

Volunteer Policy

Document Overview

Purpose	The purpose of this policy is to clarify the terms on which volunteers carry out tasks for the organisation. The policy does not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contract of employment or a contract for services. The organisation reserves the right to change any aspect of this policy at any time. This policy applies to all volunteers.
Confidentiality	This document is not confidential.
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Version History

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1.0	12/06/2024	Final

1. Definition of a “Volunteer”

- 1.1. A volunteer is someone who, without compensation or expectation of compensation beyond reimbursement of expenses incurred in the course of their volunteer duties, performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the organisation. Volunteers are not employees of the organisation and do not work under a contract for services. They undertake to carry out specific tasks on behalf of the organisation but are under no obligation to offer their services. Similarly, the organisation is not obliged to offer them work.
- 1.2. While volunteers have no employment rights such as paid sickness and holidays, they are covered by the organisation's rules on health and safety, equal opportunities and positive working and should ensure that they are aware of and follow these policies.
- 1.3. All volunteers are expected to abide by this policy.

2. Users and Relatives as Volunteers

- 2.1. Clients of the organisation may be accepted as volunteers, where such service does not constitute an obstruction to, or conflict with, service provision to the users or to others. Relatives of clients may also serve as volunteers but will not be asked to carry out any work that impinges upon their relationship.

3. Service at the Discretion of the Organisation

- 3.1. The organisation accepts the service of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at its sole discretion. Volunteers agree that the organisation may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to terminate their relationship.
- 3.2. If a volunteer wishes to end their relationship with the organisation they should inform their line manager as soon as possible.

4. Conflicts of Interest

- 4.1. Any volunteer who has a conflict of interest with any activity or programme of the organisation, whether personal, philosophical, or financial, must declare this to their line manager.

5. Representation of the Organisation

- 5.1. Prior to any action or statement that might significantly affect or obligate the organisation, volunteers should seek prior consultation and approval from appropriate staff. These actions may include, but are not limited to, public statements to the press, lobbying efforts with other organisations, collaborations or joint initiatives, or any agreements involving contractual or other financial obligations. Volunteers are not authorised to act as representatives of the organisation unless this is explicitly stated.
- 5.2. We recognise the importance of IT and social media in modern life. We recognise that it would be difficult to operate effectively without the use of technology. However, we also recognise

the inherent problems associated with all forms of technology and social media that can cause reputational loss due to inappropriate comments so we ask all volunteers to abstain from making posts that would defame the reputation of Together for Change, the Diocese of Coventry, and Church of England as a whole.

6. Confidentiality and GDPR & Data Protection Act 2018

- 6.1. The organisation is registered under the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves a member of staff, volunteer, service users or other person, or involves the overall business of the organisation.
- 6.2. By agreeing to volunteer for the organisation, you agree to maintain confidentiality both before and after your assignment has ended.
- 6.3. Failure to maintain confidentiality will be treated seriously.

7. Disclosure of Public Interest Matters (Whistleblowing)

- 7.1. We are committed to conducting the business of Together for Change with honesty and integrity, and we expect all volunteers to maintain high standards. However, all organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time, or of unknowingly harbouring illegal or unethical conduct. A culture of openness and accountability is essential in order to prevent such situations occurring or to address them when they do occur. For more information see the Diocesan website section on [Complaints and whistleblowing - Diocese of Coventry \(anglican.org\)](#)

8. Recruitment

- 8.1. Before permission to volunteer is given, all new volunteers must undergo the Church of England Safer Recruitment process. This process is detailed below:
- 8.2. Responsible Person to be designated:
 - 8.2.1. A responsible person must be identified for each role being appointed to. The responsible person is accountable for the recruitment and appointment into that role and must him/herself have been safely recruited and completed the Safer Recruitment Training which can be accessed by clicking on this link [Home | Safeguarding: Training Portal \(cofeportal.org\)](#).
 - 8.2.2. A responsible person must also be identified for the ongoing support of the person appointed into the position. The responsible person must him/herself have been safely recruited.
 - 8.2.3. The responsible person must be familiar with the requirements of the Safer Recruitment guidance and be up to date on their current safeguarding training.

- 8.2.4. If responsibility is delegated at any stage, the responsible person must ensure that the individual they are delegating to is capable, competent and has received all required training. The responsible person retains overall accountability for ensuring all requirements described in this policy are met.

8.3. Role descriptions and person specifications:

- 8.3.1. All roles must have a written role description and person specification

- 8.3.2. Where relevant, role descriptions must make any safeguarding aspects clear and refer to the Church body's commitment to protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults.

- 8.3.3. A role description should comprise of:

- The role title.
- The main purpose of the role.
- The expectations of the role.
- To whom the role reports.
- The extent of the role's contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults and the responsibility for safeguarding (where relevant to the post).
- A statement that the person appointed will be expected to work within the policy and procedures of the relevant safeguarding policy (where relevant to the post).
- A statement that the person will be required to attend relevant safeguarding training (where relevant to the post).
- General statements relevant to all roles, such as requirements relating to health and safety.
- The time commitment anticipated (including, for example, setting up, clearing up, preparation during the week, meetings, training).
- Where appropriate, a statement that the person appointed will require an enhanced DBS disclosure (with/without barred list/s check) and will be required to complete a Confidential declaration form.

- 8.3.4. A person specification should comprise of:

- Any qualifications or specific training required for the role.
- Any experience needed.
- Knowledge, skills and competencies required to carry out the duties of the role.
- General attributes which must include the need for commitment to the protection and safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults (where relevant to the post).
- Any Occupational Requirements under the Equality Act 2010 – e.g. if there is a genuine requirement for an individual to be a practising Christian.

8.4. Advertising the volunteer role:

- 8.4.1. All advertisements/notices must include the following details, or clearly indicate where they can be found (e.g. the noticeboard or website):

- A statement which confirms TFC's commitment to safeguarding and safer recruitment.

- The essential elements of the person specification required for the role.
- The pre-appointment checks that are required for the role.

8.5. The applications process:

8.5.1. When applying for a post, all applicants must be given access to the following information:

- Statement of TFC's commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Safeguarding Policy (where relevant to the post)
- Safer Recruitment Policy (where relevant to the post)
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy
- The role description and person specification
- The selection procedure for the post
- A privacy notice detailing how the applicant's personal data will be processed during the recruitment process.

8.5.2. A standardised application form must be used for recruitment to all posts. CVs must not be accepted on their own. All application forms must ask for:

- Personal details including current names, former names, date of birth and contact details (home address, email address, telephone number).
- Qualifications, where appropriate/required.
- A personal statement addressing the criteria set out in the person specification, including details of the skills and attributes the applicant believes they bring to the role.
- Request for details of appropriate referees.
- A declaration that all information provided on the application form is "true & complete".
- Where relevant, a full history and description of work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, whether paid or voluntary, with dates, and, where applicable, an explanation of any gaps.
- Where relevant, a full history and description of church involvement where it includes work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, with dates and, where applicable, an explanation of any gaps.

8.6. Shortlisting:

8.6.1. Shortlisting must be conducted by the person responsible for the appointment and at least one other person.

8.6.2. Applicants must be shortlisted for interview based on the evidence provided in their application form and usually only those who meet 70% of the essential criteria as defined on the person specification must be shortlisted (even where there is only one applicant).

8.6.3. Application forms must be properly scrutinised and any gaps or queries (e.g. in employment/education/church/volunteering history etc) must be highlighted and marked for further exploration if the applicant is shortlisted and invited to interview.

8.7. Interviews

- 8.7.1. All posts falling within the scope of the safer recruitment guidance require an interview of shortlisted candidates (even where there is only one applicant).
- 8.7.2. Interviews must be held face to face. Exceptions to this would be an applicant from outside the UK whose initial interview may be conducted virtually or where Government/Legal restrictions have been introduced e.g. due to a national emergency such as COVID19.
- 8.7.3. Interviews must be held with a panel of at least two, one of whom must have attended safer recruitment training within the last three years, be competent in interviewing and possess the appropriate expertise to assess the candidate's competence in the role. Wherever possible, interview panel members must not be closely related to the candidate. If this is unavoidable, the conflict of interest must be declared, and arrangements must be made for an additional person to be present.
- 8.7.4. Where relevant to the role, all interviews must explore issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults through a combination of questions that encompass values and expected behaviours, with questions that focus on establishing skills, knowledge, qualifications & previous experience.
- 8.7.5. Any gaps, anomalies or discrepancies that have been identified in the application form during the shortlisting process must be discussed with the candidate during the interview and a satisfactory explanation provided. A note of these discussions must be made on the interview paperwork.

8.8. Pre-appointment checks

- 8.8.1. All appointments to posts must be subject to the completion of satisfactory pre-appointment checks and procedures, as outlined in this section.
- 8.8.2. All pre-appointment checks must be:
 - Confirmed in writing
 - Scrutinised to ensure authenticity
 - Documented and recorded
 - Followed up if they are unsatisfactory or if there are any discrepancies in the information received.
- 8.8.3. Proof of identity - All applicants must be able to provide proof of identity.
- 8.8.4. References:
 - A minimum of two written references must be obtained
 - Referees must be over 18 and not be family members or relatives
 - 'Self-supplied', 'to whom it may concern' and verbal references must not be accepted.
 - At least one of the references must be from outside of the current Church body
 - At least one of the references must comment on the applicant's ability to work with the group with whom he/she will be volunteering.

- If the applicant is currently working/volunteering with children, young people or vulnerable adults, or has done within the past two years, then a reference must be sought from that organisation
- If the applicant has come to the Church body from another Church body within the past two years, a reference must be sought from that previous Church body.

8.8.5. DBS and confidential declaration form:

- If a DBS check is required for the role, an application at the appropriate level for the role must be made. Please check with the Safeguarding team whether a DBS check is required, and which level DBS check it needs to be. DBS checks need to be redone every 3 years.
- If an applicant does not want to complete a Confidential Declaration form or allow the results of his/her DBS check to be seen, then the application must be terminated.

8.8.6. Overseas Criminal Record Checks

- If a DBS is required for the role and the applicant has lived, worked or volunteered outside the United Kingdom for a continuous period of six months or more at any point within the previous 10 years, an overseas criminal records check must also be carried out, either via a third-party provider or by the applicant requesting a Certificate of Good Character from the relevant embassy(ies)
- If the appropriate documentation cannot be obtained from an embassy, the applicant must provide evidence of their attempt to obtain a certificate.

8.8.7. Qualifications - If applicable, applicants must be able to provide original proof of qualifications.

8.8.8. Professional Status - If applicable, applicants must be able to provide original proof of professional status.

8.8.9. Health Information:

- Where the nature of a role makes it reasonable to do so, applicants who are successful at interview must be asked to provide health information
- If there are any queries about an individual's health in relation to the post applied for, clarification of this must form part of the pre-appointment checks.

8.9. Appointments

8.9.1. A start date must only be confirmed once all pre-appointment checks and actions are satisfactorily completed and verified.

8.9.2. All volunteers must be issued with a Volunteer Agreement.

8.9.3. All those appointed must receive written statements of:

- Policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding, including the identity and responsibilities of those within the Church body with designated safeguarding responsibilities
- Safe practice and the standards of conduct and behaviour expected
- Other relevant procedures/documentation e.g. whistleblowing, health and safety, equal opportunities and positive working, privacy notice relevant to appointment.

- 8.9.4. All those appointed must sign a document to indicate that they have received, understood and agree to adhere to all the written statements identified above as well as the role description for their position.

8.10. Induction

- 8.10.1. All appointments to posts must undergo an induction process appropriate to the role being undertaken, whether paid or unpaid

8.10.2. Induction must include:

- Mandatory training and information about the safeguarding policies and procedures (where relevant to the post), including to whom to report concerns
- One to one meeting(s) with the individual to whom the inductee reports
- Expectations in the role, objectives (where appropriate) and arrangements for ongoing support.

8.11. A settling in period must be in place for all appointments:

- 8.11.1. During this period, regular meetings must be scheduled and prioritised between the responsible person and the individual and safeguarding (process, understanding and behaviours) must form a core part of these meetings.
- 8.11.2. Where relevant, any safeguarding concerns must be thoroughly discussed and documented, and appropriate next steps taken, including discussion with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor where necessary
- 8.11.3. The settling in period must include an element of direct observation of the individual by an appropriate member of the relevant team, in order to provide reassurance that he/she is demonstrating safe behaviour, maintaining appropriate boundaries, can spot causes of concern and knows when to report and who to.
- 8.11.4. Volunteers do not have the same rights as employees. If the settling-in period reveals that the volunteer is not suited to a particular role, or there are any emerging safeguarding concerns, the volunteer can be asked to leave and stand down at any point.

8.12. Learning and Development:

- 8.12.1. Safeguarding learning is mandatory for all posts that work with children or vulnerable adults. Learning requirements will vary according to role and responsibility as set out in the [Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework](#)
- 8.12.2. All those involved in the recruitment, appointment and management/supervision of roles that work with children or vulnerable adults must undertake training on Safer Recruitment and People Management
- 8.12.3. Basic and Foundation (where required) safeguarding training must be completed during the settling in period.
- 8.12.4. All those who manage or supervise roles that work with children or vulnerable adults must ensure and be able to evidence that all relevant training for themselves and those they manage/supervise has been undertaken

8.13. Record keeping:

- 8.13.1. You must maintain a record of pre-appointment checks for all individuals successfully appointed to roles
- 8.13.2. The information to be recorded for each individual must include (where relevant):

- Role details
- Personal details of the individual – e.g. name, address, date of birth
- Proof of identity checks performed
- Evidence of qualifications
- The following details if a DBS/Barred List check at the appropriate level has been required:
 - The date of issue on the disclosure certificate
 - The name of the subject
 - The level of disclosure requested
 - The position for which the disclosure was requested
 - The unique reference number of the disclosure
 - The details of the recruitment decision taken.
- Checks carried out on individuals who have lived, worked or volunteered outside the UK for 6 months or more in the last 10 years (where relevant to the post)
- Details of the written references requested, obtained and verified by telephone
- Details of the gaps in employment/education/volunteering history checked
- If relevant, details of registration with appropriate professional body
- If relevant, record of DBS Risk Assessment
- Record of interview questions and answers.
- The record must include whether or not each pre-appointment check has been carried out, the date on which each check was completed, the evidence obtained and who carried out the check

8.13.3. Records should be signed and dated by the responsible person

8.13.4. Other records that must also be kept:

- Where relevant, annually reviewed safeguarding policies & procedures, signed off at the appropriate level
- Ongoing up to date volunteer files, including DBS rechecks
- Safeguarding training completed and scheduled refreshers (where relevant to the post)
- Incident and concern recording – full chronology, signed, timed, dated etc.

9. Reimbursement of Expenses

- 9.1. Volunteers are eligible for reimbursement of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred while undertaking business for the organisation and they are encouraged to claim their expenses in order to ensure that the true cost is reflected in project accounts. Prior approval must be sought for any major expenditure, and receipts must always be submitted in support of claims.

10. Insurance

- 10.1. Personal liability and accident insurance is provided for all volunteers engaged in the organisation's business (excluding normal motor insurance). In respect of motor vehicle insurance cover, volunteers are responsible for consulting with their own insurers regarding the extension to include volunteer work. They may be required to produce evidence of this cover.

11. Environment and Sustainability

- 11.1. The five marks of mission were adopted by the General Synod of the Church of England in 1996. The fifth mark of mission encourages Christians to 'Treasure'; to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. The Church of England is committed to a carbon reduction target of 80% by 2050. Together for Change is supportive of this commitment and will endeavour to play its part in achieving it.
- 11.2. We recognise the theological basis of sound environmental practice. We are committed to reducing our environmental impact and continually improving its environmental performance, with regular monitoring and review. We encourage volunteers to do the same.

12. Conduct

- 12.1. The choice of clothing and personal grooming is largely a matter of individual taste. However, there are certain personal appearance factors that may affect the performance of your job. Therefore, volunteers are expected to dress in a comfortable, but neat and business-like manner, appropriate to the work they are undertaking.
- 12.2. We are committed to creating a harmonious working environment, which is free from harassment and bullying and in which every employee is treated with respect and dignity. We are called, first and foremost, as brothers and sisters in Christ, to love one another, regardless of differences in diversity, opinion or theology.
- 12.3. We are committed to ensuring that individuals do not feel apprehensive because of their religion or belief, gender, marital/civil partnership status, sexual orientation, race, age, disability (Protected Characteristics) or as a result of being subject to any inappropriate behaviour.
- 12.4. Harassment and bullying are unacceptable behaviour at work and will be treated as misconduct. All volunteers must comply with this policy. We have a zero-tolerance policy for anyone engaging in discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
- 12.5. The organisation may find it necessary to end this agreement if the volunteer commits any of the following:
 - 12.5.1. gross misconduct or insubordination
 - 12.5.2. being under the influence of alcohol or drugs
 - 12.5.3. theft of property or misuse of the organisation's equipment or materials
 - 12.5.4. abuse or mistreatment of clients or co-workers
 - 12.5.5. failure to abide by its policies and procedures
 - 12.5.6. failure to meet physical or mental standards of performance

12.5.7. failure to perform assigned duties satisfactorily

Note: This list is not exhaustive