

## **The Royal Air Forces Association Volunteer Programme**

### **Volunteer Code of Conduct**

The RAF Association has a code of conduct in place to ensure that volunteers are aware of the important role they play in the Association, and therefore the importance that is placed on a particular way of conducting 'Association business'. Volunteers are often the first people that our beneficiaries come into contact with and they are also the people that the public sees at events and fundraising drives. Volunteers are crucial to the function of the Association, fundraising or delivering welfare to those in the RAF family who need our help, and we look forward to working with our volunteers to deliver a professional service that we can all be proud of and enjoy supporting.

### **What is the Code of Conduct?**

The policy sets out the standards of behaviour that the Association expects from volunteers and identifies the rights and responsibilities of a volunteer. Compliance with the code of conduct is one condition of a volunteer's involvement with us and should be the standard volunteers work to for all events and volunteering activities. By working within the guidelines of the code of conduct, volunteers will be contributing to the success of the organisation and helping to present the Association as a professional and reliable provider.

### **General**

#### **Standards**

It is important that quality is at the heart of everything we do at the Association. Our beneficiaries are entitled to a high level of service and we ask volunteers to carry out their role to the best of their ability. It is important that we demonstrate a positive attitude and equality in our behaviour and practices and promote teamwork in all that we do.

#### **Accountability**

It is important that volunteers attend every activity, event or visit they have agreed to do. If there are extenuating circumstances and they cannot fulfil their commitment, volunteers are asked to provide adequate notice to their manager or to the beneficiary they may have an arrangement with (for welfare volunteering). Where possible (i.e. at an event or fundraiser), we will take steps to make alternative arrangements to fill their role. Failure to contact us will put pressure on other volunteers, could put other volunteers' safety at risk, prevent a beneficiary from accessing our services or mean that the event isn't as successful as it might have been.

#### **Equality and Diversity**

The Association is committed to ensuring within the framework of the law that our workplace (in all senses of the word) is free from unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of disability, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender (including gender reassignment), sexual orientation, age, marital status, religious or other similar philosophical belief or non-belief. We aim to ensure that our volunteers achieve their full potential and that all decisions are taken without reference to irrelevant or discriminatory criteria. Volunteers are asked to abide by the rules outlined in the Diversity Policy for volunteers.



## **Training attendance**

Training will form an important part of the volunteering experience and provides volunteers with valuable information to help them in their role. Volunteers may be required to attend (or undertake online) specific training/teambuilding sessions, if these have been deemed to be required for their role.

## **Instructions**

### **Confidential Information**

Volunteers have an obligation to protect confidential information or personal information in relation to other volunteers, staff, beneficiaries, members and other organisations/events, in accordance with the Confidentiality Policy for volunteers.

### **Security**

Security measures may be in place at venues and locations the Association has volunteers working at. Volunteers will be required to adhere to security procedures whilst on duty and off duty. The security measures will be notified to volunteers beforehand or on the day.

### **Facilities and Property**

Much of the Association's work is funded by the generosity of our members and volunteers and through vital donations from the public. We have accountability to these groups and for this reason we ask volunteers to be efficient and economical with resources. This covers all consumables and equipment including, but not confined to, items such as stationery, communication devices, computers, office equipment and other equipment. Property (including consumables) is not to be removed from Association premises and/or used for private purposes without prior authority from a volunteer's immediate manager. Volunteers are not authorised to use the Association's equipment such as photocopiers, PCs and phones for private purposes, unless in an emergency.

### **Contact with the Media**

All requests from members of the media for comments/information should be directed to the Marketing and Communications Team on [marketing@rafa.org.uk](mailto:marketing@rafa.org.uk) or on 0116 266 5224. This will ensure the consistency of all information given to the media and help to maintain good relations. Similarly, volunteers should not give any interviews, appear in any promotions, advertisements or endorsements, or give any assistance to the media in relation to any story concerning the affairs of the volunteering activity, without the prior consent of the organisers. Volunteers should also exercise discretion when commenting in their private capacity about their volunteering where their comments may be understood to be an official comment of the organisation.

### **Health and Safety**

The Association is committed to providing volunteers with a safe working environment. Volunteers are required to exercise reasonable care in the course of their role to ensure the health and safety of themselves and others.

Volunteers should be aware of, and follow all safety information that they are briefed on at an event or given details of beforehand. Volunteers working in a welfare role will be given general health and safety guidelines in their training around personal safety and operating alone, which they must also adhere to.

The following safety responsibilities apply to everyone. Volunteers should:

- Co-operate fully with Association staff or any team leader volunteers at all times;
- Understand the emergency plans for the venue or event they are at (e.g. fire evacuations);

- Not use any equipment or machinery which they have not been trained to use;
- Take care when lifting and carrying (e.g. not lift very heavy boxes);
- Report any potential hazards to a member of staff; and
- In the event of fire/hazard or any other risk, remove themselves and warn others of imminent danger;
- Report any cases of feeling unsafe or unwell to their supervisor;
- Contribute to a safe and healthy workplace – volunteers should not leave things lying around, rather should keep work areas and gangways clear and tidy.

### **First Aid**

If a medical emergency should arise, unless volunteers are trained first-aiders, their first priority should be to get assistance from someone who is trained. Even if they are a trained first-aider, they should ensure that professional medical help is obtained as a matter of urgency. If a trained first-aider is not available, volunteers should use their common sense to help where they can.

If there is any immediate danger, volunteers should get themselves and those near them away from the area as quickly as possible. Attempts to assist someone should be minimal but volunteers might be able to do some of the following until help arrives:

- Clear the space around the ill or injured individual and keep other spectators away;
- Help make the individual comfortable;
- If possible, place them in the recovery position and call the 999 as soon as possible.

Be extremely careful with blood. A cloth can be put over a wound to help stop bleeding but volunteers should not touch the wound or allow blood to come into contact with their skin.

Please refer to the Health and Safety Policy for volunteers for more information.

Please also refer to the Personal Safety and Isolated Activity Policy for volunteers for more information.

### **Shift start/finish times**

The start time for a role, if for a one-off event, will be given to volunteers no later than two weeks before the event, where possible. If volunteering involves visiting a beneficiary, volunteers themselves will be likely to arrange in advance the time they will visit. It is important that they arrive on time for their commitment and if there is an issue preventing them from doing this, that they inform the person expecting them. If someone is volunteering at a specific event (rather than for a welfare visit), they should not leave until they have been released by the manager or volunteer team leader in charge for that event.

### **Gifts, Hospitality and Gratuities**

Volunteers should register the acceptance of any gifts or entertainment, other than those of nominal value (e.g. pens, keyrings, etc.), with their manager or the Volunteer Manager at Head Office. Gifts or entertainment, even of nominal value, should never be accepted if it could be seen as bribery. Nominal gifts of hospitality, such as a cup of tea and a biscuit, is fine to accept. Where there is any doubt volunteers should speak to their immediate manager.

Acceptance or asking for personal tips or gratuities is not allowed. Some of our welfare beneficiaries that volunteers may come into contact with may want to express their gratitude by offering volunteers a monetary thank you. Volunteers are not permitted to accept money under any circumstances and should politely decline any such offers. Volunteers may, however, accept donations on behalf of the charity where it is appropriate to do so, as long as they pass these on immediately.

### **Additional Duties**

Volunteers' roles will be clearly outlined in their respective role profiles and their duties will be made clear before they start volunteering. Due to the nature of some of the volunteer roles, volunteers may, at times, be asked to help out with duties outside of their role description, to help the team deliver what is needed. For example, volunteers assisting at a fundraising event might be asked to carry the collecting bucket back to the organiser's car or help pack away a stand. Volunteers should not feel obliged to undertake anything they feel unable to help with and should inform their manager for the day if they cannot assist with an activity.

## **Behaviour**

### **Professional behaviour**

All volunteers have a responsibility to behave professionally at all times. If volunteers are travelling to and from the location of their volunteering in uniform they will be highly visible as a representative of the Association and should therefore ensure that they are presenting themselves in a professional manner at all times.

Volunteers must not:

- Consume illegal substances;
- Consume alcohol (other than at designated staff functions or where they are permitted to do so);
- Swear or use offensive language or tell offensive/inappropriate jokes;
- Touch other volunteers, staff members or beneficiaries in a way that may make them feel uncomfortable or invade personal space.

### **Performance Issues/ Inappropriate Practices**

We will always attempt to resolve any performance issues or conflict fairly. In such cases, the relevant team leader or manager will discuss their concerns with the volunteer in question and seek to resolve the matter in a quick and professional manner. These will be dealt with in accordance with the Complaints Policy and Process.

### **Mobile Phones**

Volunteers can use their phones whilst on a break, away from their volunteering duties and are asked to use their discretion to decide when it is appropriate to use their phones during a shift. It is recognised that there may be emergency instances where volunteers will need to use their phones whilst on a volunteering shift.

### **Complaints Resolution**

The Association is committed to encouraging an open environment in which all volunteers can express themselves freely and responsibly, where issues raised are responded to in an appropriate and timely manner and where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. Above all, we are committed to providing a fair and honest settlement of any complaint. More information can be found in the Complaints Policy and Process document for volunteers.

## **Prohibited Actions**

### **Criminal/Illegal activity**

Any volunteer found to be engaging in criminal or illegal activity during their volunteering will be referred to the police where the matter will be dealt with.

### **Fraud and Corruption**

Fraudulent and corrupt activities are in fundamental opposition to the spirit of the Association. If a volunteer suspects fraudulent or corrupt behaviour, they should report it to their immediate manager or to the Volunteer

Manager at Head Office. We will treat reports of corruption/fraudulent behaviour as confidential, where possible, and will seek to protect individuals making such reports from recrimination. All reports will be investigated promptly and fairly. Anyone found to be engaging in such conduct will be asked to leave and referred to the police (if appropriate).

### **Illegal Drugs and Alcohol**

The Association prohibits volunteers being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or any other substances that may affect a volunteer's performance and behaviour.

Consumption of alcohol, illegal drugs or other performance-impairing substances prior to and/or during a shift is not allowed. If a volunteer takes medication which makes them drowsy, they are advised to inform their manager to ensure they are not given a role which would place them in danger.

At some functions volunteers are involved in, alcohol may be permitted after a shift, however, volunteers are reminded that during these times they are representing the Association and therefore we would ask them to keep drinking within a 'reasonable level'. Volunteers must ensure that their actions do not bring into question the professionalism of themselves or the Association. If a volunteer's behaviour causes embarrassment, distress or offence to others or they continue to drink when instructed to stop by their manager, the volunteer may be asked to stop volunteering for the Association altogether.

If a volunteer is driving for their role, alcohol should not be consumed before undertaking a journey.

If volunteers are socialising with beneficiaries (for example with Befriender volunteers), they should not be consuming alcohol whilst, or immediately prior to being 'on duty' carrying out their Befriending (particularly if driving, where no alcoholic drinks should be consumed).

### **Selling or Canvassing on premises**

Volunteers must not engage in personal business or other interests whilst volunteering. This includes the use of Association telephones to make calls in relation to personal interests, the display or distribution of posters, pamphlets and catalogues and/or approaching colleagues in relation to those activities.

### **VIP approaches, Autographs and Photography**

The soliciting of VIP autographs and/or taking of photographs is not permitted during volunteering hours or whilst in uniform. These activities can be disruptive and can also pose a security risk. Volunteers are asked to be polite and discreet when making such approaches at other times and to be prepared to take 'no' for an answer. Volunteers are discouraged from bringing cameras along with them to events and fundraisers as there is often nowhere to store valuables securely.

## **Appearance**

### **Uniforms**

Where issued, uniform items should be worn with pride and in accordance with the guidelines below:

- If volunteers are provided with official uniform items for their role, for example a sash or T-shirt with the Association logo on it, they are asked to wear it for the shift for which it has been given to them. In some instances, volunteers may be allowed to keep the items, however, some of the uniform items such as sashes, tabards, etc. may be collected in after a shift.

- Volunteers are required to provide their own footwear. Footwear should be clean, comfortable and conservative in colour. In some cases, for safety reasons, open toe shoes and high heels may not be permitted. Volunteers will be informed of this with enough notice to wear appropriate footwear for the volunteering activity. Comfort is the priority so footwear such as trainers is an acceptable item of uniform, provided they are clean and presentable.
- Personal comfort or various weather conditions may require volunteers to wear additional layers of clothing. Additional layers of clothing should be worn under the official uniform where possible (i.e. a long-sleeved top under an Association T-shirt).
- Uniform items should only be worn when volunteers are on duty or arriving/leaving, as volunteers may still be perceived to be on duty if they are seen wearing it.

Additional garments and accessories may be worn to ensure religious or cultural needs are observed. Where possible, however, standard uniform items should be worn to ensure that volunteers are identified as volunteering for the Association.

### **Personal Property**

Volunteers are responsible for looking after their own personal property. The Association does not assume responsibility for the loss, theft or damage to a volunteer's personal property. There may be no supervised storage space at the location where volunteering is taking place. If volunteering for a street or premises collection, volunteers are advised to make plans for storing valuables. (Some may use a money belt to keep necessary valuables in or some may use an across-the-shoulder bag which can be kept close to the side.) Volunteers are advised not to bring unnecessary valuables to the place where they are volunteering.

### **Smoke-free environment**

The Association observes a smoke-free work environment and volunteers cannot smoke whilst on duty. Smoking will be allowed during approved breaks for events, where there will either be a designated area or volunteers will need to move at least 100 metres away from where they are on duty and ensure that their uniform is not on display. Volunteers in a welfare role in a beneficiary's home should not smoke, even if the beneficiary is smoking and they offer the volunteer the opportunity to do so as well.

If you object to being in a smoke-filled room and you are visiting someone as part of your volunteering, please check prior to your visit with your manager whether or not it will be smoke-free. If there is a chance there will be smoke, you could either ask to have a window open, meet at another location or ask to be assigned a different beneficiary to visit.

### **Please remember:**

These guidelines are in place to ensure both the volunteers' and the event organisers' safety and to ensure the reputation of the Association. They are not designed to be restrictive in any way.

The Association wants to provide a professional service to its volunteers but we also want volunteers to have fun and enjoy their volunteering experience. A volunteer's time is so important to the Association and its beneficiaries and it is very much appreciated.