging and broadening community volunteer involvement in the delivery of UCG services.

Reporting directly to the CEO and working closely with the Manager Emergency Relief and the Opportunity Shop (Op Shop) Co-ordinators, the Co-ordinator of Volunteers is responsible for the management and continuous improvement of the Volunteer Programme.

The Co-ordinator of Volunteers role includes:

- Recording, maintaining, implementing and regularly evaluating volunteer related documentation, including the *Volunteer Program Policies and Procedures Manual*, in particular in relation to recruitment, selection and training processes.
- Liaising with the Manager Emergency Relief (who is responsible for managing the volunteer delivered services and the workplace of UCG volunteers) and Op Shop Co-ordinators (who are responsible for managing the work and workplace of Op Shop volunteers) in relation to volunteer vacancies, the nature of the volunteer roles, and the knowledge, skills and attributes required for the positions.
- Responsibility for volunteer recognition, in consultation with Supervisors and staff.

Volunteers are recruited in a non-discriminatory manner in consultation between the Co-ordinator of Volunteers and the relevant Supervisor/s, with emphasis on the skills match between the potential volunteer and the competencies required for the volunteer position. Volunteers may be recruited either with an interest in specific functions or a general interest in volunteering, which will later be matched with a specific function if possible.

All potential new volunteers will be expected to meet with the Co-ordinator of Volunteers for an interview to discuss their suitability for volunteering; to complete: the *UCG Volunteer Registration Form* (including providing two referees); the *UCG Confidentiality Agreement*; a *Crim Check Application Form* (and a *WWC Check* if required); and to successfully complete a three month period of probation. Volunteers will be referred to the UCG website to access the *Volunteer Program Policies and Procedures Manual* which they are expected to read and become familiar with. A hard copy is available on request and volunteers are encouraged to seek clarification if needed.

The Co-ordinator of Volunteers undertakes to diligently and respectfully prepare for and conduct potential volunteer interviews and to consider the interests of a prospective volunteer. However, vacancies are a priority and the major consideration when making placement decisions. UCG has the discretion to not offer ongoing volunteer work if referral to another agency is more appropriate in the circumstances.

UCG actively endeavours, as far as is practicable and relevant, to implement the *Volunteering Australia National Standards for Involving Volunteers in Not for Profit Organisations* (including the *Definition and Principles of Formal Volunteering*, *Volunteer Rights*, and the *Model Code of Practice for Organisations Involving Volunteers*), and other recognised standards relevant to the specific functions of UCG.

# Volunteer Involvement

## Policy

Volunteers are crucial to the operations of UCG and undertake a variety of roles to provide appropriate services for our clients.

## Procedure

- Volunteers work to the Mission and Values of UCG.
- Volunteers with appropriate skills will be recruited to fill designated volunteer positions.
- Volunteers will be covered by insurance.
- Volunteers must sign in and sign out for each shift.
- Position descriptions will be available for volunteer roles and will be regularly reviewed in consultation with volunteers, staff and Supervisors.
- Volunteers must comply with the UCG *Code of Conduct*.
- Volunteers are entitled to be reimbursed for reasonable out of pocket expenses relating to their volunteer role, excluding travel costs, unless authorised by the CEO.
- Volunteers are encouraged to provide feedback and participate in planning, review and decision making processes.

# Volunteer Inquiries

## Policy

Every effort will be made to ensure that potential volunteers inquiring about opportunities either in person, via email or by phone will be contacted within one week of the initial inquiry.

## Procedure

- The Co-ordinator of Volunteers will respond either by phone, email or in person to volunteer enquiries.
- Information will be provided on the volunteer roles currently available and will include details on the selection process including the *Crim Check*, *WWC Check* or training necessary for the specific role.
- Current UCG clients (or individuals who have been UCG clients within the last 2 years) cannot apply for a volunteer role in the UCG welfare service areas.
- UCG cannot always guarantee enough volunteer hours per week to satisfy the mutual obligation required for Centrelink clients.

# Recruitment

## Policy

The recruitment process will be non discriminatory and people from all demographics and cultural groups are encouraged to apply for volunteer positions.

## Procedure

- UCG will promote volunteer opportunities, including via:
  - The UCG website.
  - Volunteering Geelong.
  - Participating in expo events for community and educational organisations.
  - Uniting Church newsletters.
  - Local media.
  - Supply of brochures and/or information to individuals, community groups, service clubs, sporting groups and job search agencies.
  - Guest speaking at local meetings.
- Potential UCG Op Shop volunteers may be interviewed by the designated Op Shop Co-ordinator/s and will be required to complete a *Volunteer Registration Form* before commencing any on the job training. The Op Shop Co-ordinator is responsible for forwarding the *Volunteer Registration Form* to the Co-ordinator of Volunteers and for referring the volunteer to the Co-ordinator of Volunteers for a follow up interview.
- All potential UCG volunteers will arrange to meet with the Co-ordinator of Volunteers for an interview as soon as practicable to discuss their application and will complete and sign:
  - A UCG *Volunteer Registration Form* which will include the name and contact details of the volunteer, two referees, an emergency contact and medical information necessary in the event of an emergency.
  - A *Crim Check Application Form* undertaken as part of the screening process to help ensure the safety of staff, volunteers and clients.
  - A UCG *Confidentiality Agreement*.
- The Co-ordinator of Volunteers will follow up referees provided by potential volunteers if necessary and will advise all applicants of the outcome of their application.
  - Unsuccessful applicants will have the opportunity to discuss their application with the Co-ordinator of Volunteers and will be referred to Volunteering Geelong to explore other volunteer opportunities.
  - Successful applicants will be referred to the Supervisor in the relevant UCG work area (Supervisor) and will be given details of their position including general induction into the organisation and on the job training for their specific role under the guidance of their Supervisor.
- All volunteers will have access to the UCG Policies and Procedures, including the *Code of Conduct*, either via the UCG website, or in hard copy if requested.
- Volunteer documentation and files will be stored in compliance with the *Privacy Act* and kept confidential.

# Placement

## Policy

UCG volunteers will only be asked to undertake duties in designated volunteer positions and will never be asked to replace employees.

## Procedure

- There will be regular consultation between the Co-ordinator of Volunteers and relevant staff and Supervisors to determine where volunteer vacancies exist and the criteria for those positions.
- Applicants will be matched to designated positions based on skills and suitability and will have a position description available to them.
- UCG may refuse any potential volunteer for any position for which they are deemed unsuitable.
- Volunteers are expected to complete assigned duties within the agreed time frames and to agreed standards.
- Performance of volunteers will be regularly monitored by the relevant Supervisor/staff (including the Co-ordinator of Volunteers) as appropriate.
- Volunteers have the right to refuse to do a task if they believe it is unsafe or inappropriate but are expected to discuss this matter with their Supervisor or the Co-ordinator of Volunteers.
- Volunteer placement is subject to a three month probationary period. During or at the end of the probationary period, and after any necessary consultation between the Co-ordinator of Volunteers, the volunteer and his/her Supervisor, the volunteer will either:
  - Be offered the opportunity to remain in the position.
  - Request, or be offered, to be reassigned to another role.
  - Have their volunteer involvement terminated if deemed unsuitable.
  - Be referred to Volunteering Geelong to explore other volunteer opportunities.

# Certificate of Ability

## Policy

UCG values the health and well being of volunteers and is committed to providing a safe workplace.

## Procedure

- Volunteers are obliged to disclose any medical condition, illness or injury that may adversely affect their ability to perform their volunteer role satisfactorily and safely.
- Volunteers who do not disclose relevant medical conditions, illnesses or injuries may be required to terminate their volunteer role.
- If a volunteer experiences a serious illness including hospitalisation, s/he must present a certificate from their Doctor advising UCG that they are fit to return to work and in what capacity.
- The return to work process may include a staged return to work, reduced or modified duties or hours, or transition into another area if more appropriate.
- Any volunteer who indicates that they are under the care of a doctor for either physical or mental health treatment may be asked to present a certificate from their doctor as to their ability to satisfactorily and safely perform their volunteer duties.
- Volunteers under a course of treatment, which might affect their volunteer work, will not be accepted without a written verification of suitability from their doctor.
- Volunteers returning to work after illness or injury are expected to communicate regularly and confidentially with their Supervisor regarding their ability to undertake and complete their assigned duties and to complete a Return to Work Interview if appropriate.
- UCG reserves the right to terminate volunteer involvement due to injury, illness or inability to undertake and complete assigned duties, if appropriate in the circumstances, giving due consideration to the volunteer and to the need to fulfil the duties of the volunteer role.

# Orientation

## Policy

As soon as is practicable after placement, volunteers will be provided with an orientation appropriate to their nominated duties. Volunteers may request further information in relation to the Volunteer Program if needed.

## Procedure

- Orientation will include:
  - A guided tour of the work site - including the location of the sign in and sign out book, kitchen, toilets, staff offices, telephones, fire extinguishers, first aid kit and the emergency evacuation exits - with their Supervisor or with the Co-ordinator of Volunteers, depending on availability of staff.
  - Introductions to staff and volunteers.
  - A summary of the mission, vision, values, work and programmes of UCG.
  - Access to a Position Description, UCG Policies and Procedures (and relevant forms), *Code of Conduct* and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) procedures via the UCG website or in hard copy if requested.
  - The procedure for appropriate lines and methods of communication with management, Supervisors, staff and volunteers, including relevant contact numbers if unable to attend their designated shift/s.
  - Information relevant to confidentiality and client rights.

# Training and On-the-Job Training

## Policy

Volunteers will receive, and may request, training and development appropriate to their roles, in particular, specific on-the-job training under the guidance of their Supervisor and more experienced volunteers to provide them with the information and skills necessary to safely and confidently perform their volunteer duties. The timing and methods of delivery of training should be appropriate to the complexity and demands of the position and the capabilities of the volunteer.

## Procedure

- Volunteers will be advised of dates and provided with initial orientation, and ongoing training, relevant to their current skill level to ensure they are able to carry out their role safely and successfully.
- Training may include but not be limited to:
  - General OHS and Safe Manual Handling Principles.
  - Privacy, Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest.
  - Team Work.
  - Retail Management and Customer Service.
  - Safe Food Handling.
  - Updates to work processes.
  - Relevant professional or personal development courses if available.
- Volunteers are expected to make every effort to participate in any relevant training offered to them in order to be able to undertake their volunteer roles as successfully as possible.
- Volunteers will undergo orientation, training and support via one or more of the following methods:
  - Being assigned a Supervisor.
  - Initial one on one training with their Supervisor.
  - Being assigned a mentor/buddy if appropriate.
  - Facilitated workshops for groups of volunteers.
  - Written notes and/or Power Point Presentations/s.
  - Access to the UCG website for Policies and Procedures, *Code of Conduct* etc.
- Volunteers will be informed of, and when necessary receive specific training in OHS issues impacting on their role.
- Regular review of the skills necessary for each specific volunteer role will be undertaken as required and in consultation with the volunteer and his/her Supervisor and the Co-ordinator of Volunteers.
- Training/information will be made available for those volunteers who request, or are identified as needing, to update their skills to carry out their role more effectively.
- Volunteers will be provided with training/information when the legislation impacting on their role is altered or when new UCG processes are introduced.
- Volunteers will be invited to complete evaluation forms at the conclusion of training sessions which will also be used to assist in ongoing quality control and improvement.
- Staff will be provided with relevant training in relation to working with volunteers if necessary.

# Code of Conduct

## Policy

UCG acknowledges and values the individuality of staff and volunteers and strives to achieve a workplace culture where relationships and behaviour are based on co-operation, mutual respect, understanding and trust.

## Procedure

All volunteers and staff working with UCG seek to:

- Actively support the mission and vision of UCG
- Act within the ethos of the Uniting Church.
- Respect and comply with all UCG Policies and Procedures.
- Behave with integrity, honesty and without prejudice in a way that upholds the reputation of UCG and values the strengths and contribution of staff and volunteers.
- Present all monetary and other valuable gift donations to the Assistant to the CEO or the Manager Emergency Relief.
- Listen with understanding and refrain from communicating in an abusive, intimidating, sarcastic or patronising manner.
- Refrain from providing clients with financial or material assistance directly from personal resources.
- Wear a UCG staff or volunteer badge and work within the boundaries of the position description.
- Be punctual and accountable.
- Take responsibility, as representatives of UCG, for presenting a positive image to the community.
- Dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of duties.
- Always act with sufficient care to ensure own safety and the safety of others.
- Have a current WWC Check if working in Reception, Clothing or Food Distribution areas.
- Treat clients, volunteers and paid staff with dignity, respect and courtesy and without harassment.
- Maintain confidentiality and always use appropriately any information obtained whilst undertaking activities on behalf of UCG – even after leaving UCG.
- Disclose, and take steps to avoid, any conflict of interest.
- Use resources and equipment in a safe and appropriate manner.
- Not speak publicly (including to media) on UCG matters without approval from the CEO.
- Participate in meetings and training as required.
- Perform assigned duties taking into account skills, experience, qualifications and position.
- Request assistance when needed to undertake an activity competently.
- Comply with lawful and reasonable requests of UCG staff and management.
- Not provide false or misleading information to UCG.
- Not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while undertaking assigned duties.
- Adhere to all accounting procedures and practices of UCG.

# Equity and Non Discrimination

## Policy

All UCG volunteers and staff have a right to a working environment free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation and violence. All volunteers and staff are expected to treat others in a way which will not cause distress or discomfort. Discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation and violence are against the law and will not be tolerated. Anyone participating in any of these behaviours will be subject to immediate disciplinary action.

## Procedure

- UCG expects all volunteers and staff to contribute to a workplace that is free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation and violence.
- All volunteers and staff will be informed of their rights and responsibilities, or will be expected to pro-actively access this information via the UCG website or by requesting a hard copy of the relevant documents.
- Complaints will be resolved in a just and effective manner.
- All volunteers and staff are encouraged to report any behaviour believed to breach this policy.
- Appropriate conduct will be actively promoted.

The behaviours outlined below are not acceptable at UCG:

## Discrimination

Discrimination is deemed to be the treatment of someone unfairly or unfavourably because of a personal characteristic such as their sex or race or age.

### **Under the *Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic)***

Grounds of unlawful discrimination:

- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.
- Gender identity.
- Pregnancy.
- Breastfeeding.
- Marital status.
- Status as a carer.
- Age.
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin).
- Parental status.

- Physical features.
- Childless or a de facto spouse.
- Lawful religious or political belief or activity.
- Impairment (including physical impairment, mental illness, mental retardation).
- Industrial activity.
- Lawful sexual activity or personal association with persons having any of the above attributes.

## Harassment

Harassment is deemed to be any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour which a reasonable person believes to be humiliating, intimidating or causing offence in that particular circumstance. Activities deemed as causing harassment include:

- Unwelcome physical contact.
- Sexually explicit materials.
- Jokes or ridicule involving a person's individual characteristics.
- Jokes with sexual connotations.
- Racist remarks.
- Offensive phone calls, voicemails, emails, letters, text messages or computer screen savers.
- Ostracism by an individual or group.

## Bullying

Bullying is deemed to be repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed towards another.

Activities deemed as bullying include:

- Abuse, threats, continuous teasing or criticism.
- Physically hurting another person.
- Overwork, unnecessary pressure, impossible deadlines.
- Undermining work performance, unfair assessment.
- Discrimination, racism, sexism.
- Intimidation.
- Psychological harassment (including mind games).
- Assigning meaningless tasks.
- Spreading rumours.
- Isolating a person.

## Victimisation

Victimisation is deemed to be the hassling or victimisation of someone because they have made an allegation or formal complaint of discrimination or sexual harassment. People who believe they have been victimised can make a complaint to the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity Victoria.

## Authorising and Assisting

Authorising or assisting another person to discriminate or sexually harass someone is against the law. A staff member or volunteer must not ask, instruct or encourage any person to discriminate against or sexually harass another person.

# Privacy

## Policy

UCG complies with the *National Privacy Principles* in the *Privacy Act 1988* (Commonwealth), which impose minimum privacy standards for the handling of personal and sensitive information (including health information) of an individual.

## Procedure

- UCG will treat personal and health information confidentially, but it recognises that there are certain situations in which the *National Privacy Principles* authorise the collection, use or disclosure of personal or health information. This includes, but is not limited to situations where:
  - UCG believes that the use or disclosure of information is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious and imminent threat to an individual's life, health or safety or a serious threat to public safety.
  - The use or disclosure is authorised by law.
  - UCG recognises that individuals have the right to request access to any personal information held about them and to request amendments if there are any inaccuracies in this information. Any volunteer wishing to inquire about any personal information held about them should apply in writing to the Co-ordinator of Volunteers.
- UCG collects certain information on clients for statistical and professional purposes. This information is not considered personal or sensitive information.
- Any individual wishing to make a complaint about a privacy issue should follow the *Grievances, Complaints and Disputes* Policy.

# Confidentiality

## Policy

All volunteers will maintain the confidentiality of all information about UCG business or client details and must sign a *Confidentiality Agreement*.

## Procedure

- Volunteers will not:
  - Disclose to anyone any confidential information acquired while undertaking their duties.
  - Use any confidential information acquired by their position for their personal financial or other benefit or for that of any other person.
  - Make statements to the media or public in general in the name of UCG unless acting as an authorised spokesperson with approval from the CEO.
  - Permit any unauthorised person to inspect or have access to any confidential documents or other information.
- The obligation to maintain confidentiality continues even after the person is no longer a volunteer at UCG.

# Personnel Records

## Policy

Personnel files will be maintained for all UCG volunteers.

## Procedure

- A personnel file will be established for each volunteer recruited by UCG and will be stored according to the *Privacy Act*.
- Hard copy files will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the office of the Co-ordinator of Volunteers. Access to electronic and hard copy volunteer files will be restricted to authorised staff and volunteers.
- Volunteer files will be updated with current information as required and each volunteer has the right to access their file at a time convenient to the Co-ordinator of Volunteers.
- Files on dismissed or retired volunteers will be destroyed after ten years.
- Files on potential volunteers will be destroyed after one year.
- Volunteer files will include:
  - *Volunteer Registration Form*, including emergency contact details.
  - *Crim Check Application Form*.
  - *Confidentiality Agreement*.
  - A record of training required and completed.
  - File notes including those relating to performance or disciplinary procedures.

# Conflict of Interest

## Policy

UCG expects disclosure of any conflict of interest that might adversely impact upon the organisation or the individual. Failure to do so may result in dismissal.

## Procedure

- Current UCG clients (or individuals who have been UCG clients within the last 2 years) cannot volunteer at any UCG service site.
- Any volunteers wishing to purchase UCG donated goods must seek permission from the Manager Emergency Relief or Op Shop Co-ordinator before doing so and the purchase must be documented and the correct price paid for all goods.
- Staff and volunteers should not engage in any activity that might be deemed to be a conflict of interest with the activities of UCG.

# Lines of Communication

## Policy

UCG strives to implement effective communication between staff and volunteers.

Volunteers should have clear lines of communication and are entitled to all necessary information pertinent to the performance of their volunteer work.

## Procedure

- Clear lines of communication between staff and volunteers should operate both formally and informally.
- Volunteers should report to their immediate staff or volunteer Supervisor in relation to volunteer or workplace issues.
- Supervisor volunteers in emergency relief services and programmes report directly to the Manager Emergency Relief.
- Op Shop Co-ordinators report directly to the CEO.
- The Manager Emergency Relief is responsible for managing the volunteer delivered services and the workplace of UCG service volunteers.
- The Op Shop Co-ordinators are responsible for managing the work and workplace of Op Shop volunteers.
- The Manager Emergency Relief and Op Shop Co-ordinators should consult with the Co-ordinator of Volunteers in relation to volunteer recruitment and support issues.
- Volunteers should be included in and have access to all appropriate memos, materials and meetings relevant to their volunteer work.
- Volunteers should be consulted regarding all decisions which would substantially affect the performance of their duties or working conditions.
- Communication between staff and volunteers will include:
  - Morning meetings.
  - Co-ordinator meetings.
  - Area meetings.
  - Individual consultations.
  - Volunteer training events.
  - Quarterly Volunteer Newsletters.
  - Email communications.
  - Mail out of important information.
  - Notices on notice boards and in tea rooms.
  - Performance appraisals.
  - Surveys.
  - *Retention and Satisfaction Survey.*

# Leave and Absenteeism

## Policy

UCG volunteers are expected to perform their duties as scheduled but are entitled and encouraged to take holiday leave to avoid feeling overworked in their volunteer role.

## Procedure

- UCG volunteers are required to personally inform their Supervisor or the Co-ordinator of Volunteers as far in advance as is possible if they expect to be absent from a scheduled shift due to holidays or other commitments, so that alternative arrangements may be made.
- A *Leave Notification Form* should be completed if possible.
- Absenteeism, including unauthorised late arrival to scheduled shifts will result in *Performance Counselling*.

# Volunteer and Staff Relationships

## Policy

Volunteers and staff are considered to be partners in implementing the mission of UCG at each of the UCG sites and Op Shops, with each having a complementary role to play.

## Procedure

- To maintain harmonious volunteer and staff relationships, individuals and groups will:
  - Endeavour to understand the needs and abilities of each other.
  - Be committed to behaving with respect and courtesy to one another.
  - Be able to communicate calmly with one another at all times.
  - Understand the need for, and be prepared to implement strategies for, teamwork and co-operation.
  - Accept direction from, and not undermine, staff Supervisors, in front of clients or other volunteers.
  - Seek clarification from one another where necessary to ensure the smooth running of UCG services.

# Performance Appraisal

## Policy

In line with a commitment to continuous quality improvement, UCG promotes regular and ongoing informal and formal performance appraisal of individual volunteers and volunteer teams, and expects staff and volunteers to be pro-active to help ensure positive work relationships are fostered, and any obstacles to achieving goals are identified and addressed.

## Procedure

- Volunteers are invited and encouraged to discuss and review the individual or team performance of their duties, the achievement of set goals, and any other issue/s or suggestions, with their Supervisor and/or the Co-ordinator of Volunteers on a regular basis.
- Supervisors are encouraged to provide timely, positive and constructive feedback to individual volunteers and volunteer teams in their work areas on a regular basis.
- Self assessment and follow up discussion with the Supervisor is encouraged, including completing a *Retention and Satisfaction Survey* annually or as appropriate.
- More formal appraisal can be requested, including an annual formal interview with the Supervisor, the Co-ordinator of Volunteers and a support person if requested.
- A written volunteer appraisal will be available on request.

# Performance Counselling

## Policy

Where a volunteer is not meeting the expectations of their role, a formal meeting will be requested by the Supervisor and/or the Co-ordinator of Volunteers.

## Procedure

- Any volunteer who is deemed to be not meeting the expectations of their volunteer role, is expected to attend a formal meeting, with a support person of their choosing, their Supervisor, the Co-ordinator of Volunteers, and where appropriate the CEO.
- At this meeting the volunteer is given the opportunity to clearly outline any areas of concern they have in relation to their role and to have any relevant explanations taken into consideration.
- The volunteer's Supervisor is given the opportunity to clearly outline areas of concern in relation to the performance of the volunteer and to present any relevant observations or evidence.
- The volunteer and his or her Supervisor must endeavour to come to an agreement as to the expectations on the volunteer, including specific undertakings in relation to performing the volunteer role.
- If no agreement can be reached, the CEO has the discretion to terminate the involvement of the volunteer.
- If an agreement is reached, it must be put in writing and signed by both parties, to be reviewed if the specific undertakings are not honoured.
- If the performance of the volunteer continues to fall below expectations, the volunteer will be sent a formal *First Written Warning*.
- If performance continues to fall below expectations, the volunteer will be sent a formal *Second Written Warning*.
- If both the *First Written Warning* and the *Second Written Warning* fail to address the areas of concern within the volunteer's performance, then the *Dismissal Policy* is to be followed.
- All steps are to be fully documented.

# Dismissal

## Policy

The CEO of UCG has the discretion to terminate the involvement of any volunteer who, having undergone *Performance Counselling*, is considered to be not meeting the expectations of their role. In the case of serious breaches of behaviour the *Performance Counselling* Policy can be waived and instant dismissal action undertaken.

## Procedure

- A formal Letter of Dismissal will be sent or handed personally to the volunteer and a copy kept on file.
- Files of any volunteers dismissed will be maintained for a minimum of ten years.
- Behaviours that may result in instant dismissal include but are not limited to:
  - Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while on duty.
  - Theft or misuse of UCG's property.
  - Malicious damage to UCG's property.
  - Illegal, violent or unsafe acts.
  - Sexual harassment.
  - Discriminatory or racist statements or behaviours.
  - Inappropriate disclosure of confidential information.
  - Failure to disclose past convictions for crimes.
  - Failure to disclose a conflict of interest.
  - Undertaking tasks not authorised by UCG.
  - Blatant disregard for directions given by staff and authorised by the CEO.

# Resignation and Exit Interviews

## Policy

When UCG volunteers decide to retire they are encouraged to provide as much notice as possible and to discuss their resignation with their Supervisor and/or the Co-ordinator of Volunteers so that a transition period can be planned in relation to recruitment to the vacancy.

UCG also encourages volunteers to participate in an exit interview and/or survey in order to document positive and constructive feedback in relation to the Volunteer Program and UCG generally.

## Procedure

- To allow time to arrange for replacement volunteers in the short and long term, volunteers are requested to give at least two weeks written notice of their intention to resign or retire if possible.
- Where appropriate and possible the outgoing volunteer will assist in mentoring and training the incoming volunteer during the transition period.
- The Co-ordinator of Volunteers will send a thank you letter and an invitation to attend an exit interview and /or complete an exit survey, plus a Certificate of Appreciation where appropriate, to exiting UCG volunteers.
- Any volunteer who notifies UCG that they are resigning from a volunteer position may request an exit interview.
- Volunteers will be given the option to have an independent person to conduct the exit interview.
- The interview and survey are both voluntary therefore the volunteer is under no obligation to answer any questions.
- Volunteers will be given the opportunity to provide positive and constructive feedback about their experiences with UCG.
- Confidentiality is to be maintained and exit interview notes are to be kept with locked personnel files and may only be accessed by authorised staff.

# Grievances, Complaints and Disputes

## Policy

UCG is committed to reaching a timely and fair resolution of grievances, complaints or disputes which may arise and potentially jeopardise the well being of individuals and the harmonious functioning of UCG.

## Procedure

- Individuals involved in a complaint or dispute are encouraged to attempt to resolve the issue informally via respectful discussion.
- If the issue is not resolved, the complainant will request assistance from his/her Supervisor.
- If the issue is still not resolved the complainant or his/her Supervisor will request assistance from the Co-ordinator of Volunteers.
- If appropriate the Co-ordinator of Volunteers will request a meeting with the individuals involved, including the relevant Supervisor.
- If the issue is still not resolved the complainant must put the complaint, and the remedy sought, in writing to the Co-ordinator of Volunteers and a formal meeting will be scheduled for the relevant parties and an independent mediator if required.
- The person/s against whom the complaint is made must be given the full details of the allegation/s and be given reasonable time and opportunity to convey their side of the story, with a support person present if requested, before resolution is attempted.
- Proceedings will be conducted honestly, fairly, without bias and not be unduly delayed.
- If necessary the written complaint and any relevant additional material may be referred to the CEO for consideration. A meeting will be scheduled and the CEO will communicate with any other people believed to be relevant to resolve the dispute, and the CEO will then provide a written resolution plan.
- If necessary the written complaint and any relevant material may be referred to the Board for consideration. The Board will communicate with any other people believed relevant to resolve the dispute and The Board Chairperson will then provide a written resolution plan.
- If necessary, the complainant will be advised of his/her rights to pursue the matter to the Director of UnitingCare Victoria and Tasmania if they wish to do so.
- There will be provision for the aggrieved person to be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

# Occupational Health & Safety

## Policy

All foreseeable measures will be taken by UCG to ensure that appropriate OHS standards are maintained. The primary objective is to prevent injury and illness by providing a safe and healthy working environment.

## Procedure

- All volunteers will be inducted as soon as is practicable by their Supervisor in relation to safe practices to be utilised when undertaking their designated tasks.
- All relevant OHS documentation is made available to volunteers on request.
- UCG will comply with all industry OHS legislation and standards.
- All necessary inspections, maintenance, repairs, cleaning and modifications will be undertaken in a timely manner.
- All necessary registration, certification and licensing requirements are complied with.
- Tasks requiring specific qualifications, skills or experience are only undertaken by those assessed competent to do so.
- Volunteers will comply with all OHS instructions given by their Supervisor.
- Volunteers will be expected to use personal protective equipment (e.g. gloves supplied by UCG) when sorting bags of donated goods and clothes.
- Volunteers will be requested to immediately report observed safety hazards to their Supervisor.
- Reported hazards, accidents or injuries will be recorded and followed up in a timely manner.
- The Assistant to the CEO will be responsible for following up on all reported hazards, accidents or injuries in a timely manner.
- Appropriate measures will be taken to prevent visitors and other unauthorised people from entering those parts of the workplace where they may be at risk, or endanger the health and safety of others.
- Volunteers are expected to be pro-active in reporting issues, including any of the following, to their Supervisor to be passed directly to the CEO if appropriate:
  - Client dissatisfaction.
  - Unfavourable publicity.
  - Any perceived mismanagement.
  - Failure of equipment or computer systems.
  - Any perceived breaches of legal responsibility.
  - Fraud or deficiencies in financial controls or reporting.

# Critical Incident Response

## Policy

UCG acknowledges that a critical incident may occur during a volunteer shift, and outlines the appropriate responses to deal with these situations.

## Procedure

- Volunteers have responsibility for their own personal well being first, and then for the safety and well being of others.
- Protection of property is the lowest priority.
- Volunteers will have access to support in managing the critical incidents that occur in the course of their work, for example, debrief with their Supervisor, or referral to the Linkage Outreach Worker for further debrief and counselling if necessary.
- Critical incidents will be adequately documented.

## In Case of Emergencies:

### **Accident or Medical Emergency:**

- Make sure the person is kept safe and comfortable
- Do not leave the person unattended
- Telephone **000** if ambulance required
- Ask for the person's health information if ambulance is called
- No medication to be given, unless person self administers
- Complete Accident Incident form as soon as possible

### **Fire Emergency:**

- Notify everyone to evacuate
- Check all rooms if safe to do so
- Telephone **000**
- Receptionist or member of Management team to take Sign In and Sign Out Book
- Assemble at rallying point
- Check off all persons signed in to Sign In and Sign Out Book
- Building safety assessed
- When the ALL CLEAR is given return to building
- Complete Incident Report as soon as possible

### **Violence Emergency:**

- Activate emergency “buzzers”
- Withdraw from violent situation if possible
- Inform Supervisor
- Evacuate everyone to safety if necessary and possible
- Call **000**
- Evacuate everyone to rallying point, or stay in safe locked area
- Await assistance
- Complete Incident Report as soon as possible

### Evacuation Plan Locations:

Red Evacuation Plans are located on notice boards within the buildings.

It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to be pro-active in ensuring they know the location of these Evacuation Plans, and to be familiar with their particular Area Evacuation Plan.

# Risk Management

## Policy

UCG undertakes ongoing assessment of potential risks and works to systematically minimise these risks for all volunteers, staff, clients and visitors.

## Procedure

### **Duty of Care:**

UCG will take reasonable care to identify foreseeable hazards, assess risks and, if practicable, eliminate any hazards or minimise the risks of those identified hazards that could harm the health and safety of any person working at or visiting any of the UCG sites.

### **Prevention:**

UCG will ensure that:

- Suitable equipment is provided and maintained.
- Systems for the safe use, handling, storage and transport of equipment and substances are established, monitored and maintained.
- Adequate information, training and qualified supervision are provided for all volunteers and staff to enable them to work in a safe and healthy manner.
- The workplace is maintained in a safe and healthy condition.
- Compliance with relevant Acts, Regulations, Codes and Standards will be the minimum standard of safety.

### **Professional Risks:**

UCG will ensure that:

- All volunteers are screened (including Crim Checks, WWC Checks and referee checks if necessary) to help to ensure that they are law-abiding.
- Volunteers have a Position Description available to them, and that is adhered to, clearly showing their role and what is required of them.

### **Potential Hazards:**

UCG will ensure that:

- Property damage from fire, burglary, flood and/or vandalism are reported immediately to the appropriate authorities and are dealt with as quickly as possible to reduce risk.

- Fire alarms and extinguishers are in place and inspected regularly.
- An emergency plan is in place – including an emergency exit diagram on display.

### **Physical Risks:**

UCG will ensure that:

- All locations operate as a safe environment for staff and visitors.
- Regular inspections of facilities, equipment and premises are completed and the outcomes documented.
- Public liability claim report forms are kept on file. All incidents that are potential claims will be followed up as soon as they occur.

### **Potential Environmental Risks:**

It is the responsibility of UCG to ensure that as far as possible in all foreseeable circumstances all operations of the organisation are safe.

### **Volunteer Risks:**

- UCG will take steps to ensure that:
- Volunteers are protected from clients or any other person who may be liable to attack or infect them.
- Prejudice and harassment in the workplace does not occur.
- Volunteers have access to the *Grievances, Complaints and Disputes* Policy and Procedure via the UCG website or in hard copy if requested.
- Adequate breaks are available.
- Volunteers have a secure location to place their belongings.

### **Child Safety:**

The Uniting Church in Australia, including UCG, is committed to provide safe places where people are cared for, nurtured and sustained. The Uniting Church and UCG commits itself to the care, protection and safety of all children relating with it or its agencies including UCG.

- WWC Checks are required for all UCG volunteers working in the following areas:
  - Reception.
  - Food Distribution.
  - Clothing Distribution.

# Security

## Policy

UCG is committed to implementing procedure to help ensure a secure work environment.

## Procedure

- Staff and volunteers must:
  - Not leave any doors or windows open or unlocked when last to leave the building. The last employee or volunteer to leave the building is responsible for this, and must activate the fitted alarm if applicable.
  - Ensure that all computers, heaters, cooling appliances and lights are shut down and switched off properly.
  - Limit client access to authorised areas only.
  - Inform their Supervisor or the nearest Manager if they see anything of a suspicious nature.
  - Observe the privacy of others, and keep noise to a respectful minimum in service areas.
- Closed doors indicate that privacy should be observed, only interrupt if absolutely necessary.

# Insurance

## Policy

UCG will ensure Volunteer Personal Accident Insurance is maintained for all approved activities undertaken by volunteers.

## Procedure

- Volunteer personal accident policy is maintained by the Assistant to the CEO.
- Duty of disclosure requirements are maintained by notifying the insurer of any additional activities being undertaken by volunteers not already on record.
- Liability and accident insurance is provided for all volunteers engaged in UCG business, however, volunteers are only insured under the age of 90 years (and at a reduced level between the ages of 80 and 90). Volunteers 90 years and over must sign a declaration in the understanding that they are not covered by insurance and that they are requested to provide a Doctor's Certificate stating their ability to continue their duties.

# Motor Vehicle Use

## Policy

UCG is committed to safe, accident free driving and expects volunteers to comply with all road laws. Volunteers are considered to be on duty when driving their car to undertake designated duties and will be reimbursed for pre-approved out of pocket expenses.

## Procedure

- All UCG volunteers using their personal vehicles to undertake activities on behalf of UCG, will have, and supply on request, the following:
  - Current driver's licence.
  - Current car registration details.
  - Car Insurance Policy.
- Any volunteer who undertakes driving tasks on behalf of UCG will notify their Supervisor immediately if their licence is suspended or cancelled for any reason.
- When a volunteer takes passengers in their personal vehicle while undertaking designated duties they will have comprehensive insurance on that vehicle.
- Parking fines and other traffic infringements are the responsibility of the driver, unless authorized as an exception by the CEO.
- Drivers will take regular and adequate rest breaks if undertaking journeys of more than two hours whilst undertaking UCG duties.
- Where approved, UCG volunteer drivers are to submit a signed out of pocket expenses claim form for reimbursement of petrol expenses, including the odometer reading at start and finish for kilometres travelled.

# Recognition

## Policy

UCG regularly recognises and celebrates the commitment and achievements of its volunteers both formally and informally.

## Procedure

- UCG undertakes to provide formal and informal recognition of its volunteers by planning a variety of activities each year, generally including, but not limited to the following:
  - A meeting in January to mark the start of the welfare services each year.
  - A Dedication Service and lunch.
  - Morning teas and/or chocolates during National Volunteer Week in May.
  - An annual Volunteer Training Day for new and existing volunteers.
  - Volunteer profiles or stories, acknowledgment of International Volunteer Day and regular thank you messages in the quarterly Volunteer Newsletter.
  - Recognition in Annual Reports.
  - Informal morning teas or lunches for existing and/or exiting volunteers or Alumni.
  - A formal Annual Recognition Lunch and entertainment.
  - Thank you letters and Certificates of Appreciation for retiring volunteers.
  - Certificates of Appreciation to mark volunteer milestones.
  - Birthday cards to mark milestone birthdays.
  - Get Well cards to volunteers suffering from illness or injury.
  - Sympathy cards to acknowledge the death of a loved one.
  - Christmas cards and gifts for volunteers in co-ordinator roles.
  - A Christmas Lunch on the last day of the year for staff and welfare volunteers.
  - Nomination of individual volunteers or groups of volunteers for awards.
  - Media Releases for significant activities.
  
- UCG will acknowledge the contribution of volunteers in all promotional material, newsletters, media releases and interviews, reports and any other appropriate documentation.

# Succession Planning

## Policy

UCG places great importance on the health and wellbeing of our volunteers. UCG recognises the dedication and knowledge of long serving volunteers and will implement volunteer management strategies to ensure the retirement of volunteers is a dignified and respectful process, having particular consideration for the increased risks and insurance implications for volunteers over the age of 80 years.

## Procedure

The dignity of retiring volunteers will be ensured by:

- Informing volunteers of the steps to be taken when a person reaches the age of 80 years and/or is believed to be no longer capable of performing their assigned duties, including:
  - Acknowledging and discussing concerns regarding ageing or illness as they arise.
  - Regularly reviewing and assessing the capacity of ageing or ill volunteers to comply with health and safety standards while undertaking their allocated duties.
  - Respectfully informing volunteers personally and in private as soon as is practicable, of the steps to be taken when a person is believed to be no longer capable of performing their assigned duties.
  - When required, using the performance appraisal process to discuss the activities the volunteer is no longer able to undertake and then explore why it is essential they move to a new position or, if necessary, retire.
  - Discussing the likelihood of ageing or ill volunteers being asked to transition into retirement.
  - Asking ageing volunteers, prior to retiring, to mentor new recruits if possible, to ensure knowledge and skills are maintained.
  - Asking ageing volunteers, prior to retiring, to job share with new volunteers, for example to cut back from weekly shifts to fortnightly shifts for a period of 3 months.
  - Acknowledging and celebrating the contribution of retiring volunteers, including having a farewell morning tea if appropriate and presentation of a Certificate of Appreciation.
  - Inviting retiring volunteers to join the UCG Alumni Group and remain active ambassadors for UCG.
  - Inviting retiring volunteers to remain on the distribution list for the *UnitingCare* Geelong Newsletters.
  - Inviting retiring volunteers to accept pastoral care services to help them with their transition into retirement.

# Continuous Quality Improvement

## Policy

UCG is committed to short and long term quality improvement of the Volunteer Program to ensure a positive experience for volunteers and to provide a quality service to clients.

## Procedure

The Co-ordinator of Volunteers, reporting directly to the CEO and with the support of the Manager Emergency Relief and the Op Shop Co-ordinators, is responsible for:

- Regular review of the Volunteer Program, with reference to the Strategic Plan, to ensure that all opportunities to improve the quality of the program are identified and implemented.
- Collecting data and regularly monitoring:
  - The services delivered by volunteers.
  - Volunteer work satisfaction and feedback.
- Annual audit of the Volunteer Program against The National Standards.
- Reporting on audit and review results to the CEO and Manager Emergency Relief and jointly identifying, prioritising and implementing any follow up action necessary.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of any action taken.



**South Geelong**

2 Balliang Street  
South Geelong 3220  
03 4210 1100  
03 5222 3545

**Norlane**

10 Wendover Avenue  
Norlane 3214  
03 5278 8492  
03 5277 9753

**Winchelsea**

Hesse Street entrance in the hall  
beside the Uniting Church  
Winchelsea 3241  
03 5222 3293 (South Geelong number only)

email: [admin@ucg.unitingcare.org.au](mailto:admin@ucg.unitingcare.org.au)

[www.ucg.unitingcare.org.au](http://www.ucg.unitingcare.org.au)

**All Correspondence to: PO Box 239, Geelong VIC 3220**

**Revised January 2014**