

# Parkinson's UK Volunteering Policy

## Overview of our volunteering policy

Parkinson's UK provides information and support to help everyone feel in control of life with Parkinson's. We fund groundbreaking research to find new and better treatments – in years, not decades. Together with our generous and dedicated supporters, we change attitudes and raise awareness.

This **volunteering policy**, alongside the guidance, sets out our approach to volunteering to ensure that we recognise and value volunteers and that anyone who volunteers at Parkinson's UK has a fair, consistent and valuable experience of being part of the charity.

**Volunteers are the core part of Parkinson's UK** and we value and recognise the work they do. A volunteer might not even think of themselves as a volunteer, but we define a volunteer as someone who freely gives their time to the charity to help people affected by Parkinson's. Volunteers are entitled to claim reasonable out of pocket expenses, further details in the policy itself.

**There are many opportunities to volunteer** - from being a Trustee, to running or being part of a local group that provides connection, information and activities; from helping run a fundraising event, to supporting our research - volunteers provide our community with essential skills, support and energy that helps people affected by Parkinson's.

In return, **we seek to offer volunteers rich and varied opportunities** that match their motivation, skills and experience. We offer learning and development and communicate with volunteers about what's happening, new opportunities and the impact of the work they are doing. Often volunteers will take part in more than one role and be part of the charity for many years.

Parkinson's UK offers a **safe and supportive environment** for all volunteers and staff. Further detail is found in the detailed volunteering policy that follows.

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## **1. About volunteering at Parkinson's UK**

Parkinson's UK provides information and support to help everyone feel in control of life with Parkinson's. We fund groundbreaking research to find new and better treatments – in years, not decades. Together with our generous and dedicated supporters, we change attitudes and raise awareness.

We recognise that volunteers make vital contributions towards finding a cure and improving life for everyone affected by Parkinson's. We are committed to inspiring, developing and supporting our volunteers and recognising that the support they provide is essential to our work.

## **2. Recognising the important work of our volunteers**

Our work could not be delivered without volunteers and Parkinson's UK is committed to ensuring that volunteers and their contributions are recognised and valued across the organisation.

Volunteers support people affected by Parkinson's in a wide variety of ways, including being Trustees of the charity. A volunteer is someone who:

- gives their time and skills to deliver the needs of the Parkinson's community, in addition to delivering the work and ambition of the charity.
- is unpaid (although entitled to claim reasonable 'out of pocket' expenses)
- freely chooses to give their time.

Parkinson's UK volunteers help us to achieve our vision of helping people to live as well as possible with Parkinson's. We define volunteering as a relationship between the organisation and an individual who gives their time and skills unpaid to undertake a clearly defined volunteer role to deliver the work of Parkinson's UK.

## **3. Recruitment, Development and Support**

Parkinson's UK is committed to ensuring our volunteering opportunities are open to all and that volunteer recruitment procedures are consistent, fair and open. Anyone applying will be provided with information relevant to the role and how to apply. Volunteers will have an opportunity to learn about the role and make sure they understand the expectations for the role before committing.

A reference might be required for some volunteer roles and some roles require a criminal

records check<sup>1</sup> in line with our volunteer criminal records check policy.

There is no upper age limit for volunteers; however, we have a minimum age restriction of 18 for volunteer roles.

We offer learning and development to all our volunteers to make sure that volunteers have the knowledge and skills to perform their role effectively. Learning and development is dependent on role and includes:

- volunteer induction which provides volunteers with an overview of the aims, vision and values of Parkinson's UK, as well as insight into Parkinson's condition
- Time with a volunteer or volunteering staff contact to ask questions relating to volunteering at Parkinson's UK
- Learning that relates to safeguarding or GDPR<sup>2</sup> (depending on the role)
- Learning specific to role (where appropriate)

Parkinson's UK is committed to supporting all volunteers that work with us. All volunteers have access to a volunteering staff contact to provide support and guidance throughout their time with the organisation. In line with volunteer good practice, we offer a flexible volunteer support model, which is tailored to the needs of the individual, their role, progress and learning and development needs, as well as addressing any issues or concerns that may arise.

## **4. Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)**

Parkinson's UK is here for everyone in the Parkinson's community. Our EDI strategy sets out our commitment to removing barriers so that everyone in the Parkinson's community can access the right support and services, tailored to their needs. Volunteers are part of this commitment. We welcome a wide range of volunteers from diverse backgrounds and are working to ensure equitable access to opportunities in line with our EDI policy.

## **5. Working together**

Parkinson's UK is committed to encouraging a safe and supportive environment for all our volunteers and staff. This means that we will:

- provide safe volunteering conditions and ensure volunteers are covered by adequate insurance
- provide volunteers with the opportunity to share their views and opinions on the

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<sup>1</sup> Known as a Disclosure and Barring Service check in England and Wales, an Enhanced PVG check in Scotland and an Access NI in Northern Ireland)

<sup>2</sup> General Data Protection Regulation and please refer to section 13

organisation and its work

- consult volunteers on matters related to volunteering
- ensure volunteers are recognised and valued.

This can only happen when everyone is committed to working together effectively and collaboratively and in the spirit of our values. We therefore ask that everyone agrees to and adopts our values, as set on the Parkinson's UK website. These are:

- **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 people with Parkinson's, scientists, 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*

## 6. Communications

Effective communication with and between volunteers is vital to the success of volunteer involvement. All communications with volunteers should encourage open dialogue and the sharing of information and ideas between volunteers, staff and people affected by Parkinson's.

Volunteers will be kept up-to-date with any information relevant to their role by their volunteering staff contact. Important organisational developments and issues are communicated through a range of communication tools including publications, events, email updates and our website.

## 7. Volunteer expenses

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

## 8 Gifts and hospitality

Occasionally, volunteers 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 volunteers 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 volunteers must deal with the receipt or offers of gifts or hospitality.

## **9. Health and safety and insurance**

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

All volunteers are responsible for ensuring that they read and are familiar with the Parkinson's UK health and safety statement by completing the relevant modules as part of their volunteer induction, and that any concerns or incidents are reported to their volunteering staff contact. All volunteer roles will be risk assessed and any risks identified as part of this process will be shared with the volunteer as part of their induction.

Parkinson's UK volunteers using their own private vehicles for volunteering purposes are personally liable for any accident or incident and must ensure that their own private motor insurance is comprehensive and permits travel for the purpose of volunteering appropriately.

Parkinson's UK volunteers are covered under our insurance arrangements. This 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, volunteers have a responsibility not to expose themselves and others to any unnecessary risks while volunteering. If in doubt or for further information volunteers can speak to their volunteering staff contact.

## **10. Safeguarding and Whistleblowing**

Due to the nature of our work, some of the people volunteers come into contact with could be considered at risk. We take the safeguarding of people at risk very seriously and have a robust safeguarding policy and process.

We will support our volunteers with regards to safeguarding and are committed to providing them with advice and appropriate training about best practice in this area. Volunteers should ensure that they are familiar with our Safeguarding volunteer guide which is part of the Parkinson's UK volunteer induction, and know who to contact if they have a concern about Safeguarding.

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 should raise your concern with your volunteering staff contact in the first instance. If you are concerned that your volunteering staff contact may be involved in the alleged wrong doing, you may raise your concern directly with the charity's General Counsel by emailing [governance@parkinsons.org.uk](mailto:governance@parkinsons.org.uk). If your concern involves a trustee or a member of the Executive Leadership Team, you should contact the [raiseaconcern@parkinsons.org.uk](mailto:raiseaconcern@parkinsons.org.uk) email address which is monitored by the company secretary and the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee. All correspondence will be treated in the strictest confidence and enquiries made will be as discreet as possible. A full copy of the whistleblowing policy and process can be obtained by emailing [volunteering@parkinsons.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@parkinsons.org.uk) or requested anonymously by emailing [raiseaconcern@parkinsons.org.uk](mailto:raiseaconcern@parkinsons.org.uk)

## **11. Solving problems and feedback**

Parkinson's UK is committed to ensuring that all volunteers have a positive and rewarding experience. Part of making sure that this happens is by recognising that problems can occur and ensuring that when they do, there is a fair and consistent process for resolving them. There are two routes to resolving issues that arise. The first is through our feedback policy (for complaints) and the second through our Volunteering Solving Problems Policy.

## **12. Assemble**

Parkinson's UK uses market leading volunteer management software called 'Assemble' which provides an online platform for both volunteers and staff. Assemble supports staff with providing a quality service to volunteers as well as compliance with data protection regulations. Volunteers are provided with an account which enables them to manage their information, access news items, and information and training to support their role. Use of Assemble is optional for volunteers.

## **13. Confidentiality and data protection**

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

Some volunteers may have access to information of a confidential nature as part of their roles. 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 Parkinson's UK volunteers for their own purposes.

Where applicable, volunteers will be asked to complete the confidentiality module as part of their volunteer induction. Parkinson's UK is registered with the ICO under the 2018 Data Protection Act because we hold information about our members. Personal details of staff, volunteers, supporters and service users should at all times be treated in the strictest of confidence and in line with Data Protection legislation (GDPR) as detailed in our data protection policy. Volunteers must be familiar with and adhere to it.

## **14. Moving on from a volunteer role**

We greatly value the opportunity to learn from people who have volunteered with us so that we can continue to improve volunteer experience at Parkinson's UK. Many volunteers are involved with Parkinson's UK for a number of years and we want all volunteers to have a positive volunteering experience.

When a volunteer wishes to leave or take a break from their role, we ask that they let their volunteering staff contact know as soon as possible. If volunteers wish to give feedback, the staff contact will discuss their experience and feedback with them and invite them to complete an optional moving on form. The staff contact will also put measures in place to ensure the continuity of support for people with Parkinson's when the volunteer leaves. We value the contribution of volunteers for the time they are able to give and are keen to continue to learn and improve the volunteer experience as well as thank our volunteers for their service when they leave.

## **15. Reviewing this document & where to find supporting information**

This guidance will be reviewed every 3 years using the expertise of volunteers, staff and people affected by Parkinson's. Volunteers will be encouraged to inform the Volunteering team of any feedback on their experience of using the policy on an on-going basis, so improvements can be made where appropriate. If no immediate action is needed, comments will be kept and used at the next policy review.

The following supporting documents are available on request from the [volunteering@parkinsons.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@parkinsons.org.uk) inbox, which is managed by the national volunteering team. Many are also available on the Parkinson's UK website:

- Investing in Volunteers quality standards
- Example volunteer role descriptions
- Volunteer application forms
- Children, young people & volunteering policy
- Volunteer expenses policy
- Parkinson's UK Health and safety statement and procedure
- Volunteer criminal records check policy
- Volunteer Solving Problems policy

- Feedback Policy
- Safeguarding volunteer guide
- Parkinson's UK volunteer induction.

## Document information

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<b>ELT owner:</b> Director of People and Culture	<b>Policy lead:</b> Head of Volunteering and Local Group Development