

Volunteer Policy

Implemented: 11/05/2020

Last Review: June 2026

Next Review: 01/06/2028

1. Introduction

1.1 Poole Communities Trust is a small, local charity with a mission to inspire change and help address disadvantage. To help us achieve this, we focus on four priorities:

1. Bringing people together, increasing community participation and improving skills and confidence.
2. Offering greater opportunities for children, young people and families.
3. Reducing the impact of poverty through food support, advice services and access to publicly funded services.
4. Ensuring we are a well-run charity.

1.2 Poole Communities Trust is committed to involving a diverse range of people in our work volunteering. We do this because we believe that:

- Through the involvement of volunteers, we contribute to the building and support of active and sustainable communities.
- We work more effectively by providing opportunities for people to use their skills, knowledge and experience through volunteering.
- As volunteers who reflect the diversity of their communities, people bring a different perspective to that of professional paid staff, which adds value to our work.
- By involving volunteers, we can offer opportunities for genuine involvement, learning and development for individuals.

- 1.3 A volunteer is anyone who freely chooses to undertake supporting Poole Communities Trust through the giving of their time, skills and experience without financial remuneration beyond out-of-pocket expenses. It is support undertaken by choice and is unpaid.

Volunteers:

- help with the delivery of our services
- are active in projects and community-led activities supported by us

- 1.4 We believe that our relationship with volunteers is one of mutual responsibility and commitment within which Poole Communities Trust and volunteers have both rights and responsibilities. We aim to ensure that volunteers enjoy their involvement with us and gain from it in terms of their own personal objectives. Poole Communities Trust will devote sufficient personnel, resources and training to support volunteers in their role.

2. Purpose of this policy

Our purpose in adopting this policy is to:

- highlight and acknowledge the value of the contribution made by volunteers
- reflect the purpose, value, standards and strategies of Poole Communities Trust in its involvement of volunteers
- recognise the respective roles, rights and responsibilities of volunteers at Poole Communities Trust
- confirm Poole Communities Trust commitment to involving volunteers in its work
- help to ensure the quality of both the volunteering opportunities on offer and the work carried out by volunteers
- acknowledge the current areas of volunteer involvement in Poole Communities Trust.

3. Scope of the volunteer policy

Unless specifically stated otherwise, the policy applies to all volunteers in all events, activities and projects undertaken by or on behalf of Poole Communities Trust to all its departments and site of operation.

4. Statement of principles of good practice

General

In involving volunteers, we will be guided by the following principles of good practice:

- Roles and tasks will be clearly defined in our volunteer job descriptions, so that all concerned with volunteers' activities are sure of their respective roles and responsibilities.
- Volunteer roles will complement, the work of paid staff.
- Staff activity leads within Poole Communities Trust and the volunteers for whom they are responsible will discuss mutual expectations and review performance on a regular basis.
- Poole Communities Trust policies are reviewed bi-annually and consideration will be given as to how any changes will affect volunteers.

5. Recruitment and selection

- Volunteer opportunities will be promoted in a manner that ensures there is wide accessibility to the positions we offer. Poole Communities Trust Equal Opportunities Policy & Procedures applies to the recruiting and selecting of volunteers.
- Prospective volunteers will be required to complete an application form and will be given help and assistance if needed to be able to do this
- We will request two references from prospective volunteers, one from a current or former employer if possible and one character reference from someone who has known the applicant for over two years who isn't a family member.
- People who offer to volunteer will hear from the Volunteer Co-ordinator within 10 days of their initial enquiry.

- Written role descriptions will explain what is expected of volunteers in relation to time, commitment, necessary skills, experience and specific duties required.
- Volunteers will be placed in activities which match their skills, talents and interests and, once placed they will be required to comply with Poole Communities Trust's existing policies and procedures.
- Poole Communities Trust will follow a safer recruitment checklist.
- Volunteers supporting activities involving young people will be asked to undergo an enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check, following out DBS protocol.
- Volunteers supporting any other Poole Communities Trust activities /services will be asked to undergo a basic DBS check, this is required as Poole Communities Trust work includes supporting vulnerable people, following our DBS protocol.
- For the DBS process the prospective volunteer must show proof of identity to a member of staff at Poole Communities Trust.
- Volunteers will be asked to sign a volunteer agreement stating they understand the specific policies that affect them in their role and will be given help and assistance if needed to be able to do this
- Volunteers will be asked to confirm they understand and agree to the values and principles of Poole Communities Trust which inform the way in which we work.
- We will ensure that procedures are in place to explain, support and monitor good practice requirements for volunteers selected to work with residents and other visitors to our centres.
- We will regularly review the ways in which potential volunteers can contact us.

6. Support for Volunteers

- We will provide an induction programme and a review session for volunteers to assess the progress of their placements and resolve any problems at an early stage.
- Poole Communities Trust will reimburse volunteers for any reasonable out-of-pocket expenses. We will only reimburse the amount that you have spent, up to agreed maximum levels. Any expenses must be pre planned and agreed with the Activity

Lead & Charity Manager. Tickets and receipts must be provided to reclaim this money.

- As a volunteer of Poole Communities Trust fully insures you, for example, against injury whilst you are involved in our activities
- Volunteers will be shown Poole Communities Trust's policies which may affect them eg:

The Trust has the following policies, which apply to all our volunteers:

- Accessibility Statement
- Equal Opportunities Policy & Procedures
- Health and Safety Policy
- Discipline Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Employing Ex-Offenders Policy

In these respects, volunteers will be treated in the same way as staff for liability purposes.

- All volunteers will be offered access to support and supervision on a regular basis, with a named person, and will be informed of who to contact in an emergency.
- All volunteers will be offered access to appropriate training to enable them to develop their capabilities and competence in relation to their volunteering role.
- All Safeguarding Training is required to be renewed every **2 years**.
- PCT to also provide **Annual Refreshers** in person with support from outside agencies where able.
- All volunteers will be provided with level 1 safeguarding training as outlined in our safeguarding policy and protocol.
- Volunteers will be made aware of Poole Communities Trust Volunteer Problem Solving Policy if any issues arise.

7. Volunteers with additional support needs

Poole Communities Trust welcomes applications from volunteers with additional support needs.

During our recruitment process we will explore interests, abilities and areas of additional support that we are able to put into place, which will be taken into consideration as to whether a volunteer opportunity can be offered.

General support is provided to volunteers through conversations encouraging self-care, no pressure and adjusting aspects of the role if required. In addition, every volunteer placement with a person with additional needs, will be tailored for the individual.

PCT is open to working with other agencies which work with people with additional needs and support them with volunteering and work opportunities. PCT will discuss the level of support the external agency offers and create a plan together.

PCT will provide training and support to all staff who are supporting volunteers with additional needs.

8. Relationship with paid staff

- We will ensure that paid staff at all levels are clear about the role of volunteers and that good working relationships are fostered between them and volunteers.
- Appropriate training, support and resources will be provided for those who work alongside volunteers and for those who have a managerial role in relation to them.
- Volunteers will be given clear information about the roles undertaken by paid staff and of their value to Poole Communities Trust.
- Poole Communities Trust's Volunteer Co-ordinator's primary function is to recruit and place volunteers within the Charity and to oversee the implementation of this volunteering policy and ensure that Poole Communities Trust's volunteering practices are of a high standard.
- In the rare event of industrial action by staff, volunteers will not be engaged to do the work of paid staff

Relationships with other groups and organisations meeting the needs of the local community.

In all our relationships with other groups, organisations or partners we will:

- promote volunteering as an important means of contributing to the building and support of active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual respect
- promote good practice in volunteering.