

Volunteering and Involvement Policy

1. Policy Control

1.1 Approval

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Policy Sponsor	Steve Williams, Director, POD	Sponsor Approved Date:	23/06/2023
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1.2 Review History: record of reviews (irrespective of changes made)

Reviewer Name	Reviewer Role	Review Date

1.3 Version History: record of policy versions and changes made

Version No.	Description of change	Date of Issue

For generic questions or concerns relating to this or any other policies at Versus Arthritis email policies@versusarthritis.org.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 Versus Arthritis acknowledges the invaluable, integral, and mutually beneficial role played by volunteers and involved people. They play a crucial role in delivery of our strategic goals, and are involved in many areas of our work, including governance, involvement, research, campaigning, service delivery and local support networks, fundraising and in our online communities.
- 2.2 Lived experience of arthritis is not a requirement for all volunteering roles (though it is for some areas, such as involvement). None-the-less, many of our volunteers do have arthritis themselves, or know someone who does.
- 2.3 An important way volunteers with lived experience can volunteer is through Involvement where people affected by arthritis share their experiences to help shape or influence our work. When unpaid, involvement is a type of volunteering. Involvement is crucial to the work of our charity and there are specific features unique to involvement which are explained under definitions below.

Definitions:

- 2.4 A volunteer is anyone who carries out a defined role, at the direction of and on behalf of Versus Arthritis, on an unpaid basis, using their time, skills, knowledge and experience to help us achieve our vision of 'A Future Free From Arthritis.'

Volunteering can be completed as a one-off action or can be conducted on a longer term/ more formal basis.

- 2.5 Involvement at Versus Arthritis means working together with a diverse range of people with lived experience of arthritis to better understand what people need to live the life they choose, helping us to achieve our vision of A Future Free From Arthritis.

Scope:

- 2.6 The scope of this policy includes all volunteers/ involved people, apart from involvement work that attracts payment of any kind. It also applies to those managing volunteers and involved people, either directly or indirectly.

3. Rationale

- 3.1 This policy sets out what volunteers/ involved people can expect from Versus Arthritis, and what Versus Arthritis expects from volunteers/ involved people.
- 3.2 In order to achieve our best results for people with arthritis, Versus Arthritis expects high standards from all of our volunteers/ involved people.
- 3.3 Volunteers/ involved people should also expect high standards from Versus Arthritis. It is hoped through setting clear expectations, there will be a mutually beneficial relationship between Versus Arthritis and volunteers/ involved people.
- 3.4 Volunteers/ involved people are valued by Versus Arthritis and are entitled to be treated fairly, have the opportunity for consultation in matters which are relevant to them, and to be involved in roles that are acceptable to them, to which they consent without coercion.

What Versus Arthritis expects from volunteers/ involved people:

- 3.5** Always treat others at Versus Arthritis, including employees, fellow volunteers and supporters, with respect, consideration and appreciation, and always in accordance with our Values and Behaviours: United, Compassionate, Inclusive, Brave.
- 3.6** To only ever act within the scope of the volunteer/ involved person role to which Versus Arthritis and the volunteer/ involved person has agreed.
- 3.7** To ask for clarity if any aspect of their role is unclear.
- 3.8** To complete any induction activity or training which has been identified as appropriate for their role.
- 3.9** To provide as much notice as possible if they are unable to fulfil their commitments, or if they no longer wish to be involved/ volunteer.
- 3.10** Contribute positively to Versus Arthritis and avoid bringing the charity into disrepute.
- 3.11** To act within all Versus Arthritis policies and procedures that are relevant and accessible to volunteers and involved people

What volunteers/ involved people can expect from Versus Arthritis:

- 3.12** Versus Arthritis will recognise the vital contribution of volunteers/ involved people and will ensure they are always treated with respect, consideration and appreciation, and always in accordance with our Values and Behaviours: United, Compassionate, Inclusive and Brave
- 3.13** To be given clarity about the role that is being asked of them including scope, expected time commitment, training and ongoing support
- 3.14** An experience which is flexible and proportionate to the responsibilities and risks involved in the role, for example, upon recruitment or training
- 3.15** For personal data to be held in accordance with the Data Protection Policy and law/ General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- 3.16** Versus Arthritis will ensure appropriate insurance, including employers' liability and public liability, is in place for all agreed/ known volunteering and involvement activity
- 3.17** Provision of the tools/ guidance needed to operate safely/ legally
- 3.18** Reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred through volunteering/ involvement in line with our Expenses Policy
- 3.19** An inclusive and welcoming experience where reasonable adjustments are made
- 3.20** Support and guidance appropriate to role. For example, for more formal/ longer term roles this may include regular meetings with a staff contact/ volunteer manager where feedback can be given/ questions asked
- 3.21** To be informed about the work of the charity as a whole and other opportunities to participate

Values and behaviours are embedded across all volunteering/ involvement activities. For example:

United

Volunteers and involved people are a vital part of the Versus Arthritis team. Where possible, we will collaborate with volunteers and involved people in order to deliver better services for people with arthritis. We will celebrate the contribution and success of volunteers and involved people for example through Volunteers Week or in our newsletters.

Compassionate

We care about the views of volunteers and involved people and we will ensure there is an opportunity for views to be fed back. We will actively listen in order to understand and take action as appropriate. We will always seek to provide support to volunteers and involved people and consider wellbeing through everything we do, for example, if we ask for a response to an email, we will recognise that many volunteers have jobs and lots going on in their lives, and may need more time to respond than our employees might.

Inclusive

We strive to recruit and retain diverse volunteers and involved people who represent our arthritis community. We value and respect the different views of volunteers and involved people, and ask the same in return. We will create accessible ways to participate, for example if we are running a meeting, we will seek to offer a range of dates and times which suit the diverse needs of volunteers and involved people, such as evenings and weekends as well as mid week, and to offer an accessible venue.

Brave

We will seek to improve the experience of volunteers and involved people and approach challenges in a solutions-focused way/ ask volunteers and involved people to do the same. We will be accountable and communicate transparently, for example sending notes of meetings in a timely manner and ensuring all actions/ decisions are recorded.

4. Making it happen

It is hoped that this policy will be followed by volunteers/ involved people and those who manage them at all times. In the event that this policy is not adhered to, the [Volunteer Problem Solving Procedure](#) should be used to resolve the issue.