**THE FIRE FIGHTERS CHARITY**

**Volunteering**

**Topic: Volunteer Policy**

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**Signed: Kate Harrison**

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Director of Organisational Development & Corporate Services

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All Staff

**A word from our Chair**

A very warm welcome! You join a host of committed volunteers who help influence the innovation, effectiveness and efficiency of the Charity.

We recognise how integral your contribution is to our work and how significantly it benefits our beneficiaries and local communities. Without your time, skills and enthusiasm we simply could not offer our range of services to the fire community.

On behalf of everyone here, thank you. We hope your time with us is enormously satisfying and enjoyable.

**Andrew Lynch**, **Chair of the Board of Trustees**

**Involving Volunteers**

This policy outlines the key principles on which our relationship is based, it provides you with guidance on how to get the best out of your volunteering and ensures that your undertaking with us is in accordance with all current and relevant legislation.

**Our commitment to you**

As a culture that fosters a positive and inclusive environment, our aim is to enable you to have the best volunteering experience possible.

We will:

* treat you with respect and consideration
* promote diversity and inclusion
* match your skills and experience to the right role wherever possible
* provide you with clarity about your role; the main responsibilities and tasks required
* provide you with a key contact who will be your principal point of guidance and support
* deliver appropriate induction and training
* make provisions to ensure your health, safety and welfare
* listen to what you have to say and act on any concerns as appropriate
* reimburse reasonable out of pocket expenses in line with our expenses policy

**Diversity and Inclusion**

We are committed to creating an environment that promotes respect for each other and values individual differences.

**Your commitment to us**

Volunteering is a partnership based on trust and respect. We ask that you work collaboratively with others and aim for high standards within your role.

You will:

* treat everyone you come into contact with as part of your volunteer role with respect and consideration
* always consider our good reputation in your actions and conduct, acting responsibly and within the law
* adhere to our policies, guidelines and management decisions – including health and safety, confidentiality and data protection
* give us the opportunity to explain if there is something you don’t understand or you have concerns about
* keep your key contact informed if there is anything that may affect your volunteer role
* act in a positive and professional manner when representing the Charity

**Recruitment and Selection**

We welcome and respect the range of experience, skills and knowledge that every applicant brings and base our volunteer selection on the ability of the applicant to carry out a specified role.

Our recruitment process includes:

* Role description
* Application and references
* Informal Interview
* Disclosure and Barring check (DBS) where appropriate
* Induction and training

**Induction and Training**

We understand that it takes time to learn a new role and accept that you may want to assess the role objectively before making a commitment, all we ask is that you keep your key contact informed, as during this time we will provide induction, regular guidance and will begin preparing for any training required in accordance to your role.

**Ongoing Development**

Volunteers are our best spokespeople; you will have access to charity communications and where possible the opportunity develop your skills and knowledge further.

**Support**

We recognise that there may be times where outside influences put a strain on your availability. For this reason, we provide opportunities for you to discuss things openly. It is important to us that you feel valued and well-supported in your role and that you can talk to your key contact before any difficulties arise.

**Expenses**

We will reimburse reasonable approved out-of-pocket expenses incurred while carrying out your volunteering duties as outlined in our Travel, Subsistence and General Expenses policy. Reasonable expense claims include;

* travel expenses to and from your home to your place of volunteering
* travel expenses incurred as part of your agreed volunteering role

Claims need to be supported with receipts and signed by your key contact.

**Health and safety**

It is our policy to provide, maintain and promote *as far as reasonably practicable* safe and healthy working including; environment, equipment and systems of work for all volunteers, and to provide information, instruction, training and supervision as is needed for this purpose.

In order to achieve high safety standards within the Charity all volunteers are expected to take our commitment to your health and safety seriously by reading our Health and Safety Policy and the summary below:

* comply with health and safety requirements relevant to your duties and responsibilities
* co-operate in order to enable us to meet our responsibilities for the provision of health and safety at work
* take reasonable care of your own health and safety and seek to do all you can to prevent illness and injury to yourself and colleagues
* consider the safety of anyone who may be affected by their acts or omissions
* work in accordance with information and training provided
* refrain from intentionally misusing or recklessly interfering with anything that has been provided for health and safety reasons
* make proper use of anything provided in the interests of health and safety
* wear all relevant Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) provided
* promptly report accidents and incidents using the agreed procedure
* discuss any safety matter of concern with your key contact and/or ask for advice or guidance on any safety matter, this includes unsafe or unhealthy conditions or working practices

**The Charity’s Policies, Procedures and Guidelines**

Policies, procedures and guidelines provide clear communication when dealing with activities that are fundamental to the Charity; they establish consistency, best practice, avoid misinterpretation and focus attention on legal liabilities. Your key contact will advise on the most relevant policies, procedures and guidelines you should read and where to find them.

**Volunteer Conduct**

As a volunteer, you are a representative of the Charity’s values and culture and as such we ask that you keep your personal views/opinions separate from your volunteering and do not conduct yourself in any way that could be detrimental to our reputation, our relationship with our beneficiaries or our image.

To convey our brand and key messages in a consistent, clear and positive way ask your key contact for information on our Key Messages and Our Voice and Tone toolkit.

As many of us have personal accounts on social media it is understood that you may want to share some of the Charity’s successes or campaigns; however, before doing so please refer to our ‘Social Media’ guidelines.

**Resolving concerns**

In the course of your volunteering you may encounter difficulties either at a personal or a professional level. We take any such concerns seriously and ask that you discuss with your key contact as soon as possible to try and resolve the situation. If you feel unable to discuss with your key contact please speak to the Volunteer Lead. For further information see our Resolving Problems and Concerns Policy.

**Leaving the Charity**

We hope that your volunteering experience is a thoroughly enjoyable one, however, if the time comes when you do want to leave we very much welcome the opportunity to discuss any highs and the lows of the role beforehand.

**Further Information**

* **Insurance**

The Charity’s Employers’ Liability and Public Liability Insurance provides cover in the event of you being harmed in the course of your volunteering due to negligence of the Charity, or, injury to a third party as a result of your actions while undertaking your volunteer duties. The insurance does not cover the activities of any volunteer who performs duties outside the confines of their role. The insurance does not cover personal belongings.

* **Using your own vehicle**

We do not provide motor insurance for you as a volunteer; driving in connection with your volunteering activities is normally classified by insurers as “social, domestic and pleasure” which is part of your standard cover. However, we recommend that you inform your insurer before using your vehicle for this purpose.

If your volunteer role involves the transportation of passengers, it is essential that you inform your insurer in order to be fully covered; a copy of your insurance should also be seen by your key manager. Any Volunteer using their own vehicle while volunteering is required to adhere to the Business Drivers’ Handbook and the Driving Risk Assessment.

* **Media**

All media relations are handled by our marketing and engagement team and all media enquiries should be forwarded to them.

* **Smoking, Alcohol and Substance Abuse**

All our premises are smoke-free, including e-cigarettes/vaporisers. Volunteering under the influence of alcohol or drugs may result in you being asked to leave.

* **Gifts**

Please discourage the offer of gifts or hospitality. Any beneficiary or existing/potential business contact planning to gift anything may donate it to the Charity where it will be used to generate more funds. Any gift you are given, regardless of value needs to be disclosed to the Volunteer Lead who will log it on our gifts register.

* **Equipment and intellectual property**

Any equipment and intellectual property, including branding, or any original works you may produce in your volunteer role remains the property of the Charity unless otherwise agreed. Unless you have authorisation, you must not photograph beneficiaries or any representative of the Charity.

**Data Protection and Privacy Statement**

We are committed to keeping all personal information you provide us with safe; and manage all the ways we communicate with you; email, letter, phone, in person and through our website in line with General Data Protection Regulation (EU Regulation 206/679) GDPR law. To see our privacy policy please go to:

[**https://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/privacy/**](https://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/privacy/)