

Volunteers Handbook



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WELCOME

On behalf of the Board and Directors of Novita Children's Services, we thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer for our organisation.

ABOUT NOVITA CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Novita was established in 1939 as the Crippled Children's Association of SA, to care for children diagnosed with polio. From these humble beginnings, Novita has grown to become South Australia's premier children's charity – and a recognised world leader in the provision of therapy, equipment and family support services to more than 1300 South Australian children and their families living with physical disabilities or acquired brain injuries.

OUR SERVICES

Novita provides services to children aged 0-18 years living with cerebral palsy, spina bifida, muscular dystrophy and other physical disabilities, as well as children with acquired brain injuries.

Novita's therapy services include occupational therapy, physiotherapy, psychology and speech pathology, provided at home, at kindy, at child care and at school by expert staff based in offices right across Adelaide. We also provide equipment and technology to make life easier for our families, ranging from wheelchairs and walking frames to electronic communications devices and even major home modifications.

Novita's services are provided in a partnership with clients, their families and their communities. No two children are the same, so Novita's services are individualised, responsive and flexible, allowing each family to make choices about the services they receive.

OUR FUNDING

Each Novita client requires a customised level of therapy and care – which in most cases adds up to hundreds of thousands of dollars to support just one child.

Novita receives only 55% of its annual funding from the Government, which leaves millions of dollars to be raised every year through the generosity of the South Australian community. By supporting Novita, you are helping us to connect thousands of South Australian kids with their worlds!

Novita is committed to providing induction to all volunteers and in some instances provide training where required.

The purpose of this handbook is to outline the policy and procedures of volunteering within Novita, which will ensure you are informed and understand your role, responsibilities and your rights as a volunteer.

Your support is greatly appreciated and we hope your time with Novita will be a rewarding and challenging experience.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Community Relations Co-ordinator on (08) 8243 8223.

OUR VALUES

All Novita activity is motivated by the following values:

Families

We recognise that our clients and their families are the ‘real experts’ when it comes to their own priorities and wellbeing.

People

We value the capabilities, experience and diversity that individual staff members and volunteers bring to Novita.

Partnership

We aspire to develop positive partnerships with families, colleagues, the community and Government to achieve greater connection for our clients.

Customer Service

We truly listen to our clients in an effort to fully understand and respond in a professional, equitable, timely and flexible manner.

Integrity

We are committed to honesty, integrity and the highest ethical standards.

Accountability

We empower staff to be accountable for decisions within the boundaries of their individual roles.

Innovation

We constantly strive to build our capabilities, create and embrace new ideas and increase our understanding of new practices.

Achievement

Our results-oriented culture fosters trust and mutual respect, and provides a safe environment for our staff, volunteers and our clients.

our values

THE ORGANISATION AND ITS STRUCTURE

How are we are structured?

The central office is located at 171 Days Road, Regency Park.

Novita has a Board of 12 voluntary members (2 non-voting members).

Novita is managed by a 6 member Executive Reference Group (ERG), consisting of Chief Executive, 4 Directors and 1 Manager.

Novita presently provides services from 4 Regional Offices (Regency Park, Parafield Gardens, Paradise and St Marys).

Novita employs approximately 260 staff.

Novita has over 400 volunteers.

Novita has a client base of over 1,500 children.

SERVICES PROVIDED

Novita provides a large range of innovative and [family-centred services](#) to children who are registered clients of the Association.

Therapy Services

Novita is the leading provider of therapy, equipment and support services for children with a physical or multiple disability in South Australia. Our team of physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech pathologists and psychologists work together to provide solutions that best meet the needs of our clients and their families.

NovitaTech

NovitaTech staff work in partnership with therapists to develop customised solutions to best meet the needs of our clients.

NovitaTech consists of 5 departments:

Orthotics

Our orthotics area manufactures and fits a range of custom made orthotic devices, including ankle-foot and knee-ankle foot orthoses, spinal braces and helmets.

Assistive Technology

NovitaTech's Assistive Technology team is a leader in the supply and servicing of electronic technology, including communication devices, computer access and products and environmental control units.

Seating and Mobility

The Seating and Mobility area assesses the seating and mobility requirements of clients and provides custom-made and modified wheelchair; seating and mobility systems to suit individual client needs.

Equipment Testing and Design

The Test Laboratory provides test data for rehabilitation equipment, as well as contributing to safety and performance standards with both Standards Australia and the International Standards Organisation (ISO).

Research and Development

Research and Development focuses on innovation and the evaluation of electronic products to ensure NovitaTech clients access the best product at the best price.

Family Support Services

Family Support Services is 1 of 5 programmes that work to assist children and young people with physical/neurological disabilities or an acquired brain injury. They provide clients with a case-management service (that includes a purchasing function), including assisting with the development of community initiatives that will improve the lives of people with disabilities and ensure these initiatives are responsive to the individual needs of each client.

HOW CAN YOU HELP NOVITA?

After reading this handbook if you change your mind about volunteering or if we have no vacancies at the time of applying, we have many other ways you can assist the organisation, including:

Make a donation

Donations are always welcome. You can make a one-off payment or a regular payment by credit card over the telephone or by sending a cheque/money order to PO Box 2438, Regency Park 5942. Any donation \$2 and over is fully tax deductible.

Join the Organisation as a member

Membership is \$10 per annum. You will receive information about Novita quarterly and an invitation to the AGM held in November each year.

Make a Bequest

You are invited to join a very special group of individuals who have made a bequest in their Will. Bequests, no matter how large or small ensure Novita's life-changing work will continue into the future.

Join an Auxiliary or start one of your own

Do you enjoy fundraising? Want to get involved with other like-minded individuals who get together monthly to raise money for Novita? Speak to the Community Relations Co-ordinator who can advise you of details of your nearest group or information about starting your own group.

Organise a one-off fundraiser

At work or with your friends.

VOLUNTEER ROLES AND ACTIVITIES

Regular activities are available in Marketing & Public Relations, NovitaTech, the therapy pool and Regional Offices. Roles can include:

Marketing & Public Relations

- Mail Outs
- Folding of brochures and newsletters
- Record keeping
- Basic clerical work including filing, packing
- Assisting with the preparation of major events
- Attending major events
- Joining an Auxiliary to fundraise for Novita

NovitaTech

- Work experience for engineering students

Regional Offices

- General office and administrative work
- Preparing materials for therapy activities
- Filing

Teenzone

- Interact with children aged 12+ in our OSHC or Vacation care program (craft, activities, music, reading, movies, outings)

Therapy Pool

- Assist staff in the swimming pool

Rewards as a Volunteer

As a volunteer you will:

- make a difference to the lives of children
- develop and utilise your skills
- make new friends and colleagues
- enhance your self esteem and self confidence
- improve the balance of life for yourself
- be part of an organisation that is committed to working with children with disabilities
- be part of an organisation that values volunteers
- learn new skills
- become part of a team.

What do you need to do to become a volunteer?

Prior to your involvement with Novita you will need to take the following steps:

- If you haven't done so already, attend an interview with the relevant Business Unit Manager or Community Relations Co-ordinator;
- Read this Handbook;
- Complete the Volunteer Registration Forms (centre of booklet)
- Apply for a National Criminal History Record Check. This is more commonly known as a Police Check. There will be no charge to you but it does involve you presenting the NPC form and sufficient identification to your nearest police station. NPC's are required for all staff and volunteers and must be renewed every 3 years or as instructed by the organisation. Police checks must be completed on line (www.police.sa.gov.au).

You will receive an induction upon commencement to inform you about the Organisation, your role as a volunteer and safe work practices.

You may receive a job description where appropriate.

Some specific job training may be required. Your manager will advise you of any training requirements before you commence.

THE VOLUNTEER RELATIONSHIP WITHIN NOVITA

Your Rights and Responsibilities

As a volunteer you have the right to:

- operate in a safe and healthy environment
- receive feedback on performance
- be provided with adequate support and guidance
- withdraw from the role at any time

Your responsibilities are to:

- be reliable
- advise the organisation of unexpected absences
- maintain confidentiality
- participate in training and information sessions as required
- respect the rights of other volunteers and staff within the organisation
- adhere to Novita's Volunteer's Policies and Procedures as outlined in this booklet
- be committed to Novita and to contribute to its goals and objectives
- communicate effectively with staff
- advise the Business Unit Manager/Community Relations Co-ordinator of any unsafe working conditions.

Novita's Rights

Novita has a right to:

- receive commitment, effort and service from an unpaid worker for the role being undertaken
- expect conscientious acceptance of responsibilities as to promptness, reliability and good client service
- make decisions as to where the volunteer would best fit
- expect from all volunteers, respect and courtesy towards clients, staff and other volunteers
- expect a volunteer to comply with all Volunteer Policies and Procedures
- exit a volunteer after all options have been explored in finding an alternative role
- plan and facilitate training for volunteers where required.

VOLUNTEER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

It is the responsibility of all volunteers to be aware of Novita's Volunteer Code of Conduct and to follow its provisions, which include confidentiality. You are required to read, acknowledge and sign this documentation and return to the Community Relations Co-ordinator.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Whilst volunteering within Novita you may be told or learn personal and other information of a confidential nature. Confidentiality is an important issue and information should not be passed on or discussed with anyone except your Business Unit Manager or Community Relations Coordinator.

EMERGENCIES

Each Business Unit will provide you with information on fire and emergency procedures specific to the work site.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Whilst working for Novita, it is likely that you will come into contact with people from a variety of different backgrounds and situations.

Equal Opportunity legislation aims to ensure that all people are treated fairly and are not discriminated against because of their age, race, gender, disability, marital status, pregnancy, religion or sexuality.

GIFTS

Gifts of money must not be accepted under any circumstances, and acceptance of personal gifts should be avoided. You are required to declare any gifts or proposed gifts to your Business Unit Manager or the Community Relations Co-ordinator.

GRIEVANCES

Every volunteer has the right to express personally their complaints or grievances, without fear of retribution, and to have them investigated and resolved quickly and fairly.

All complaints will be taken seriously and quickly investigated. All complaints will be treated as private and confidential, involving only those parties who have a need to know.

You should contact your Business Unit Manager or Community Relations Co-ordinator in the first instance, should you have a complaint. If you are not happy with how your complaint has been handled, you can refer your situation to the Manager Human Resources.

INSURANCE

Novita does have Accident Insurance cover that covers volunteers in the case of an accident.

Any claims should be reported immediately to your Business Unit Manager who will advise the Director Corporate Services.

MEDIA CONTACT

Volunteers are not permitted to contact the media and make comment on any matters relating to the activities of Novita. If the media contacts you, you are required to refer them to Manager, Communications on (08) 8243 8234 immediately.

DRESS CODE

Volunteers are required to be neat and well groomed and dress appropriately for the work being undertaken. You should bear in mind your comfort and safety, which includes wearing sensible footwear.

PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

Novita cannot be responsible for any loss or damage to your personal property whilst in attendance as a volunteer. Please discuss with your Business Unit Manager or the Community Relations Co-ordinator if you are unable to secure your personal property.

PRIVACY ACT

The information Novita holds about its' clients and families is accessible only to those staff who need to view it for the purposes of their job. Volunteers are not able to view any client information, except with written consent from the client or parent.

In the event that a volunteer must see client information, as part of their role in Novita, and parent/client permission has been gained, the volunteer is to ensure that the information is not discussed or otherwise revealed to others outside of Novita or to others within Novita to whom it is not directly relevant for their job.

SMOKING REGULATIONS

All locations within Novita promote a smoke-free environment.

Smoking is only permitted outside the buildings.

TELEPHONE USE

The office telephone is expected to be confined to Novita business. See your manager if you need to use the phone for private use.

PREVENTING HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

Novita has a framework to establish a culture where staff and volunteers are treated fairly, with dignity and respect. A harmonious & co-operative environment will be created whereby staff & volunteers value and respect each other's beliefs and opinions. Staff and Volunteers will be able to provide effective services in a positive atmosphere without the fear of Bullying, Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Discrimination or Violence.

Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Violence, will be referred to as "HARASSMENT" for the purpose of Novita Volunteer's Policy and Procedures.

TRAINING

Your Business Unit Manager may offer training and it is generally not mandatory to attend, unless it is specifically related to the voluntary role, which you have undertaken, eg. Manual handling.

QUALITY

Novita has a Quality Management System (AS/NZS ISO 9001:2000) in place. This system provides Novita with policies, procedures and processes to ensure that we can deliver our products and services to the satisfaction of our clients, families, funders and other interested parties. Our aim is to get the job right first time.

The system also involves various methods of checking that we are doing what we say we are doing and identifies opportunities for improvement.

Volunteers are welcome to provide Novita with feedback, using the Praise, Complaints and Suggestions form or by talking about that feedback to a Novita staff member who will ensure it is responded to by the relevant person.

PERFORMANCE

As a Volunteer you will not be required to undertake a formal Performance Appraisal, however, we encourage you and your manager to review your role every six months to exchange ideas and give you an opportunity to discuss any issues you may have. We value your ideas and suggestions as well as any negative comments you have, as feedback is always a mechanism for change, but please don't wait until the review process. Speak to your Business Unit Manager or the Community Relations Co-ordinator at anytime.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SAFETY & WELFARE

Prevention of work related injury

Novita aims to provide:

- a safe and healthy workplace
- safe systems of work
- plant and substances in a safe condition
- hazard notification
- accident, incident and near miss reporting
- fire and emergency procedures.

Your role in OHS&W

In your role, you will be expected:

- to act in a common sense way, to be practical in potential situations of concern, and to adopt risk management practices such as identifying hazards
- to report unsafe working conditions or incidents to your Business Unit Manager or the Community Relations Co-ordinator immediately

- to report injuries immediately
- not present for duty under the influence of alcohol and/or a drug, so as to ensure the effectiveness of your performance and your own & other's safety at work
- to attend manual handling training sessions, if requested
- to use any equipment provided for health and safety purposes.

Manual Handling Procedures

Manual Handling, is the major cause of injury in the majority of workplaces. These guidelines provide strategies to reduce the likelihood of injuries and to meet legislative requirements.

What is Manual Handling

Manual Handling is defined as ‘any activity requiring the use of force exerted by a person to lift, push, pull, carry or otherwise move or restrain any person, animal or thing’.

Principles

Manual Handling tasks within Novita will be systematically identified, and assessed, and control actions implemented to reduce the risk of injury as far as practicable.

Manual Handling will be reduced as far as practicable. Should you be required to undertake a manual handling activity, use a mechanical aid wherever possible or seek assistance from a colleague.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information or a confidential discussion regarding volunteering at Novita Children’s Services, please contact the Community Relations Co-ordinator on (08) 8243 8223