**Bradford Disability Sport & Leisure**

**Volunteer Policy**

1. **Introduction**

Bradford Disability Sport & Leisure (BDSL) was founded in October 1985 as an unincorporated association and became a registered charity in October 1992. The organisation’s stated objective is the provision of opportunities and facilities for physical recreation and leisure to the benefit of people with disabilities in the Bradford Metropolitan area.

Volunteers have a long history of supporting activities run by BDSL. Indeed, it is not an exaggeration to say that volunteers are fundamental to BDSL’s ability to provide a wide range of quality sports and leisure opportunities for disabled people across the Bradford District; volunteer trustees, fundraisers, drivers, escorts and sports assistants all enable BDSL to deliver a much more diverse, inclusive and accessible programme of activities than would otherwise be possible.

BDSL membership is open to any disabled person living in the Bradford District, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality. As such, BDSL actively seeks volunteers from all communities across the District.

BDSL is appreciative of the time, energy and skills that volunteers bring to the organisation. This Volunteer Policy has been developed to demonstrate that commitment and sets out what support and training BDSL volunteers should expect, where they fit into the organisation and will help to ensure fairness and consistency across all volunteers. The Policy also sets out what BDSL expects of its volunteers. In order to make sure that it is useful and relevant, volunteers have been involved in developing this Volunteer Policy and it will be reviewed on a regular basis.

1. **Recruitment & Induction**

In order to recruit volunteers from all communities, BDSL staff work proactively with a range of organisations who work with people who may want to volunteer. These include the Volunteer Bureau, schools, colleges, Bradford Council Sport & Leisure Department and West Yorkshire Sport. Staff also advertise volunteer opportunities through district wide networks and actively promote volunteer opportunities to members’ families and friends.

When a specific volunteer opportunity is advertised, a simple recruitment process is followed:

* The opportunity is advertised widely
* Applicants complete a simple application form
* BDSL staff review all applications received and interview suitably qualified and experienced individuals.
* The successful candidate is offered the volunteer position.

Once allocated a volunteer position, all volunteers will receive an induction from a BDSL staff member. At their induction meeting, volunteers will be provided with:

* details of the volunteer opportunity,
* an introduction to BDSL and its policies,
* an introduction to working with BDSL members,
* a briefing about support available for BDSL volunteers
* information about what BDSL expects of its volunteers.

The induction will also include a briefing on BDSL’s Volunteer Policy. All new volunteers will be asked to sign BDSL’s Volunteer Agreement. Due to the nature of BDSL clients, new volunteers will also be asked to complete an enhanced CRB form.

Volunteers will also be given details of appropriate training relating to their volunteer role.

A BDSL staff member will accompany the volunteer to their first activity, introducing them to the other volunteers, paid staff and members. The BDSL staff member will ensure that the volunteer is clear and comfortable about their role before leaving them to participate independently.

Volunteers will be supervised by a named BDSL staff member until successful completion of a CRB check.

People approaching BDSL speculatively regarding potential volunteer opportunities are also welcome. When this occurs, the process outlined above will be followed. In these cases, BDSL staff will try to find a best match between a volunteer’s skills, experience and interest and the potential volunteering opportunities available.

*Copies of BDSL’s Volunteer Application form and Volunteer Agreement are attached as Appendices A & B respectively*

1. **Retention and Training**

Once a volunteer has been volunteering for 4 weeks a review meeting will take place with a BDSL staff member. This review meeting will act as an opportunity to resolve any outstanding issues / queries and check out that both parties are happy for the volunteering arrangement to continue. At this review meeting volunteers will also be asked if they have ideas for improving the activity with which they are involved.

Regular training will be offered to all volunteers. This will be related to working with people with learning disabilities, health and safety, first aid and child protection. These training sessions are provided both to ensure the quality and safety of BDSL activities and to protect BDSL volunteers. Some sessions will be particularly important and volunteers should make every effort to attend those sessions identified as such by BDSL staff.

A minimum of 4 volunteer training sessions will be available each year and these will be promoted to all volunteers on BDSL’s database and raised with individual volunteers during support sessions.

1. **Regular Support**

All volunteers will meet with a named BDSL staff member at least once a month. This will provide the opportunity for volunteers to discuss their volunteering role, any successes and challenges encountered and ensure that the right support is available from BDSL to support volunteers to develop their role, skills and experience. Useful training will be highlighted here. These sessions should also be used by either party to raise any concerns and suggestions for improvements.

1. **Out of Pocket Expenses**

BDSL are committed to providing all volunteers with out of pocket expenses for costs incurred whilst volunteering for BDSL. Out of pocket expenses can cover:

* Travel & costs of fuel used in the course of volunteering
* Refreshments / meals (only in relation to a full day’s volunteering)
* Postage and telephone costs in connection with volunteering

Please be aware that total out of pocket expenses cannot exceed more than £5 a day

Out of Pocket expenses will be paid in accordance with the Out of Pocket Expenses Policy and can be claimed by completing the volunteer out of pocket expense form, accompanied by appropriate receipts.

*The Out of Pocket Expenses Policy and Claim Form are attached as Appendices C and D respectively*

Childcare costs incurred whilst volunteering with BDSL **may** be claimed as out of pocket expenses. Prior agreement from a BDSL staff member **is always required** before any claims of this nature are made.

Any protective clothing and other essential equipment required by volunteers will be provided by BDSL

1. **Respect and Confidentiality**

Volunteers are a valuable asset to BDSL. As such they should expect to be treated with the same respect as anyone else associated with BDSL in line with BDSL’s Equal Opportunities Policy and regardless of a volunteer’s ethnicity, religion, gender, age, disability or sexuality.

All volunteer personal information records will be treated as confidential

In return, volunteers should make every effort to keep confidential any information they are party to for health and safety reasons about BDSL members, staff or other volunteers

*A copy of BDSL’s Equal Opportunities Policy is attached as Appendix E*

1. **Health and Safety**

BDSL has a responsibility to avoid exposing volunteers to risks to their health or safety. A copy of the BDSL Health & Safety Policy is kept in the main office and can be accessed by volunteers.

As part of its commitment to maintaining the health and safety of volunteers, BDSL will provide relevant training on a regular basis

In return, volunteers should make every effort to attend training relating to health and safety. Also, if unable to fulfil a commitment for which they have volunteered, volunteers should make every effort to inform the relevant BDSL staff member as soon as possible

*A summary of the Health and Safety Policy is attached as Appendix F*

1. **Insurance**

BDSL’s public liability insurance provides appropriate cover for all BDSL volunteers up to the age of 80.

 In return, volunteers should make every effort only to volunteer for activities that have been agreed with a BDSL staff member.

Volunteers should also make every effort to attend training sessions identified as important by BDSL staff.

1. **Dealing with Problems, Complaints or Disputes**

BDSL is committed to ensuring that all volunteers are treated fairly and with respect. It is also keen to maintain quality standards of service to its members. Where volunteers experience a particular problem they should first try to resolve it informally with their contact BDSL staff member. Similarly, where a problem is raised about a volunteer, it will first be raised informally with the volunteer by their contact BDSL staff member.

It is hoped that most problems, complaints and disputes can be resolved in this way. However, when this proves impossible – or when allegations are of a sufficiently serious nature (e.g. potential child protection issue) - the Volunteer Complaints and Disputes procedure should be followed.

This procedure exists to ensure that all formal complaints and disputes are dealt with and resolved in a fair and transparent way.

Where the formal procedure is implemented, volunteers have the right to be accompanied to all meetings by someone agreed by both parties.

*A copy of BDSL’s Volunteer Complaints and Dispute procedure is attached as Appendix G*