

## Volunteering Policy

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This policy is for volunteers and staff of Soundabout. The purpose of this policy is to let everyone know how we will treat volunteers within our organisation and to let volunteers know what they can expect when they join us.

The policy will define what a volunteer is and how we will recruit, manage and support volunteering in our organisation. A copy of this policy will be given to every volunteer and to people who support or manage volunteers.

Because this policy applies to the whole of the organisation, everyone will be aware of its existence and purpose.

As well as this policy there are also other documents that may need to be shared with volunteers and those who involve or manage them. These documents are shared in the Volunteer Handbook and are all stored on Soundabout’s Sharepoint site available to the office team that need them.

### 1. What is a volunteer?

Volunteering is:

“...An important expression of citizenship and essential to democracy. It is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community and can take many forms. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain”

*The Volunteering Code of Practice*

## 2. Fundamental principles of volunteering

- **Choice**

People must be free to choose to volunteer; no one will be forced to volunteer. Volunteers are also free to choose not to volunteer.

- **Diversity**

Volunteering is open to all. Soundabout has an EDI and Equal Opportunities Policy and will prevent discrimination, particularly on the grounds of gender, marital status, disability, colour, religious belief, political belief, sexuality, nationality, ethnic origin, age, trade union activity, responsibility for dependents or employment status.

In order to reach a wide section of the community, recruitment should be done by a variety of means.

- **Mutual Respect**

In return for giving their time, energy and skills, volunteers expect to gain something – this could include: a sense of worthwhile achievement; useful skills; experience and contacts; sociability and fun; inclusion in the life of Soundabout.

- **Recognition**

We want to recognise volunteers' contribution to our organisation, within the community, to the social economy and to wider social objectives.

## 3. Recruitment

- All volunteers will complete an online 'Volunteer Enquiry Form'. The Enquiry Form includes a space for volunteers to provide two suitable references.
- All Soundabout volunteers will be asked to go through an Enhanced DBS check for child and adult workforce as part of the recruitment process. All administrative costs for this will be covered by Soundabout.
- All volunteers will be invited to meet the Operations Manager from Soundabout for a discussion on the volunteer role, its requirements and each other's expectations. This meeting is for both the Operations Manager and volunteer to see if the volunteering opportunity is suitable.
- When the DBS and references have been carried out, potential volunteers will be told whether a volunteering placement with Soundabout can go ahead. Soundabout retains the right to refuse the offer of a voluntary role to any volunteers, for example if any background checks are not satisfactory or there is a breach of Soundabout's core values.
- Volunteers are expected to complete online safeguarding training (Level 1 Children and Adults, free training).

- The Volunteer Handbook will be given to all volunteers. We ask that volunteers read the policies and sign the agreement to say they have done so. The agreement is not intended to be a legally binding contract between us and may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. Neither of us intends any employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future.
- Positive action in recruitment may be used for specific voluntary tasks. For example, specific work with minority ethnic groups.

#### 4. Induction and training

All volunteers will receive an induction with their supervisor that will include:

- A full explanation of their role and tasks and the expectations of the organisation;
- An introduction to the team (where possible) which will include staff, other volunteers and members of the organisation;
- A clear introduction to where they will be based when volunteering and who to go to if they need help or support. An introduction to the building (if appropriate), including any health and safety information relevant to the role. This should include fire safety and personal safety e.g. where to store personal items, toilets and general building layout;
- Additional training and induction for each role will be identified by the Operations Manager; this may include a risk assessment.

#### 5. Expenses

Soundabout will reimburse volunteers' reasonable out-of-pocket expenses. These will be agreed by the supervisor and could include:

- Travel undertaken in the course of volunteering
- Postage and telephone costs if directly part of the volunteering role;

Full details of volunteer expenses are found in the Volunteer Handbook.

To claim expenses back, volunteers will need to complete a '**Volunteer Expenses Claim Form**' (found in Volunteer Handbook). Proof of the claim, such as bus tickets or receipts, should be attached to the form. The claim must be authorised by the appropriate member of staff before reimbursement is given.

#### 6. Support, supervision and Problem-Solving

- Regular support should be available to each volunteer. The type and level of support will depend on the needs of the volunteer and the nature of their role.

- Soundabout recognises that problems do arise and we aim to identify and resolve these problems at the earliest stage. Volunteers who have a problem of any kind should discuss it in the first instance with the Operations Manager or CEO.

If an issue arises the Operations Manager/CEO will speak and listen to the volunteer, this may lead to agreements about changes in behaviour or expectations which will be monitored and reviewed.

If the Operations Manager/CEO or the volunteer feels that there is no resolution to any issues raised then the volunteer will be asked to leave.

If a serious incident such as theft, violence or a safeguarding issue arises the volunteer will not be given time to change behaviour but asked to leave immediately as they are no longer supporting the aims and core values of Soundabout.

Volunteers are not covered by employment legislation but, as members of the public, they are covered by legislation covering health and safety law and data protection. Concerns relating to the governance of the organisation, health and safety, data protection or harassment, can be referred to external agencies.

## **7. Health and Safety**

We have a duty to look after the safety and well-being of our volunteers.

This means we will make sure that appropriate precautions are taken to control and manage any significant risks, including having support sessions, training and information about any relevant health & safety policies and procedures.

Volunteers must take reasonable care for their own health and safety and the health and safety of others who may be affected by what they do, or omit to do, while volunteering. Volunteers must also cooperate with our organisation in carrying out any duty or complying with any requirement imposed by relevant health and safety laws.

Please see Health and Safety Policy.

## **8. Insurance**

Our organisation covers its volunteers through Employer's Liability and Public Indemnity, against claims made against them for injury or damage as long as the volunteer:

a) Acted in good faith and honestly believed that they were acting within their power or duty as our volunteer and;

b) Lets the supervisor or Board know immediately about any incident which could lead to a claim.

## 9. Confidentiality and Data Protection

During the onboarding process, all volunteers will be made aware of their rights under Data Protection law and the importance of respecting the confidential nature of our business, particularly in the case of sensitive information about children, young people or vulnerable adults that volunteers may have access to.

Volunteers must be made aware that any information they produce during their time volunteering may be made available to the public, if asked, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Volunteers must not have access to the personal information of colleagues, children, young people or vulnerable adults unless it is deemed necessary by the charity for example in case of a medical condition that staff and volunteers should be aware of such as diabetes or epilepsy.

## 10. Copyright and Intellectual Property

Copyright is a form of intellectual property, and it lets people who make certain types of work control how it is used. Copyright exists as soon as the work is created or recorded – it doesn't have to be registered.

Soundabout will ask their volunteers to assign (transfer) copyright to them (in writing).

## 11. Monitoring and reviewing the policy

It will be the responsibility of Soundabout staff and the board of Trustees to regularly review this Volunteer Policy to make sure it is always in accordance with our EDI and Equal Opportunity Policy, legal requirements and best practices in relation to volunteer management. This will be done every year.

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Completed by</b>
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