

CVSS

Sailing for People with Disabilities

VOLUNTEER POLICY

CVSS is a charity entirely staffed by volunteers that provides sailing and water based activities for disabled people. The Trustees are elected by the membership at the AGM and runs CVSS.

CVSS has been working at Bury Lake, the Aquadrome Rickmansworth since 2000 and in 2011 received the Queens Award to Voluntary groups (the Volunteers' M.B.E.)

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF CVSS VOLUNTEER PROFILE

- Our volunteers come from all walks of life and are aged 16-93 years .
- CVSS Young Volunteers (YVs) are 16 years and above. They are usually students who want to do community service, perhaps as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award. The YVs usually work on Saturdays and sign up for 2-hour shifts at the Lakeside. When they join CVSS they do not need to be able to sail or have any knowledge of people with disabilities. CVSS gives “on the job” training and YVs acquire skills and knowledge in greeting people and making them feel at ease, fitting buoyancy aids, rigging and mooring boats, crewing our safety boats (which are power boats), sailing and buddy sailing in Access Dinghies. YVs are asked to commit to 10 2-hour sessions in our 28-week season
- Regular volunteers aged 16 upward are required to have a DBS check.
- Our adult volunteers are 18 years upward. They are required to have a DBS check which is completed by CVSS (we accept DBS checks from other organisations which are less than 3 years old). CVSS DBS checks are free to the volunteer.
- We do not expect our volunteers to have previous experience of sailing or people with disabilities but provide on the job training

and, in line with CVSS requirements, formal training to RYA level in specific areas. Many of our volunteers become qualified in basic First Aid. (Courses are paid for by CVSS).

- Adult volunteers at CVSS need enthusiasm and to be willing to commit the equivalent of 4 days (min) each season to CVSS tasks. Volunteers working at the lakeside and on boats are expected to wear buoyancy aids –CVSS provides these.
- We welcome volunteers from all backgrounds. CVSS needs a huge range of skills (sailing and cooking, graphic design and fund-raising, administration and publicity, boat maintenance and repair and power boat driving -the list is enormous) .We try to match volunteers' interests to the job we ask them to do. Some of our volunteers choose never to come to the lake or step on a boat!
- CVSS volunteers need to be able to communicate well enough in English to be safe.
- We do encourage our volunteers to develop new skills but no one gets press-ganged into a role!
- The trustees are elected by the membership at the AGM. All are welcome to stand for election with the usual requirements of needing to be proposed and seconded by members. The trustees carry out a large variety of tasks that are critical to the smooth running of CVSS- members of these groups contribute large amounts of time year round.
- We do not pay expenses to our volunteers for routine attendance but provide tea and coffee for those on duty. We have a volunteer BBQ each summer so that all volunteers can enjoy a relaxed evening and meet the members of the other “day teams”.
- If a volunteer has to travel to attend a course, to collect materials or boats for CVSS or represent CVSS at an event expenses can be claimed if they are agreed in advance by the trustees. The trustees will be pro-active in ensuring that volunteers are aware of this.

- At the Lakeside the day can be busy but our ethos is to look after each other as well as our disabled sailors....it means that everyone will at times make the tea if that's what is needed.

We welcome people with disabilities as volunteers.

RECRUITMENT

- The contact details for CVSS are widely available on publicity materials and on our web site cvsssailors.org.uk. Enquiries from volunteers are followed up quickly by members of CVSS
- CVSS welcomes volunteers of all ages (from 14 years) and backgrounds
- CVSS will try to match a volunteer's skills and/or interests to the organisation requirements, if this is not possible we will explain why and try to offer advice on alternative opportunities
- CVSS will be flexible about when and where volunteers carry out their duties. If a volunteer does not carry out the required number of duties in a season they will continue to be welcome to volunteer in the following season but will not have voting rights at the AGM (Autumn each year)
- Volunteers are required to complete the CVSS Volunteer Membership Form annually
- Volunteers are advised on the ways of registering for duty (Three Rings organiser) and the importance of cancelling duty sessions they find they cannot attend (sailing requires a high CVSS to disabled sailor ratio which has to be maintained)
- Adult volunteers must have a DBS check every 3 years. They are expected to make themselves available, with the required documents, for an appointment with a delegated CVSS volunteer (usually the Membership Secretary) to complete the required procedures. Confidentiality is respected and our focus is CHILD and ADULT PROTECTION ISSUES
- Adult volunteers are asked to become aware of the CVSS policies that are available in hard copy at the Lakeside and online by

request. In particular they are asked to be familiar with the Safeguarding and Health and Safety Policies. We DO NOT REQUIRE that volunteers read through the policies themselves.

- All CVSS sailors are “vulnerable” because of their disabilities. Volunteers will be “phased-into” a range of tasks with increasing responsibilities in line with their competencies and confidence.

INDUCTION

CVSS INDUCTION will include the following activities and information, phased over a number of weeks

- CVSS rules relating to wearing buoyancy aids, how to fit a buoyancy aid
- Completion of CVSS membership form
- Completion of DBS check
- Appropriate terminology
- Description of the structure of CVSS on sailing days and in terms of the organisation plan
- Emergency procedures
- First aid arrangements
- Risk assessments
- Health and safety policy procedures
- Equal opportunities policy
- Insurance cover
- Duty rosters, arrangements for volunteers cancelling duties, arrangements when sailing has to be cancelled
- CVSS relationship with BLYM our host club
- Grievance and complaints policy
- Access and parking

ACCESS AND PARKING

CVSS is fortunate in that our lake is located close to the centre of Rickmansworth in a park. However this location brings special responsibilities for volunteers arriving by motor transport.

- **Volunteers who are disabled** (ie hold a badge) will be given a gate key card and can park outside the clubhouse in the disabled places. When driving up the access road **IT IS ESSENTIAL** that you drive at or below the **5MPH** speed limit and use **HAZARD WARNING LIGHTS**, to protect other park users
- Able-bodied volunteers who are NOT transporting heavy items are asked to use the **MAIN CAR PARK and walk to CVSS**

- Able-bodied volunteers who are transporting heavy items are permitted to use the BLYM car park but MUST drive at LESS than 5 MPH and use HAZARD WARNING LIGHTS. Failure to follow these rules WILL result in car park privileges being withdrawn

What will happen on my first day volunteering at CVSS?

- New volunteers will be welcomed into the “day team” they have volunteered for (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Saturday). The Shore Officer or Leader will arrange for them to work alongside an experienced volunteer
- On their first visit they will be “walked through” safety information, fire and evacuation procedures etc and given some information (verbally) about the CVSS procedures and the sailing groups of the day.
- They will be shown the procedures file and key basic information will be given verbally. If the volunteer prefers this will be given in written form. If the volunteer needs signed/augmented communication we will arrange this for induction purposes- CVSS does not have a “resident translator” for BSL or sign assisted English. CVSS mainly works outside and our building does not have a hearing loop. Whilst we welcome non-English speakers as volunteers we cannot translate written materials into other languages because of the costs involved. A non-English speaking volunteer would have restricted duties because of the SAFETY element in CVSS operations- rapid clear communication can be essential.
- Information will be given about helping disabled people.
- During their first season volunteers will be given some direct training on disability awareness.
- If volunteers have established sailing/power boat skills these will be used by CVSS as soon as possible. Volunteers without pre-existing skills (most volunteers) will receive on the job training in all general volunteer tasks.

SAFETY

CVSS aims to make sailing and boating enjoyable and safe for both sailors and volunteers

CVSS has policies documents on

- Health and Safety
- Manual Handling
- Positive Behaviour
- Personal Hygiene

These are intended to promote enjoyment and safety of sailing with CVSS. Volunteers are advised that these are available on site (in the black file); they are also given instructions about how to carry out activities that are based on these policies. CVSS volunteers are not required to read the policy documents.

CLOTHING

Sailing is a sporting activity. Any volunteer working Lakeside or on boats (and not using a wheelchair) will need to wear appropriate clothing

- Footwear- shoes that are that stay firmly on the foot (no flip-flops), give protection to the toes (no open toe sandals) and do not have “heels”. Trainers are ideal.
- Both female and male volunteers need to wear clothing that allows them to move quickly and easily-shorts or trousers are ideal, short skirts or floor length skirts are unsuitable.
- Volunteers should give consideration to protecting themselves from heat/sun-burn as well as cold and wet
- If volunteers wear clothing that restricts them or does not meet safety requirements their volunteering activities on site will be restricted.

PERSONAL EFFECTS

- CVSS cannot take responsibility for personal possessions of volunteers when they are at CVSS

- CVSS advises that it is unwise to wear expensive jewellery etc when volunteering since if it is lost in the lake it cannot be retrieved.

VOLUNTEER HEALTH ISSUES

- CVSS has volunteers between 16-93 years and with varying levels of physical fitness. We need volunteers to take responsibility by deciding if they are able to carry out tasks such as lifting particular objects, pushing boats etc and asking for help when they need it.
- CVSS works well because we work as a team and say when we need to take a rest or ask for help.
- We welcome volunteers who may have mental health issues but ask that they or their support is frank and open so that possible difficulties can be considered prior to the first volunteering day.
- For a confidential discussion contact the Chair chair@cvssailors.org.uk or Secretary cvss@cvssailors.org.uk
- If a volunteer has a particular health (or other) issue they can discuss it with the Sailing Leader or Shore Officer and decide on an appropriate course of action.

SAFEGUARDING

CVSS sailors are Children and Vulnerable Adults. We also have volunteers who are children and volunteers who are disabled who may be considered to be vulnerable adults. We have a clear Safeguarding policy which we adhere to protect our sailors and our volunteers.

INSURANCE

CVSS has insurance covering public liability (£5,000,000.00) member-to-member liability (£5,000,000.00) and RYA training centre extension (£5,000,000.00)

WORRIES AND GRIEVANCES

- CVSS begins each sailing day without sailors present as we prepare for sailing. During this period discussion of concerns is

encouraged. Before sailing begins a formal “briefing “ occurs when volunteers can raise concerns about sailing/ organisational / planning matters.

- If a volunteer has a more personal concern these can be raised, at an appropriate point, with the Sailing Leader.
- CVSS also has a formal complaints and grievances procedure that is in the policy file at the Lakeside.

TRAINING

- CVSS provides “on the job” training to all volunteers, new and experienced. Refresher training may be provided for established volunteers at the beginning of season, or as required. Established volunteers may be asked to attend training courses in a wide variety of areas to meet CVSS needs. There will, of course, be no requirement on volunteers to attend courses. When CVSS pays for course attendance there is an expectation that volunteers will use their new skills at CVSS if they have achieved the required standard.
- Within CVSS there are roles and responsibilities that require a specific skill set. Volunteers in these roles or in training for these roles will receive appropriate support from CVSS.

REFERENCES

CVSS recognises that both young volunteers and adult volunteers may be job seekers or need references for a variety of purposes. CVSS is very happy to provide references for our volunteers but will find it useful to have appropriate information on the purpose of the reference, the format required and a reasonable time to produce the document.

References from CVSS (rather than individuals) can be written by

- A trustee
- A leader
- A shore officer

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH OUR MEMBERS

CVSS needs to keep its administration costs as low as possible.

If a member (Sailor/supporter/ sailing group leader/volunteer) has an email address we ask for this. We communicate regularly by e-mails. CVSS has a website which has information about CVSS, key dates in the CVSS calendar, upcoming events etc. Members are able to email/telephone or write to the committee or trustees about concerns.

During the sailing season CVSS maintains a lakeside notice board to keep all members up to date with events.

CVSS DECISION MAKING AND THE CHAIN OF RESPONSIBILITY ON SAILING DAYS

On sailing days the Sailing Leader is responsible for the safety of sailing and our sailors whilst they are on the water. (It is a CVSS requirement that sailors who know they require support on land must be accompanied by a friend/parent/carer who remains with them on site and is responsible for them when they are on land).

The sailing leader decides if sailing will go ahead and also if conditions are suitable for particular groups/individuals to sail.

All volunteers share in the responsibility of ensuring the safety of our sailors and themselves by being observant of on-going conditions and reporting concerns to the Leader/Shore Officer.

CVSS ORGANISATION and DECISION MAKING STRUCTURE

CVSS is run by the trustees elected from members (sailors or their representative, volunteers, group leaders) at the AGM.

The trustees carry out the very wide range of tasks that are required to finance, organise and maintain CVSS sailing. The trustees also plan ahead to ensure that CVSS continues to be a vibrant organisation that adapts to the changing needs of disabled sailors. Being member of the CVSS trustee is a year round task.

The trustees are authorised to co-opt members for particular purposes.

CVSS SAILING LEADERS AND SHORE OFFICERS

CVSS calls the Sailing Leaders and Shore Officers to meetings from time to time. These meetings inform policy and procedures in CVSS and ensure that all leaders share essential information.

CVSS TRUSTEES

CVSS is a Charity and has Trustees who ensure that it fulfils its charitable objective. The Trustees have the “final responsibility” to ensure that CVSS operates safely, within the law and fulfils it’s charitable objective. They are the final arbiters in any complaints or grievance procedure. In CVSS “fund raising” is the responsibility of the trustees in that they seek to identify avenues for raising funds.

The Trustees are elected annually at the AGM

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notification of the AGM is by email unless a member does not have an email address. Notification of the date will normally be sent to members at the beginning of the sailing season in the appropriate year (e.g. May for an AGM in September/October).

The CVSS AGM is held locally in a building with good access for disabled people. Although it is an open meeting voting on motions is restricted to:

- Individual sailing members who have paid their annual subscription-or if they are not able to represent themselves a spokesperson
- Group Leaders from groups that have paid the annual group charge
- 1 named member of a family that has paid family membership
- Volunteers who have carried out the required number of duties in the season.