



General Volunteering Policy

Policy owner: Head of Volunteering

Policy approved by: Executive Team

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1. Purpose

This policy applies to Diabetes UK staff and volunteers. It provides the key principles and standards that guide our work with volunteers, outlining the organisation's approach to volunteering and our commitment to volunteers. It guides the work of staff who work with volunteers and helps volunteers to understand what they can expect from the organisation.

2. Volunteers at the Heart of Diabetes UK

Volunteers are crucial in helping us support people with Diabetes and tackle diabetes as the fastest growing health threat of our time. They are at the heart of the achievement of our Reach for the Stars strategy¹ and, in the strategy, we also make a standalone commitment to growing volunteering activity from 2015-19.

Volunteers increase our impact and enable the organisation to reach thousands of people in local communities each year. Most of our services are underpinned by the work of volunteers and our work in the areas of influencing and improving care and the prevention of Type 2 diabetes, are volunteer-led or supported by volunteers².

3. Our Commitment to Volunteers

Diabetes UK is committed to ensuring that all our volunteers have a high quality experience, which is informed by national standards of good practice in volunteer management and support. We will do this through providing clear and meaningful roles for volunteers, flexible and relevant learning and development opportunities, and by consistently recognising the contribution of volunteers across our work.

4. What is Volunteering?

Diabetes UK defines volunteering as a relationship between the organisation and an individual who gives their time and skills in an unpaid capacity to carry out a clear role on behalf of the organisation. Volunteers are entitled and encouraged to claim reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred as a result of their volunteering.

The scope of this document covers individuals who carry out a defined role as a volunteer for the charity. It does not cover those who engage with one-off, ad hoc campaigning or fundraising opportunities, such as signing a petition or cheering on runners at a sporting event.

5. Recruitment and Selection

We are committed to a fair, honest and two-way recruitment process which supports volunteers to identify a role that is right for them and that enables Diabetes UK to select volunteers against the different roles through taking account of particular skills, experience and their availability. This will ensure that a volunteer base exists to best support people living with, affected by and at risk of developing diabetes.

¹ Find out more by downloading the strategy and summary from our website https://www.diabetes.org.uk/About_us/What-we-do/

² Please see Volunteer Expenses Policy and Volunteer Expense Claim Form for more information

Each volunteer will be provided with a clear and up-to-date Role Description which outlines the purpose, main activities, skills requirement and time commitment of the role. Every potential volunteer is required to complete an application form and will have a form of assessment with a staff member, such as a phone discussion, face-to-face interview or discussion or in some cases a group selection day.

In the case of some roles we will continue the two-way selection process throughout induction and initial training to assist the volunteer and staff to make a final decision as to whether the role is right for the individual.

For some volunteer roles that involve working with children or vulnerable adults, individuals will need to supply references and a cleared criminal record check before starting their volunteer role. Please see Section 11 on Safeguarding.

6. Learning and Development

Learning and Development covers all of the resources and training that we give to volunteers to develop their knowledge and skills.

6.1. Induction

Volunteers are an essential part of the Diabetes UK team. Although our volunteer roles vary in time commitment and skills required, we ensure that all volunteers are fully prepared for their role, that they understand how their role fits in to the wider work of the organisation and that they have their existing skills recognised.

As volunteers are giving up their time and will have other commitments, we work to ensure that our induction resources and mandatory training are flexible and easy to access, without compromising on quality. Each new volunteer will therefore understand their roles and responsibilities and subscribe to the Diabetes UK Volunteer Partnership Agreement. They will receive a welcome pack containing information about Diabetes UK, volunteering and information specific to their roles, such as key policies. Before starting the role volunteers will receive a role-focused induction briefing or training- the format and length will be appropriate to the role.

6.2. Ongoing learning and development

Following induction we will ensure that we are able to provide further resources, training and learning opportunities that are relevant and appropriate to the role, including refresher training if needed. We will also offer learning and development opportunities for volunteers to increase and develop their skills and knowledge to enable them to move into other volunteering roles for Diabetes UK in the future.

We are committed to delivering learning and development through a variety of methods to help ensure it is accessible to all volunteers and also appropriate to the level of engagement.

7. Support and Supervision

7.1. We will ensure that each volunteer has a named contact at Diabetes UK. Volunteer support and supervision will be tailored dependent on the volunteer role - some roles may require regular meetings with a staff member however this will not be appropriate or relevant for other roles. The level of support and supervision that a volunteer can expect will be clearly outlined in the role

description. All new volunteers will receive follow up via phone or email after their first engagement with us.

- 7.2. Staff members will maintain a professional relationship with volunteers underpinned by good practice in line with Diabetes UK Volunteer Management Standards. Boundaries will be in place and maintained between staff and volunteers, prohibiting the inappropriate exchange of personal information and interactions that would compromise the professional relationship.
- 7.3. In addition we will develop more opportunities for networking and peer-learning between volunteers. This may be informal as part of training or it could be more structured such as through a buddy system.
- 7.4. A review point will be introduced for volunteers, usually after 12 months, which will enable volunteers and staff to come together, at a defined point in time, allowing both parties to reflect whether they wish to continue with the role or whether the volunteer would wish to progress to a different volunteer role with the organisation.
- 7.5. We will ensure that communications sent to volunteers are free of jargon and contain a balance of role-specific, new opportunities and relevant wider organisational information for volunteers.

8. Motivation and Appreciation

Volunteers are a highly important part of the Diabetes UK team and this is reflected in our day-to-day approach to managing volunteers and the support we provide. We will proactively recognise the contribution of volunteers, say thank you and report back to volunteers on the difference that their volunteering makes.

To ensure that volunteers want to stay with Diabetes UK we will we recognise their existing skills and expertise, offer refresher training where necessary and encourage them to move on to other volunteer roles as progression opportunities.

9. Exit

We will ensure there is a clear exit process for volunteers. This will ensure that we thank volunteers, offer them advice on other relevant opportunities where appropriate and can provide references for future employers or volunteer placements. We will provide opportunities for volunteers to feedback on their experience to inform continuous improvement of our support for volunteers.

10. Problem Solving

Diabetes UK is committed to ensuring that all volunteers have a positive and fulfilling experience. To ensure that this happens we need to recognise that problems can occur and ensure that we resolve them fairly, consistently and in a timely manner. It is crucial that volunteers and staff feel able to raise and discuss concerns.

A procedure for problem solving in situations that involve volunteers will be found in our Problem Solving Policy, see Section 12 below.

11. Safeguarding

Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is an essential part of the work of Diabetes UK. Safeguarding is taking a common sense approach to keeping children or vulnerable adults safe from harm and understanding what you need to do if you are worried about the safety or well-being of an individual.

We will ensure that safeguarding is covered in the induction for each volunteer so that everyone understands how it relates to their role. Refresher information/training will also be provided. There is a central safeguarding team and a local safeguarding lead in each region and nation to support volunteers with any safeguarding queries or concerns. Volunteers are never expected to investigate safeguarding issues themselves. All volunteers should ensure that they have read and understood our Safeguarding Policy and procedures. These will be given to all volunteers on induction and are available from your local volunteering contact.

12. Other Volunteering Policies and Resources

We will have a set of volunteering policies and documents which will be made available to volunteers from January 2016. Induction materials will summarise key points to make them easily accessible for volunteers:

1. Volunteer Expenses Policy
2. Volunteer Problem Solving and Complaints Policy
3. Volunteer Partnership Agreement
4. Keeping Safe and Legal Guidance for volunteers
5. Volunteer Management Standards