

Welcoming people with disability into volunteering

Understanding the roles and responsibilities when someone volunteers

About our Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIO)

Volunteer-involving organisations play a crucial role in fostering inclusive communities. Many people with disabilities are interested in volunteering or participating in community activities and may attend with the support of a Support Worker.

You are expected to

- Provide a safe, welcoming, and respectful environment
- Include the volunteer as part of your program or activity
- Provide customised approaches as outlined in the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement
- If something isn't working, raise your concerns with the person
- Their Support Worker can be involved to assist with communication or decision-making if needed

You are not expected to

- Manage behaviour or provide personal care
- Supervise the Support Worker
- Make decisions on behalf of the participant
- Give medication or make medical decisions

What Support Workers are responsible for

Support Workers are employed to support individuals with disabilities. While they may occasionally assist with volunteering tasks, their primary role is to prioritise the wellbeing of the person they support and assist with any barriers to inclusion related to the person's disability.

Their responsibilities include:

Ensuring the person feels safe and included

Support Workers help the person feel welcome, respected, and part of the group.
Example: They might stay close during a new activity to ensure the person feels comfortable, or help explain the steps so they can participate fully.

Supporting communication or decision-making

This means helping the person understand information, express their choices, and make decisions.
Example: A Support Worker might use pictures, key words, or sign language to help someone understand what's happening and choose what they'd like to do.

Managing behaviours of concern

This means helping the person stay calm or safe if they feel upset, anxious, or act in a way that might be risky.

Example: If someone becomes overwhelmed in a busy place and starts shouting, the Support Worker might guide them to a quiet space and help them calm down

Providing personal care or mobility support.

This includes assisting with tasks such as using the toilet, getting dressed, or moving around safely.

Example: A Support Worker might help someone transfer from a wheelchair to a seat, or assist with getting to the bathroom.

Administering medication or monitoring health needs.

Support Workers may administer medication or monitor the person's health and wellbeing.
Example: They might remind someone to take their medication at the right time or notice if they appear unwell and need medical attention.

Collect Emergency Contact Information

An emergency contact for the person with disability

Contact details for their Support Worker

The name and contact information for their Support Provider