



Volunteer Management Policy

Version/Date Approved	January 2025
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Approved by	Board of Trustees
Date original version of policy approved	January 2021

Date of next review	January 2026
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Purpose

This policy sets out the principles and practice by which Adult Literacy Trust involve volunteers and is relevant to staff, volunteers and Trustees within the organisation. It aims to create a common understanding and to clarify roles and responsibilities to ensure the highest standards are maintained in relation to the management of volunteers.

Our commitments

We recognise volunteers as an integral part of the organisation. Their contribution supports our mission and strategic aims, and complements the role of any paid staff and contractors. We aim to encourage and support volunteer involvement to ensure that volunteering benefits the organisation, those to whom we provide advocacy, to our ultimate beneficiaries, and the volunteers themselves.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between employees, volunteers, and those who perform the additional governance role as Trustee.

For some activities, we will use employees or hire external help for specific tasks or projects. These employees and third-party contractors may work alongside volunteers and facilitate them; whilst it is important for employees especially to be aware of this policy, these non-volunteers are not directly subject to this policy.

We recognise that there are costs associated with volunteer involvement and will seek to ensure adequate financial and staffing resources are available for the development and support of volunteering.

We recognise that people have a right to participate in the life of their communities through volunteering and can contribute in many ways. We recognise our responsibility to organise volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

Role of Volunteers

Meaning of "volunteer"

Volunteers are individuals who undertake activity on behalf of Adult Literacy Trust, unpaid and of their own free choice.

For Adult Literacy Trust purposes, being a volunteer means providing your time and talent in a way that is:

- undertaken freely, by choice
- undertaken to be of public/ community benefit
- not undertaken for financial gain

Volunteers may be involved on a one-off, short-term basis or on a longer-term, regular basis. They may be involved:

- in the direct delivery of our literacy work;
- on our Board as Trustees (with the additional Trustee obligations referred to above);
- in networking to raise awareness of our work, either at a local area in our regions of operation, or amongst the wider communities from where we can draw support and build awareness of our activities; or
- to help in discrete tasks as called upon.

Volunteers are valued for:

- bringing additional skills and new perspectives to Adult Literacy Trust;
- championing our cause within the wider community;
- enhancing the quality of our work and effectiveness of our advocacy; and
- promoting collaboration with businesses with whom we work, staff, local communities and themselves.

Volunteers who are Trustees

Some of Adult Literacy Trust's volunteers may be Trustees, who have active and formal for governance of the organisation. However, for all unpaid Trustees, being a Trustee is a distinct role with specific responsibilities on top of those set out in this document. Unpaid Trustees will receive additional or adapted advice and information to that set out here so that they can perform their role in accordance with Adult Literacy Trust's legal ethos and requirements.

Roles and responsibilities

The Trustees shall have ultimate oversight of volunteer matters as part of their general governance oversight. However, they shall nominate a Trustee or other person as Volunteer Coordinator who shall have day-to-day responsibility for the development and coordination of voluntary activity within the organisation, including day-to-day review volunteering policy and procedure implementation, volunteer welfare, feeding back to the Trustees on volunteer-related matters at Trustee meetings and, where appropriate, raising volunteer concerns with the Trustees or other relevant people according to Adult Literacy Trust policy.

Changes to this overarching policy, and to any other significant matters shall be approved by the Trustees as a whole.

Volunteer Management

All volunteers will have a designated charity member/volunteer for guidance, support and supervision (a "Volunteer Coordinator"). The name of the Volunteer Coordinator will be explicitly referred to in the volunteering role/commission description.

The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, for the volunteer to attend or to undertake tasks, or for the organisation to provide continuing opportunities for voluntary involvement, provision of training or benefits. Both Adult Literacy Trust and its volunteers support each other on an ongoing basis, in a spirit of mutual enablement and commitment towards Adult Literacy Trust's goals.

However, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the organisation.

Adult Literacy Trust expects volunteers:

- to be reliable and honest
- to uphold the organisation's values and comply with organisational policies
- to make the most of opportunities given, e.g. for training
- to contribute positively to the aims of the organisation and avoid bringing the organisation into disrepute
- to carry out tasks within agreed guidelines

Volunteers can expect:

- to be allocated, as stated above, a Volunteer Coordinator with whom they can freely liaise regarding their role and any questions or issues that may arise;
- to have clear information about what is and is not expected of them;
- to receive adequate support and training to perform the tasks given to them;
- to be insured against third party civil liabilities and to volunteer in a safe environment;
- to be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner;
- to receive out of pocket expenses on a pre-approved basis following discussions with their Volunteer Coordinator;
- to have opportunities for personal development, in as far as the size, structure and activities of Adult Literacy Trust allows;
- to be recognised and appreciated;
- to be able to say 'no' to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable; and
- to know who to tell if something goes wrong.

Recruitment and selection

Equal opportunities principles will be adhered to in recruiting volunteers. Opportunities will be widely promoted, as appropriate to the role, to attract interest from different sectors of the community. Positive action to target recruitment may be used where appropriate.

Information will be made available to those enquiring about volunteering, including written role descriptions which set out the nature and purpose of the volunteering role, key tasks, skills required and benefits. A risk assessment will be undertaken on all volunteer roles.

Recruitment will usually involve an informal interview, application form and the taking of references; the process will be defined and consistent for any given role - for example the recruitment process for Trustees, regular volunteers and for volunteers for one-off events will be tailored in each case and may differ from one another.

Where applicants are not able to be placed in their preferred role, they will be provided with feedback and given the opportunity to discuss alternative volunteering roles.

Induction and training

Volunteers will be given Induction and training appropriate to the specific tasks to be undertaken.

Support and supervision

Volunteers will be offered support and supervision as appropriate, and this is discussed during induction. Arrangements vary according to the volunteer and the role undertaken, and may include telephone support, group meetings or one-to-one reviews.

Recognition

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with the organisation's wider staff, at Board meetings, etc.

Dealing with problems

The organisation aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. It seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly.

Adult Literacy Trust will attempt to deal with any problems informally and at the earliest opportunity. All volunteers will have a named person to whom they can turn in the case of any difficulty.

Volunteers will be made aware of the organisation's complaints policy and how to use it. They will also be made aware of how inappropriate behaviour by volunteers will be addressed by the organisation.

Expenses

Volunteers will be given clear prior information about what expenses can be claimed and how to make a claim. Volunteers should discuss with their Volunteer Coordinator prior to incurring any expense if (i) the volunteer is not sure whether falls within scope for reclaiming (ii) if they have not yet been briefed on general expenses policy or (iii) an expense requires pre-authorisation.

Moving on

When volunteers move on from volunteering with Adult Literacy Trust, they will be asked to provide feedback on the volunteering experience by way of an exit questionnaire. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss their responses to the questionnaire more fully.

Volunteers who have remained continually with the organisation, contributing on a routine basis, for at least 10 weeks may request a reference.