

VOLUNTEERING POLICY

Ownership. This Policy is owned by the Chief Executive of RMA-TRMC.

THE LAW

1. There is no specific UK or English law that governs volunteering.
2. Volunteers do not have a contract of employment and therefore do not have the same rights as an employee or worker. Most case law focuses on the boundary that should exist between volunteering and employment. However, it should be noted that a 'contract' can exist without a written document where there is 'consideration' and 'intention' (e.g. a minimum amount of volunteering hours, regular expenses or an obligation on the volunteer to refund any training costs if they do not do any volunteering).
3. The UK Government recommends the use of volunteer agreements. A volunteer agreement is not compulsory and does not form a contract between the volunteer and the Charity, rather it seeks to explain:
 - a. the level of supervision and support provided
 - b. the training provided
 - c. whether the volunteer's activities are covered by the organisation's employer or public liability insurance
 - d. health and safety issues
 - e. any expenses the organisation will cover
4. Volunteers are not protected by anti-discrimination laws, such as the Disability Act.
5. Volunteer activities are covered by GDPR.

PRINCIPLES

6. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that volunteers are attracted to supporting the Charity and feel appropriately supported.
7. The Charity is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering.
8. The Charity encourages the use of volunteers from all backgrounds across the full gamut of Charity activities, recognising that volunteers contribute in many ways, that their contribution is unique and that volunteering can benefit users of services, staff, local communities and the volunteers themselves.
9. The Charity will seek to arrange our volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

10. Volunteering is defined as any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, and close relatives. Central to this definition is the fact that volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual. This can include formal activity undertaken through public, private, and voluntary organisations as well as informal community participation¹.

11. Volunteers are not employees and should not be treated as such. Volunteers have a less formal relationship with the charity which is based on trust and are not remunerated for their services other than for agreed expenses incurred due to their role as a volunteer.

12. All volunteers for the RMA will also be representatives of the charity and, as such, we expect appropriate behaviour and bearing.

13. The RMA is committed to ensuring the well-being and safety of all of our volunteers whilst volunteering and in turn, we expect our volunteers to contribute to maintaining a safe working environment.

POLICY STATEMENT

14. This policy applies to all RMA-TRMC staff and the volunteers that support the Charity.

15. The RMA has four categories of volunteer, each with different recruitment, selection, training and tasking. These are:

- a. Royal Marines Support Network Volunteers (RMSN). These are often the first responders to requests for welfare support from the RMA.
- b. Regular Volunteers. Volunteer on more than an occasional or local basis at RMA Central Office managed events.
- c. Local Volunteers. Volunteer on an occasional or local basis, whether at RMA Central Office managed events or local events.
- d. Branch Officials. These are recruited locally in accordance with the RMA Bye-Laws.

16. Volunteer Recruitment.

- a. The RMA is committed to equal opportunities and diversity. We believe that volunteering should be open to all regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or political beliefs.
- b. All volunteers must be 18 or over (see Family Volunteering and Cadet Group Volunteering below)
- c. Volunteers should be able to demonstrate empathy for the aims of the RMA-TRMC and for the Charity's beneficiary groups.

¹ NCVO <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/policy-and-research/volunteering-policy>

- d. 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.
 - e. Information about the volunteer not relevant to the performance of the volunteering tasks concerned will be disregarded by the Charity in terms of recruitment and selection.
 - f. Volunteering opportunities are advertised in ways that makes them accessible to all members of the community.
 - g. Informal interviews are carried out for our regular volunteers to ensure that applicants are suitable for the role in question.
 - h. Individuals will be assessed as to their suitability for each role, which will include a risk analysis and consideration of any Health & Safety concerns. We wish to ensure that volunteers will have their skills, interests and aptitude matched as closely as possible to a particular role. As well as taking into consideration any effect a volunteer may have on the safety of all parties, our brand and our reputation. Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular role will be offered alternative voluntary involvement with the charity where possible and their details will be held on file for 12 months for future opportunities
 - i. RMSNVs Volunteers will be required to produce two relevant references
17. All RMSN and Regular Volunteers will receive and be required to sign a Volunteer Agreement before they are permitted to conduct any volunteering activities. The Volunteer Agreement includes the need to report criminal convictions, driving convictions and UK Residency Status.
18. Disclosure and Barring Checks. The RMA aims to comply with the DBS Code of Practice on fair use and handling of disclosure information
- a. RMSNVs will be required to undertake an Enhanced Check (managed by the RMA).
 - b. Regular Volunteers will be required to undertake a Standard Check.
 - c. Volunteer DBS Certificates will be held by the EA.
19. Confidentiality and Data Protection.
- a. Volunteers will be briefed on the concept of confidentiality, how this applies to their role as a volunteer and their commitment to it.
 - b. The following situations, however, illustrate when it is necessary to break confidentiality:
 - (1) when there is a potential threat of serious harm to the individual, or to others, in which case the Safeguarding Policy is to be applied and the issue reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a member of staff;
 - (2) to protect others (safeguarding vulnerable children and adults), in which case the safeguarding Policy is to be applied and the issue reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a member of staff;

(3) to prevent a serious criminal act (where others may be endangered).

c. A database will be maintained of all potential, active and past volunteers' details, including any other relevant information. This database will be recorded accurately, securely and used in line with data protection requirements that apply at the time.

d. We expect any volunteer to protect any personal or confidential information to which they may have access

20. Cadet Group Volunteering. Cadet groups are welcome to partake in volunteering for the Charity providing they are supervised by Cadet Adult Volunteers who have completed their induction programmes and have been approved by their Commanding Officer or the Officer in Charge to exercise full supervision of cadets. Contact must be made with the Commanding Officer or the Officer in Charge of the cadets taking part in an event, one week beforehand to ensure suitable supervisors are available. It is the responsibility of the Officer in Charge to hold a complete and current list of Next of Kin information for their cadets.

21. Family Volunteering. We welcome families volunteering together. Parents should register as regular/local volunteers. Parents will remain entirely responsible for their child/ren at all times during the volunteering. Children under 16 should not be given a collection bucket or tin to hold. There may be events where it is outside of our control if they will not allow under 16's to volunteer. Age appropriate tasks may be available to facilitate the involvement of children. The whole family should feel involved. Family volunteering will not be suitable at every type of event or session.

22. Induction and Training.

a. All RMSN and Regular volunteers must be assigned a supervisor who works within the department that the volunteer will have most contact with. This supervisor will be the volunteer's key contact during their time volunteering and responsible for providing guidance, support and ensuring expenses are paid promptly.

b. Volunteers will be properly briefed (normally by phone) about the general volunteer activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information and training to enable them to volunteer with confidence and in safety.

c. Volunteers will be briefed specifically on each event that they support, normally face to face.

23. Health and Safety. Appropriate risk assessments will be carried out by the charity to ensure that volunteers' health, safety and well-being are protected at all times. All volunteers must:

a. Take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and other persons who may be affected by the volunteer's actions or omissions.

b. Co-operate with staff by assisting them to fulfil their statutory duties.

c. Follow our health and safety policy and measures put in place by the RMA-TRMC or any other organisation whose premises the volunteer may be working on.

d. Report accidents and incidents or dangerous circumstances to a member of staff, whether or not any person has been injured.

- e. Be aware of actions to take when an emergency situation arises and who to contact for support
24. Insurance. The RMA's Group Insurance Policy covers the activities of volunteers and liability towards their volunteering activities. However, volunteer's personal possessions are not covered against loss or damage. Volunteers should notify their insurer that they occasionally use their car for volunteering purposes. It is the responsibility of the assigned supervisor to make volunteers aware of this. We recommend that each volunteer checks with their own insurer but there should not be any additional cost.
25. Smoking and Substance Abuse. Volunteering whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be accepted. Volunteers are to refrain from smoking anywhere other than specified smoking areas.
26. Expenses. The reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred by volunteers is important in enabling all individuals have access to voluntary opportunities. Reimbursement will be subject to relevant receipts. Volunteer expenses policy will be covered in the induction and is included in the Volunteer Handbook. All expenses will need to be approved by the delegated budget holder for the event being supported.
27. Copyright, Intellectual Property and Photography. The rights to any original works that are produced in the course of volunteering will belong to the charity, unless otherwise agreed. Examples include photography, artwork, graphic design and written work, including the results of research. The RMA may use photographs of volunteers carrying out their roles for promotional purposes, such as in our literature or online. A volunteer may, of course, request that images of them are not used.
28. Media Relations. No comments or stories should be given directly to the media unless a volunteer role specifically includes talking to the press or other local media or a volunteer is explicitly asked to comment. Generally, our media relations are handled by our Communications Manager and any requests from the press etc. should be referred to him.
29. Online communications and social networking. Volunteers should adhere to the same high standards of conduct and behaviour online as elsewhere in their capacity as a volunteer. This includes personal websites, blogs, or social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. When posting comments online, volunteers must not compromise RMA's reputation or public image by making inflammatory or defamatory comments about people or organisations. Carefully consider your readership and the wider impact your opinion may have. The internet is accessible to all, and such views may reflect negatively on us.
30. Personal Activities. Volunteers must not partake in inappropriate behaviour or personal activities that may reflect on the RMA or lead to adverse attention i.e. activities that may be unlawful and result in a conviction or caution, or behaviour that may compromise our public image. As a RMA volunteer, you must not use or share any inappropriate material that could bring the RMA into disrepute either electronically or in hard copy. This includes visiting inappropriate websites or internet sites that contain illegal and/or offensive and/or damaging material.

LEAD STAFF MEMBERS

31. Membership Operations Directors are responsible for ensuring good volunteer practices and oversight.
32. The Membership & Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for the day-to-day management of all volunteers except RM Support Network Volunteers.
33. RM Support Network Volunteers are managed by the Casework Manager.

TRAINING

34. All volunteers who signed a Volunteer Agreement must be inducted into:
 - a. The RMA's Objects and activities.
 - b. The RMA's Safeguarding Policy
 - c. The RMA's Third-Party Liability
 - d. Volunteer Handbook
 - (1) Volunteer Agreement (including DBS checks)
 - (2) Volunteer Data Protection Policy
 - (3) Volunteer Expenses Claim Form 2019
 - (4) Volunteer Health and Safety Policy
 - (5) Volunteer Internet & Email Policy
 - (6) Volunteer Social Media Policy
 - (7) Volunteer Complaints Procedure
35. All volunteers are to receive annual refresher training, during which they will be advised of regulatory changes affecting their activities and safeguarding legislation.
36. In addition, the RMSNV's require enhanced training, managed by Director Welfare.

RECORD KEEPING

37. A database will be kept of the personal details of all volunteers, including:
 - a. Volunteer Agreement status
 - b. DBS status
 - c. Activities undertaken

- d. Training completed
- e. Injuries sustained whilst volunteering

REVIEW

38. This Policy is to be reviewed biennially or sooner should the law, or Charity Commission/ Companies House/Fundraising Regulator/Information Commissioner guidance change. In addition, the Board of Trustees in partnership with the Charity's Senior Leadership Team will reflect upon the learning arising from all volunteering activities within the organisation and review the learning against the volunteer policy and procedure making amendments as necessary. Any amendments made will be recorded together with the date of any changes to the policy and procedure.

Signed



Dated

12 February 2022