



VOLUNTEERING ESSENTIALS



Our Commitment to Volunteering: Parkinson's UK Volunteering policy

Introduction from Mark Goodridge- Chair of Parkinson's UK

As a volunteer myself, chairing the Board of Trustees, I'm honoured to introduce this revised version of our Volunteering policy. It's been a privilege to volunteer for Parkinson's UK since 2009.

Volunteers make a vital contribution to all aspects of our work to bring forward the day when no one fears Parkinson's. I really enjoy meeting volunteers leading our local groups, supporting our fundraising events and helping out in our offices, as well as working with my trustee colleagues to govern the charity.

People affected by Parkinson's often tell me that that they're not 'volunteers' – they just wanted to help out. I'm always inspired to hear that people living closely with Parkinson's choose to use their experiences to help others by giving their time to Parkinson's UK.

Whatever your motivation, it's crucial that we value and support everyone who chooses to give their time to do the work of our charity, and that's why this policy is important. It outlines what we've put in place to support volunteers, and what we ask of our volunteers.

Parkinson's UK can achieve most when we work together – so when you read the word 'we' in this document, it means all of us; paid staff, volunteers and trustees.

I hope you find the policy useful, and that you enjoy your time as a volunteer at Parkinson's UK.

Thank you for what you're doing, it really makes a difference.

Mark Goodridge
Chair of Parkinson's UK



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1. Our vision for volunteering

Parkinson's UK recognises that as a volunteer you make vital contributions towards finding a cure and improving life for everyone affected by Parkinson's. We are committed to inspiring, developing and supporting you and recognise that the support you provide is essential to the charity's work.

2. Our commitment to volunteering

People affected by Parkinson's benefit from the contribution of our volunteers who provide invaluable support, skills, experience and ideas. We want every volunteer to have a positive experience and will strive to continually improve your experience with Parkinson's UK.

To achieve this we'll work together with our volunteers to meet best practice in volunteer management standards, offer worthwhile volunteering that meets the motivations of volunteers and involve volunteers at every opportunity, where they can have the greatest positive impact on the lives of people affected by Parkinson's.

3. What is volunteering?

Parkinson's UK volunteers support and enable the organisation to achieve its vision – to find a cure and improve life for everyone affected by Parkinson's.

We define volunteering as a formal relationship between the organisation and an individual who gives their time and skills unpaid to undertake a clearly identified volunteer role to deliver the work of Parkinson's UK.

All volunteer roles at Parkinson's UK will have a defined role description.

4. Recruitment

Parkinson's UK is committed to offering volunteering opportunities that appeal to a range of people and that our volunteer recruitment procedures are consistent, fair and transparent at all stages. We want to make it as easy as possible for volunteers to join us whilst ensuring we have safe and robust recruitment procedures in place. Therefore, when applying for a role you'll be asked to complete an application process appropriate to that specific role. Our processes are designed to ensure you have the opportunity to learn about the role and make sure it's right for you, as well as ensuring we match you with the right role.



Some of our volunteer roles require criminal records checks (known as Disclosure and Barring Service checks in England and Wales, an Enhanced PVG checks in Scotland and an Access NI in Northern Ireland). This will be made clear on our volunteer role descriptions and checks will be carried out in line with our criminal records check policy.

There is no upper age limit for volunteers. However, some of our volunteer roles have a minimum age restriction of 18 to ensure that younger volunteers are not put at unnecessary risk. Any age restrictions are clearly marked on our volunteer role descriptions.

5. Welcome, learning and development

We want to ensure that all volunteers are equipped with the knowledge and skills to undertake their roles safely and effectively and get the most out of them. As a Parkinson's UK volunteer, you'll be provided with a welcome to the charity and on-going learning and development opportunities appropriate to your role, such as shadowing others and attending group events. For some roles, there's compulsory training, which may be refreshed from time to time. Where training is compulsory for a role, and a volunteer decides not to complete this, we would ask that they step down, and would discuss alternative roles with them.

6. Support

We believe that all volunteers should be supported throughout their time with us and we are committed to ensuring appropriate volunteer support is in place across the charity.

We recognise that volunteers give their time in different ways and have different support needs which is why we provide a flexible model of volunteer support which is tailored to you and your role. You will be matched with a staff contact who will offer you support and guidance. Staff contacts provide you with the opportunity to discuss your role, successes, progress and learning and development needs, as well as any issues or concerns you may have.

7. Volunteer expenses

Volunteers should not be disadvantaged in any way whilst volunteering for Parkinson's UK, including financially. We will reimburse all reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred whilst carrying out volunteering activities that are in line with Parkinson's UK's volunteer expenses policy.

8. Working together

At Parkinson's UK we want to everyone to unite together to bring forward the day when no one fears Parkinson's. This can only happen when we are all committed to working together in the spirit of our values. We therefore ask that all our staff and volunteers agree to and adopt the below:



Our values

People first:

We're a strong movement for change, informed, shaped and powered by people affected by Parkinson's. We value and support each other.

Uniting:

We're scientists and supporters, fundraisers and families, carers and clinicians. We're working, side by side, to improve the lives of everyone affected by Parkinson's.

Pioneering:

We innovate across everything we do. Creative, courageous and with pioneering spirit, we strive to continually improve.

Driven:

We live and breathe our purpose. We set clear goals and strive to deliver the greatest impact for everyone affected by Parkinson's.

9. Problem solving

Parkinson's UK is committed to ensuring that volunteering is a positive and rewarding experience. This includes recognising that if problems occur, there is a fair and consistent process for resolving them.

We have developed a volunteering problem solving policy and procedure which provides a framework for resolving problems involving volunteers in an open, fair and timely manner. It is important that you are confident about raising concerns and are aware of the process should an issue be raised.

10. Complaints

We are committed to ensuring all complaints are handled promptly and fairly and have a feedback and complaints procedure, which covers complaints about the organisation and its staff. This procedure does not cover situations where a volunteer raises a complaint about another volunteer which is covered in our volunteering problem solving policy and procedure.

All complaints are treated confidentially and will be dealt with openly, fairly and promptly to minimise any disruption to volunteers, staff and service users, and to protect the reputation of Parkinson's UK. We will always try to resolve complaints informally before moving to a formal resolution process. To log a complaint, please email feedback@parkinsons.org.uk.



11. Health and safety and insurance

Parkinson's UK is committed to ensuring that you volunteer in a safe environment and are not exposed to unnecessary risks. The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for health and safety but we all have a responsibility to ensure we act safely and do not expose ourselves or others to any unnecessary risks.

You will be provided with appropriate health and safety information and/or training before starting your role which will include any risks identified as part of the role risk assessment process.

As a Parkinson's UK volunteer, you are covered under our insurance arrangements which includes public liability, personal injury and loss or damage to personal property while involved in the activities of Parkinson's UK. This is subject to policy limits, terms, conditions and exceptions, including car insurance. However, you have a responsibility not to expose yourself and others to any unnecessary risks while volunteering. If in doubt or for further information, please speak to your staff contact.

12. Safeguarding and whistleblowing

At Parkinson's UK we have processes and procedures in place to ensure we can volunteer, work and receive support in a safe way. We take our responsibilities for the safety and security of our people very seriously and have a comprehensive policy in place. Irrespective of the role we have at the organisation we all need to take an active role in maintaining our safeguarding practices.

We will support you to understand, observe and report any safeguarding concerns you may have connected to Parkinson's UK. We ask you to ensure that you are familiar with our safeguarding volunteer guide which is part of the Parkinson's UK volunteer induction and know who to contact if you have a concern about safeguarding. If you have any concerns, please report these to safeguarding@parkinsons.org.uk or call the designated protection officer on 0844 225 9853.

If you have concerns about any activity related to volunteering or any activity of Parkinson's UK you can raise these in an anonymous way by reporting through our whistleblowing process. You can raise concerns by emailing xxx or calling xxx. All correspondence are treated in the strictest confidence and enquiries made will be as discreet as possible.

13. Gifts and hospitality

You may be offered gifts, hospitality or some other benefit by those outside the charity when volunteering for Parkinson's UK. There may also be times where you believe it is appropriate to offer a gift or hospitality to someone outside the charity. We therefore have a comprehensive gifts and hospitality policy in place which outlines how to deal with the receipt or offers of gifts or hospitality.



14. Equal opportunities and diversity

We are committed to promoting equality and valuing diversity across all aspects of our work and organisational culture. We welcome a wide range of volunteers from diverse backgrounds and are working to ensure equal opportunities for all in line with our equal opportunities and diversity policy.

15. Confidentiality and data protection

Everyone involved with Parkinson's UK has a right to confidentiality and we are committed to integrating the principles of confidentiality throughout the organisation.

You may have access to information of a confidential nature as part of your role. Confidential information is held on trust and should not be discussed outside Parkinson's UK or in general conversation and must not be used by anyone for their own purposes.

Parkinson's UK is registered under the Data Protection Act 2018. Personal and sensitive information about our people should always be treated in the strictest of confidence and in line with Data Protection legislation as detailed in our data protection policy. As a volunteer you will be provided with the relevant data protection information and/or training relevant to your role which must be completed. You may also be asked to sign a data protection and confidentiality agreement which will be given to you by your staff contact.

16. Recognising and valuing volunteers

We could not deliver the work of Parkinson's UK without volunteers and are committed to ensuring that your contributions are recognised and valued appropriately across the organisation.

We understand that for many of our volunteers, who themselves live with Parkinson's, supporting and delivering the work of the charity as volunteers is second nature and they may not necessarily think of themselves as volunteers. With this in mind, Parkinson's UK is committed to ensuring that valuing and recognising volunteers is done in a sensitive and appropriate manner and recognises all contributions.



17. Moving on from a volunteer role

We hope that you will enjoy your volunteering experience with us and recognise that you may wish to leave your role for a wide variety of reasons. Equally, there may also be times when Parkinson's UK will need to end a volunteer role because of changes in circumstance, funding or organisational focus.

We ask that, where possible, you let your staff contact know when you would like to leave so we can put any measures in place to continue the activity or support delivered through your role. We greatly value the opportunity to learn from our volunteers so we can continue to improve the volunteer experience and will invite you to provide your feedback on your experience before you move on.

We also recognise that in certain circumstances volunteers may need to take a break from volunteering and we will support you to do so. Please let your staff contact know if you would like to take a break.

If Parkinson's UK needs to end a volunteer role then you will be given as much notice as possible. You will have the opportunity to provide your feedback and discuss any alternative volunteer roles available that you may wish to apply for.

18. Communications

All our communications with you will aim to encourage a culture of open dialogue and sharing of information and ideas between volunteers, staff and people affected by Parkinson's.

Your staff contact will keep you up-to-date with any information relevant to your role and important organisational developments and issues will be communicated through a range of communication tools including publications, events, email updates and our website.

We are committed to ensuring that you have the opportunity to contribute your ideas and suggestions and to ensuring that you receive feedback on those you share with us.

19. Any questions?

If you have any questions about this policy or would like some further information then please contact your staff contact or the volunteering team on 020 7963 9328 or email volunteering@parkinsons.org.uk.