

Volunteers Policy

About this policy

This policy is intended to outline the principles on which the relationship between volunteers and us is based, and to provide basic information about volunteering with us.

This policy applies to all of our volunteers. If you have any questions about its application, you should raise these with The Community Engagement Team.

The use of volunteers

We depend on volunteers for much of our work, both fund-raising and 'in the field'. We would be very limited in the way we could carry on our work if it were not for the help of volunteers to supplement our full-time paid staff.

The two following basic characteristics distinguish volunteers from our employed staff:

- Volunteers are unpaid and do not receive any material reward for their work; and
- There is no contract of employment between us and our volunteers, who do not have any rights as employees, workers or otherwise under the employment protection legislation; for example, the rights not to be unfairly dismissed or to have redundancy payments do not apply to them.

However, there are obligations which apply to our volunteers as well as our paid employees. Even the charitable and voluntary sectors are at risk from legal claims, and goodwill and 'freely giving one's time' are no defence to claims and legal liability. We take our responsibilities towards our volunteers seriously, and similarly expect that, as representatives of ours, our volunteers will also act appropriately. Therefore, in both the volunteers' and our interests, the main obligations applicable to our relationship with our volunteers are set out below.

We reserve the right to revise or replace the terms of this policy whenever necessary and will notify you of changes when made.

Our expectations of you

We look to you to carry out such tasks and duties as are assigned to you, within the scope that you have volunteered to do and to comply with all reasonable directions given by us. In particular, we ask that you aim for high standards of efficiency, reliability, and quality in all your volunteering.

We expect you to develop and promote a caring, supportive, and professional relationship with the client(s) with whom you are in contact with. You should be reliable and friendly with a focus on the relationship being about providing a supportive ear to listen and encourage positive thinking and growth, as opposed to therapy or over-assertive advice giving.

You must recognise that the relationship with the client may be challenging due to the needs and circumstances of the client, and so you must be realistic about what can be achieved in your relationship with them.

We expect that you will work collaboratively with other volunteers, our employees, and the general public.

You should be guided by common sense and be prepared to act accordingly. If in any case action must be taken and it is not possible to obtain our authority or permission, you should take such action as you think best in accordance with our objectives and report as soon as possible to someone empowered to give authority or permission.

Our clients rely heavily on the support provided by our volunteers. As a volunteer you are therefore in a position of trust, and must not do anything which does, or could be seen to, undermine or abuse that trust. This includes the establishment and maintenance of appropriate and professional boundaries when engaged and working with clients.

You must maintain confidentiality throughout and after your contact with a client.

If there is any change in your circumstances that may affect your volunteering, please let us know.

What can you expect from us?

We will look to match your skills and experience with the right role wherever possible, and to listen to your motivations and aspirations.

We will, where necessary, provide appropriate support and training, including placing you with trained members of staff who can guide and advise you.

We will provide you with information about our work, policies and procedures.

We want you to enjoy working as our volunteer and will do what we can to make that happen.

Expenses

Although you receive no salary, gratuity, payment in kind [or privileged use of our facilities], expenses may be reimbursed if they are expressly agreed and actually incurred in the performance of your duties. [All claims for expenses must be accompanied by receipts, vouchers or other evidence of actual payment as required by us and be submitted by the end of the month immediately after that in which they are incurred **OR** All claims for expenses must be presented in accordance with our Expenses Policy].

Motor vehicles

If you are required to use your own car in connection with volunteering for us we shall reimburse you for every mile for which you necessarily use your own car [(amount) per mile (or) an amount equal to the average [inclusive] cost per mile [excluding the costs of depreciation and garaging] of running a [1600] cc car [at the HM Revenue and Customs authorised mileage rates enacted from time to time]].

If you are required to drive any motor vehicle in connection with our activities, you shall whenever requested, permit us to examine your driving licence and (whenever your own car is used for our purposes) your motor car insurance policy and current certificate of insurance.

Insurance

We maintain insurance against risks which we consider necessary, including loss and damage to or destruction of our property and the injury or death of members of the public affected by our activities and of our employees and volunteers undertaking authorised work for us. The insurance does not extend, for example, to unauthorised work or to authorised work carried on by persons not authorised by us. It is therefore most important that you ensure that you comply with the conditions of our insurance and do not do anything which might result in the insurance being voided.

Policies

You must at all times support, respect, and adhere to our organisational policies, guidelines and management decisions, including all aspects of equal opportunities, health and safety and data protection.

Health and safety

We have a duty to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees and other persons (including volunteers and members of the public) who are affected by our activities. You must take reasonable care for your health and safety as well as that of other persons who may be affected by your acts or omissions and must co-operate with us in fulfilling our statutory duties.

Notices will be posted or issued to give you information about possible health and safety hazards within our premises and the procedures and precautions which we have put in place.

We have a health and safety policy which is overseen by AUKC appointed persons and which is included in this Handbook.

You must comply fully with the health and safety policy in all respects, including:

- Volunteering in a safe and efficient manner;
- not doing anything which does or might injure any other person or expose any other person to risk;
- making full and proper use of all safety and protective equipment and clothing;
- adhering to all procedures specified by us or any instructions issued with any plant or machinery or substances in use at any given time; and
- reporting any actually or potentially unsafe conditions, system of work, buildings, vehicles, plant or other equipment.

Volunteers must comply with our Smoking policy.

Confidentiality

All information relating to us (including our organisation, finances, membership and activities) and users of our services is confidential. You must keep this information secret and not use or disclose it except as authorised or required by us and shall use your best endeavours to prevent the use or disclosure of it by any other person.

Your obligation to keep information confidential applies indefinitely but shall cease to apply to information which you can establish has in its entirety become public knowledge otherwise than through any unauthorised disclosure.

All records in any medium (whether written, computer readable or otherwise) including accounts, documents, drawings and private notes about us and our activities and all copies and extracts of them made or acquired by you in the course of your volunteering for us shall be:

- our property;
- used for our purpose only;
- returned to us at any time on demand; and
- returned to us without demand if you cease for more than [one month] to be actively involved with our work.

Public

As a volunteer, you may not at any time:

- make any statement about us or our activities to the press or other form of public media, except with our written consent; or
- represent yourself as working for or employed by or in any way connected with us or our activities after ceasing for more than one month to be actively involved with our work.

Fund raising

We are in constant need of funds both for local needs and for our national organisation and normally will accept contributions from any legal source. We have the right however to refuse to accept any contribution without giving any reason.

As a volunteer, you are encouraged to hold and assist with fund raising events, and if you intend to organise or arrange any fund raising event for us you should discuss the proposal in advance with an authorised official. If we approve the proposal, we will support it with such publicity material and help as is practicable and you accept. However, we will not support any fund raising proposal of which we do not approve, and as the organiser of any such event you must not use our name or logo or in any way imply or permit it to be believed that the fund raising is approved by us.

No agency

Except when expressly authorised in writing, no volunteer is our agent or representative in any way or has any authority or right to assume any obligation of any kind express or implied on our behalf or to bind or commit us in any way.

Termination

We reserve the right to refuse the offer of services of any volunteer, generally or in any particular case, and to terminate any work being done by a volunteer. We may exercise these rights at any time, with or without prior notice and without giving any reason.

Resolving concerns

If you have any problems or complaints about your volunteering please let us know immediately. We take your concerns seriously and will try to resolve any difficulties you may be experiencing.

Date this policy came into effect, approved by the SLT	Name: Signature: Date:
Next Review as agreed by the SLT	Date: October 2024
Reviewed:	17 th October 2023
Name or position of person responsible for this policy	Name: Rosaleen Liard Signature: Position: Director HR & Governance
Law relating to this document	