# Policy & Guidance Document for Volunteers

Dear Volunteer,

Thank you for joining '***Sadaka***'.

**Trustees**: Sunila Lobo, Shajna Rehan, Abid Khalid, Fatima Alla-Saouiki, Wahid Issa.
**Session Leaders**: Sunila Lobo, Fatima Alla-Saouiki, Wahid Issa, Abid Khalid, Zobia Kalim

We are a registered charity offering meals on a weekly basis to those in poverty or homeless. We strive to maintain a supportive environment providing nutritious meals for those in need. We also offer donated clothing, toiletries, food surplus donated by supermarkets and sign posting to other relevant agencies with our service users' permission. By joining Sadaka you will be supporting the most vulnerable in our society and gain a positive experience by joining our dynamic cohort of volunteers who are passionate about the work they undertake and provide you a supportive community.

Our charity is dependent on donations. Therefore, if you have the means to donate in addition to your time this is greatly appreciated. Donations can be made in the form of a financial contribution through 'JustGiving' via this link at https://www.justgiving.com/sadaka or it can be through donating snacks, the main meal or dessert for the session and/or books, clothing and toiletries which will be distributed to our service users during the sessions.

The operation of the charity is dependent on our valued cohort of volunteers and therefore in order to ensure you are working in a safe and effective environment please adhere to the guidance set out below: -

1. **Weekly sessions**: At the start of each week a message will be sent out to all volunteers on the 'Sadaka ***Volunteer Whatsapp*** group chat' asking for their availability and any donations they can make. Please reply on the group chat as soon as possible so that we can plan for the service for that week. It is important you respond on the group chat rather than to individuals as this allows the session leader to quickly identify who is available and what items are being donated.

2. We require a minimum of 12 Volunteers for each session[1]. If we fall below this number, the Trustees will make a decision on whether the service can be operated safely with a lower number.

3. Fire Safety – In the event of a fire evacuation (either at Fairview or CIVITAS school) all volunteers and service users must leave the building quickly and safely, through the front door. Our assembly point is on Great Knollys Street opposite the bus depot, close to the bollards. Under no circumstance must any individual return to the building to collect possessions etc until the Fire Brigade inform us it is safe to do so. Ensure you familiarise yourself with the fire safety procedures displayed at both exits in the Fairview Community Centre.

4. **Service users & Volunteers**: It is important that you are aware that our service users are an extremely vulnerable service user group. Some have mental ill health, some are drug and alcohol users/addicts, some have been subjected to sexual abuse and some may be caught in the cycle of the abused becoming the abuser. Most are in an impoverished situation. When interacting with the service users please respect their privacy as some may choose to engage with you and others may not. If you are informed of any concerning information with regard to ***safeguarding*** of the service users, please relay this to the session leader. The session leader will make a decision on any action required including signposting to a relevant service, whilst balancing the service users' right to confidentiality and privacy.

5. The service users greatly appreciate the support provided by *Sadaka*. In order to ensure you are safe we have volunteers who are trained in dealing with aggressive or confrontational behaviour. If you find a situation is escalating such as aggressive behaviour, shouting, food throwing, inappropriate touching etc it is imperative you report this to the session leader immediately so this can be dealt with quickly. Our aim is in the first instance, depending on the nature of what has occurred, to try and ***de-escalate*** the behaviour. If this does not occur we call the police immediately. The session leader may make a decision to 'lock down' the service i.e. remove the service users from the building in order to keep both volunteers and service users safe.

6. Please ensure you retain ***professional boundaries*** at all times. Becoming too familiar with the service users can place you in a vulnerable situation and also create dependency. We would advise this both, during and out of Sadaka's volunteer working hours. We want to protect you and protect the service user. If you choose to maintain friendships with service users outside of your volunteering hours, Sadaka will not take responsibility if an untoward incident were to occur.

   If you are inappropriately touched by a service user please report this to the session leader who will address this. If it is found a volunteer has been inappropriate with a service user this will be investigated and depending on the outcome, a course of action will be taken. We hold zero tolerance for any form of abuse.

[1] A task for the session will be allocated to you once you have confirmed your attendance. Please ensure the task is completed in full ( the task list sheet is with the session leader). If you are unclear about your role or wish to work on a different task please contact the session leader before the session.

In addition, we would request you keep relationships with the service user on a professional level. These are vulnerable people who may read the wrong signals if you become over familiar either during or out of Sadaka's working hours. We cannot take responsibility for any untoward incidents.

7. **Volunteers**: If you experience negative behaviour from another volunteer in the first instance try and resolve this with them. If this is not possible please speak to one of the Volunteer Committee members[2] or session leaders who will deal with your concern. If after this, you wish to proceed with a formal complaint then this will need to be in writing to the Trustee/s. Trustees will respond within 14 days after investigation of the incident.

8. Dress Code – Please ensure that you are dressed in comfortable footwear as you will be on your feet for about 2.5 hours. All volunteers who are prepping food, serving drinks and meals are required to wear food safety attire which comprise hair nets, aprons and gloves for these tasks. We need to ensure we work in accordance with food safety regulations including cleaning all surfaces before and after use.

   In addition, please ensure your clothes are clean and appropriate to wear in delivering the service. Your attire should be modest and work appropriate. It should facilitate your ability to do physical work within the kitchen, the hall and the store-room and it should also support your professional boundaries when interacting with service users.

9. ID Badges - When on duty, an ID badge must be worn above the waist. Name badges are to be visible and readable to anyone approaching, clearly identifying your name.

   It is your responsibility to maintain your badge in good condition. ID badges are to be returned to the Trustees when volunteers end their service with Sadaka. Sadaka reserves the right to apply a charge to replace lost/damaged ID badges.

10. Training - All food related Volunteers need to ensure that in order for them to remain registered as a Sadaka volunteer, they must complete the mandatory training for Level 2 Food Certificate [and Safeguarding] training. An email will be sent to you providing the link to the food safety course, paid for by Sadaka. Sadaka reserves the right to apply a charge for allocated training courses that are not completed within their time period, as they become null and void.

11. Meetings: Annual General Meeting (AGM) meetings are held annually; the last was held on 14 March 2020. The General Meeting (GM) meeting takes place several times a year. A message will be sent out informing you of the dates followed by a reminder. We would advise you to attend as it is a forum for discussion regarding the operation and progression of the service. Your contribution and feedback is vital for how the service evolves.

Next Review August 2020

[2] The Volunteer Committee Lead is Sabine Mayeux.

**ADDENDUM**

Extraordinary circumstances [e.g Covid-19 Crisis] may result in adaptations to the weekly service. An example is due to concerns regarding social distancing and the areas where help is required, the minimum number of volunteers needed to run the service may be reduced or increased.

All Guidance e.g. on safeguarding, professional boundaries and de-escalation should be adhered to.

Chair of Board of Trustees

Sunila Lobo

Dated 14 April 2020

Contact: info@sadakagives.org