



# RFS - the Swedish Association of Voluntary Community Workers

## About RFS

RFS, the Swedish Association of Voluntary Community Workers, is a Swedish NGO, Non-governmental organization, with 55 local associations. It has around 4 500 members who undertake voluntary tasks that are subject to statutory regulation and assigned by public authorities. These voluntary tasks include acting as:

- Assistant probation officers (appointed by the Probation Service)
- Contact persons, contact families (appointed by the social services)
- Guardians and trustees (appointed by the Chief Guardian and district courts)
- Guardians for unaccompanied child refugees (appointed by the Chief Guardian)
- Special needs trustees (appointed by the social services and district courts)
- Volunteer companions (appointed by the Patients' Advisory Committee)
- Visitors to prisons and remand centers.

RFS is led by the association's board and has a central office with a staff of seven, who provide support to the local associations. The local associations enable their members to develop in their volunteer roles by arranging exchanges of experience and thematic evenings, for instance. Membership of a local association also provides accident and crisis insurance cover while tasks are being performed. Guardians and trustees can also take out professional indemnity insurance and third party liability insurance.

RFS disseminates knowledge about its members' tasks and what they do, acts as a central lobby group and cooperates with other organizations. The aim of the association is to ensure that every individual given the support of a voluntary community worker will receive high quality, legally secure assistance. For this reason, it is important for the authorities that appoint these volunteers to provide them with training, support and encouragement.

The work of RFS is funded by government grants and project funding.

## Supporting a fellow human being

All of the voluntary tasks subject to statutory regulation involve supporting vulnerable fellow human beings, treating them with sympathy and understanding and remaining aware of the importance of professional boundaries. They also require knowledge of community resources and how they can be accessed. The tasks are voluntary ones for which a modest fee is paid. RFS stresses the value of the fact that they are voluntary, not undertaken for gain but prompted by the desire to support a fellow human being.

The aim of the various tasks can differ but overall a volunteer is expected to:

- Provide human support
- Assist individuals with their personal concerns
- Help individuals to extend their networks
- Support individuals in their contacts with the authorities

## Contact

For more information, contact RFS at:

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