

Meeting Notes from Tautoko Network Meeting

January 2024

The Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights - 10 Principles for delivery by your Volunteer Team

A great start to this year's *Tautoko Network: Supporting the Community Sector* programme with Adele from Community Law joining us to run through the ten principles for delivery as set out by the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights (which became law in 1996 and sits under the Health and Disability Commissioner Act).

Put simply, the ten principles for delivery are:

- Right to be treated with respect
- Right to freedom from discrimination, coercion, harassment, and exploitation
- Right to dignity and independence
- Right to services of an appropriate standard
- Right to effective communication
- Right to be fully informed
- Right to make an informed choice and give informed consent
- Right to support
- Rights in respect of teaching or research
- Right to complain

Depending on the type of volunteer role being undertaken, some or all of these principles will be particularly pertinent - and members of your organisation's volunteer team need to know and understand their importance. For many of us, yes, they seem self-explanatory and 'the norm'. Sadly, that isn't always the case ...

The session also touched on the obligations, duties and rights contained in the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA) which makes it clear that everyone has a role to play in ensuring health and safety at work. The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 defines a 'volunteer' as someone who is 'acting' on a voluntary basis, and distinguishes between two categories of volunteers - casual volunteers, and those who work on a regular and ongoing basis (called 'volunteer workers'). The Act imposes different duties on employer organisations for each type of volunteer.

This link will take you to Worksafe's site which includes a [factsheet](#) explaining how HSWA applies to volunteers.

A volunteer organisation must ensure as is reasonably possible that its volunteer workers are provided with:

- a work environment free from risks to health and safety

- the necessary information, training, instruction, or supervision to do work safely
- a workplace with adequate and accessible facilities (such as toilets, drinking water)
- equipment such as vehicles, appliances and tools that are safe to use
- protection from toxic chemicals
- monitoring of worker health and workplace conditions to prevent injury and illness
- required safety gear, such as gloves or goggles

This session was very informative - and also provided a great opportunity for sharing of knowledge and experience amongst those who attended. Following on from this, Susan from Hapai Access Card, an organisation that aims to provide a bridge between businesses and the disabled community will be speaking with us at February's *Tautoko* session about the work that Hapai does. Just over 25% of the population of Aotearoa New Zealand identifies as having a disability and this group of potential volunteers is often one which misses out on opportunities due to 'barriers'. Susan will talk about what barriers look like, how they lead to exclusion and will get us thinking about ... actually ... how valid are the barriers?