

Volunteer Policy

Everyone has a right to take part in volunteering and to have a fulfilling and productive experience.

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement with Reading Family Aid. It is endorsed by the trustees and will be reviewed every 3 years to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of Reading Family Aid and its volunteers.

Reading Family Aid is run solely by volunteers. This means that they are unpaid (other than expenses) and may choose how to give their time.

Commitment

Reading Family Aid acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways, that their contribution is unique and that volunteering can benefit users of services, local communities and the volunteers themselves. We value the contribution made by volunteers and are committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in a supportive environment.

Reading Family Aid recognises its responsibility to arrange its volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

Definition

Volunteers are people who are unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community.

Statement of values and principles

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by Reading Family Aid and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment.

The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity.

Likewise the organisation cannot be compelled to provide either regular tasks, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability.

Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the organisation.

Recruitment & Selection

Reading Family Aid is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs or offending background that does not create a risk to vulnerable groups including children.

The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out agreed tasks. Information about the volunteer not relevant to the performance of the volunteering tasks concerned will be disregarded by the organisation in terms of recruitment and selection.

Volunteering opportunities will be widely promoted in ways that makes them accessible to all members of the community.

Volunteers will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform with confidence.

Pre-volunteering checks

For roles which involve care giving and/or sustained and direct contact with young people or adults at risk, volunteers will be required to have a full DBS disclosure check which will be arranged by the organisation. DBS disclosures are dealt with in the strictest confidence. A criminal record is not necessarily a bar to volunteering.

Training

Training applicable to the volunteer role being taken will be given to include relevant health and safety, safeguarding, policy and process training. For Trustees additional training will be available and will include provision of the document Charity Trustee: What's involved CC3A.

Expenses

Volunteer trustees and committee members are able to claim reasonable out of pocket expenses, subject to the production of receipts as evidence of the expenditure. What can be reclaimed from the organisation and the calculation of expenses will be explained to the volunteer before they start any activity likely to give rise to expenses. Expenses are not payable for attendance at one-off volunteering activities by non-trustee/committee volunteers.

Insurance

The organisation's liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability for their actions when acting within their role and in good faith. The insurance does not cover any actions not agreed as per their role. The organisation does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage.

Confidentiality

The organisation will advise the volunteer on its confidentiality policy and procedures, where relevant. This would include those relating to personal information held by the organisation relating to the volunteer.

Rights and Responsibilities

The organisation recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- know what is (and what is not) expected of them.
- have adequate support in their volunteering.
- volunteer in a safe environment.
- be insured.
- be free from discrimination.

The organisation expects volunteers to:

- be reliable and honest.
- respect confidentiality
- carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of the organisation.
- respect the work of the organisation and not bring it into disrepute.
- comply with the organisation's policies.