

1 Introduction

The RSB believes that its relationship with its volunteers is one of mutual responsibility and commitment within which the RSB and the volunteers both have rights and responsibilities.

We hope that our volunteers will enjoy their involvement and gain from it in terms of their own personal development. We expect our employees and representatives at all levels to work positively with our volunteers and, where appropriate, actively seek to involve them in their work, complying with the procedures detailed below.

This policy gives us a framework of appropriate practice and procedures, which we will follow when recruiting, selecting, managing and supporting volunteers.

Volunteers on groups or committees will often be supported by a member of staff representing a secretariat but these groups may also have executive powers and functions or an advisory role. These details are set out in the Terms of Reference (TOR) for each and should be considered alongside this policy. For the avoidance of doubt, if there is any contradiction between the interpretation of Terms of Reference and this policy, the TOR shall take precedence.

2 What is Volunteering?

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) defines volunteering 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, close relatives. Central to this definition is the fact that volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual.

3 General Principles

Our volunteering policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- We will endeavour to involve volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities and ensure our volunteering opportunities are as accessible as possible.
- Volunteers will have a clear understanding of their role.
- Volunteers will have a named person as their main point of contact and will be provided with appropriate training and support and, where appropriate, supervision.
- Volunteers will normally be reimbursed for agreed/allowable out of pocket expenses.
- There is no formal/legal agreement between the RSB and its volunteers. When volunteers give their time for a given number of hours, this is entirely at their discretion.

4 Identifying Volunteering Opportunities

When a volunteering opportunity is identified a role description will be made available to ensure volunteers are clear as to what is required and expected of them and will include:

- The volunteer's role title
- A list of tasks and responsibilities
- Times/days and location of volunteering activity
- Skills/experience that are required/desired/essential
- Whether the role is anticipated to be short term or ongoing
- The person who will be their main contact

5 Recruitment

The recruitment process for volunteers will help establish whether potential volunteers and the RSB meet each other's interests and needs. For substantial and long-term roles, (such as Committee posts) the process will normally include an informal interview and an application form and in some cases a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and the taking up of references. The recruitment will be in line with our Equality and Diversity Policy and current legislation and we will use a variety of approaches to ensure we recruit volunteers who are representative of the community and the people who use our services. In line with the RSB Privacy Policy, volunteers can opt in to receive notifications of further volunteering opportunities.

Some volunteering roles will be short-lived or very straightforward (e.g. directing people at an event) and provided safe-guarding checks, such as the DBS, are not required, may proceed without interview or references and through a very simple sign-up process.

6 Volunteer Agreements

Volunteers for the RSB Ambassador scheme will have a Volunteer Agreement establishing the role and the responsibilities of both the volunteer and the RSB. The document is binding in honour only and is not intended to be a legally binding contract of employment. It is intended to be flexible enough to take account of changes in a volunteer's circumstances or in the requirements of the RSB.

7 Induction and Training

All volunteers will receive an induction on their specific role as a volunteer unless it is very short term. Training and additional information will be provided as appropriate and will be in keeping with the duration and nature of the volunteering activity.

8 Support

All volunteers will have a named RSB staff member or representative as their main point of contact, who will be responsible for:

- providing a written description of the volunteering role

- ensuring that volunteers are aware of their agreed responsibilities with regards to confidentiality. Volunteers are bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff.
- organising the induction to the organisation
- creating and maintaining a confidential record for the volunteer, including their name, email address and availability for the specific event for which they have volunteered. The file, and their signed copy of the Volunteer Agreement will be held in a secure manner in compliance with Data Protection.
- providing on-going support to the volunteer for the duration of their specific volunteering involvement
- relevant RSB policies including Health and Safety, Travel and Subsistence, Privacy, Code of Conduct, and Diversity and Inclusion will be made available on a webpage which will be highlighted to all volunteers

9 Expenses

The RSB will, in line with the RSB Travel and Subsistence policy, reimburse reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred by our volunteers. Claims for expenses should be made through the volunteer's named RSB staff contact, and all receipts should be submitted. Claims should be made shortly after the event and may not be paid if greater than two months have elapsed.

10 Problem solving

If there are any concerns, volunteers should in the first instance speak to their named contact who will try and resolve the matter informally. If this is not possible one of the senior directors of the RSB should be contacted.

Volunteers will not be subject to RSB disciplinary procedures nor have access to the RSB grievance procedures, both of which are for employees only. The RSB's external complaints policy is available on the [RSB website](#).

11 Insurance

The specific volunteering activities of volunteers are covered by the RSB's Employers and Public liability insurance policies.

12 Health and Safety

The RSB is responsible for the actions of its employees and its volunteers in the course of their duties and will take all reasonable precautions to prevent or minimise accident, injury, loss or damage. Volunteers are subject to the RSB's Health and Safety Policy, which will be provided with the Volunteer Agreement.

13 Equality and Diversity

The RSB's Equality and Diversity policy includes its volunteers, and volunteers are expected to understand and commit to this policy.

14 Confidentiality

Volunteers are bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as are RSB paid staff.

15 Data Protection

All information provided by volunteers will be processed in accordance with data protection legislative requirements and the RSB's [Privacy Policy](#). All volunteers must adhere to these requirements if they are, in the course of their voluntary work, in possession of sensitive and/or confidential data.

16 Volunteer Records

Information about our volunteers will be held in accordance with data protection requirements, as specified in the [RSB Privacy Policy](#).

17 Evaluation Survey

When a volunteering opportunity has ended volunteers will normally be asked to complete a survey to help us continuously improve our activities and the support we give to volunteers and their experience of working with us.

June 2021