Volunteering Policy

Contents

1. What is a volunteer? 1
2. Fundamental principles of volunteering 2
3. Recruitment 2
4. Induction and training 3
5. Roles and accessibility 3
6. Code of conduct 4
7. Expenses 4
8. Support, supervision and Problem-Solving 4
9. Health and Safety 5
10. Insurance 5
11. Confidentiality and Data Protection 6
12. Copyright and Intellectual Property 6
13. Monitoring and reviewing the policy 6

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

The policy defines 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, all relevant Soundabout policies will be shared with volunteers and those who involve or manage 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"

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 and can stop volunteering at any time.

- **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.

We will try to reach a wide section of the community by varied recruitment activity and will be mindful of how the standard recruitment and management processes outlined here may be prohibitive. In such circumstances, we will try to adapt the processes and activities and roles available. For example, if a non-UK Citizen does not have the documents required for a DBS check, remote, supervised or admin opportunities could be offered.

- **Mutual Respect**

We invite volunteers to be part of our organisation, involving them in ways and to the extent that they choose. Though not rewarded in financial terms, volunteers should receive something in return for their time, energy and skills. This could be a variety of things, from a sense of achievement, to gaining new skills and contacts. It could also be having fun and being included in the life of Soundabout. To achieve this, there will be a focus on maintaining an open conversation with our volunteers and making our volunteering opportunities enjoyable, inclusive and supportive.

- **Recognition**

We want to recognise volunteer contribution to our organisation, within the community, to the social economy and to wider social objectives. We will keep a record of volunteer activities and hours. Our Volunteer Coordinator will be a constant point of contact for volunteers and will encourage conversations about their contributions and feelings of value.

3. Recruitment

As a minimum, volunteer opportunities will be advertised on the Soundabout website, on our social media platforms, and through volunteer forums. We will seek other recruitment opportunities during our work and through our partners and supporters. Positive action in recruitment may be used for specific voluntary tasks. For example, specific work with minority ethnic groups.

- Anyone interested in volunteering will provide some initial details, including two references that we can contact. We will provide an online form to submit these details by, but we can receive these details in other ways, including via a conversation or emails with the Volunteer Coordinator. Anyone expressing interest in volunteering, if not directly via the online form, will be directed to the Volunteer Coordinator.
- All potential volunteers will be invited to meet the Volunteer Coordinator for a discussion on the volunteer role/potential roles, requirements and each other's

expectations. The meeting is for both the Volunteer Coordinator and the potential volunteer to see if our volunteering opportunities are suitable. Our Volunteer Welcome Guide will be shared, introducing Soundabout, our mission and our values and outlining Soundabout's responsibilities and the volunteer's responsibilities.

- If happy to proceed, references will be sought, and the potential volunteer will be instructed on how to apply for an Enhanced DBS check for a child and adult workforce.
- Once DBS and references have been received, 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 if a DBS check discloses activity that raises safeguarding concerns, or, if concerns are raised by the named referees. Anything raised by referees will be discussed with the potential volunteer, the referee and our safeguarding lead, to assess any risk and act in the best interests of our community.
- We require our volunteers to read our relevant policies and sign an agreement to say they have done so. Signing our Volunteer Policy creates a volunteering agreement that is not intended to be a legally binding contract. The agreement 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.

4. Induction and training

All volunteers will receive an induction, to 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 and our safeguarding lead.
- 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.
- Safeguarding training, (Level 1 Children and Adults, free training).
- Additional training and induction for each role will be identified by the Volunteer Coordinator, which may include a risk assessment.

5. Roles and accessibility

Soundabout will recruit volunteers for a variety of activities and roles. Some specific roles and volunteering sessions will be identified and advertised by Soundabout. Other activities and roles may present themselves during conversations with potential volunteers.

We will offer both regular volunteering opportunities and in-frequent/one-off ways to get involved. One-off opportunities may include corporate volunteering, event support and fundraising.

Section 3 outlines our standard recruitment process, but we acknowledge that each volunteer placement will be different. We will safely adapt our administration processes to be both proportionate and person led. We will consider; what the volunteer will be doing, who they will be doing it with, the level of supervision they will have and how often they will be doing it. We will also ask people about any barriers they have to volunteering or performing specific roles and will look together at what we can do to help overcome them.

6. Code of Conduct

Volunteers will read the full Soundabout Code of Conduct policy, EDI and Equal Opportunities Policies and Anti-harassment and bullying policy. These policies apply to all Soundabout roles.

We require volunteers to:

- Approach everyone with respect and kindness.
- Follow all safety procedures.
- Use Soundabout property carefully and for agreed use only. Including logos, information and reports.
- Dress appropriately. In comfortable, practical clothing that is not distracting or offensive.
- Ensure their language is appropriate and not offensive or discriminatory
- Be reliable. To fulfil their commitments or to let the Volunteer Coordinator know as soon as possible if they are no longer able to.
- Report any breaches of our code of conduct, or any of our policies, to the Volunteer Coordinator.

7. Expenses

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

- Travel undertaken while 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 be asked to submit a **'Volunteer Expenses Claim Form'**, including proof of expenses, such a tickets or receipts. The Volunteer Coordinator can assist with this process and will authorise the claim.

8. Support, supervision and Problem-Solving

Regular support will 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 can 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 Volunteer Coordinator, unless it relates to the Volunteer Coordinator, in which case they can contact the Operations Manager.

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

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

The volunteer may be asked to leave if they breach any of our policies. 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.

9. 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 will be made aware of the procedure for reporting any safeguarding concerns whilst undertaking volunteering at Soundabout.

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.

10. 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.

b) Lets the Volunteer Coordinator know immediately about any incident which could lead to a claim.

11. 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.

12. 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).

13. 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.

	Date	Completed by
First Written	**2018**	**Jo Colton**
Updated	**23/02/2021**	**Philippa Higginbottom**
Revisions	**April 2023**	**Maryse Degbegni**
Trustee Approval	**July 2023**	**Mike Hartley**
Next review date	**April 2024**	**Rebecca Thomas**
Revisions	**June 2025**	**Natalie Ferguson** Added 'Roles' paragraph on flexibility and access. Existing mutual respect and Recruitment paragraphs expanded. Recruitment methods expanded and the positive recruitment line relocated to the same paragraph. Changed the few occurrences of 'should' to 'will', to show accountability. Changed 'treat volunteers' to 'Collaborate with volunteers' to rebalance the power in the relationship. Changed the occurrences of 'Operations Manager' to 'Volunteer Coordinator' and the occurrences of 'CEO' to 'Operations Manager'. And in section 8 - 'supervisor or Board' changed to Volunteer Coordinator'. Added Code of conduct
Trustee Approval	**June 2025**	**Ben Weston-Conway**

Soundabout, John Eccles House, Robert Robinson Avenue, Oxford Science Park, Oxford OX4 4GP
Website: www.soundabout.org.uk
Email: info@soundabout.org.uk Tel: 01235 797474
Registered Charity No. 1103002
Company Limited by Guarantee No. 5023067