

VOLUNTEER POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

Pact is committed to treating all volunteers with fairness and respect in line with our values, and offering volunteers professional management and support. We aim to foster a friendly and supportive atmosphere for volunteers and ensure volunteering is a positive experience.

For the people we are here to serve, people caught up in criminal justice, there is something unique and special about the relationship with a volunteer. A volunteer is a representative of the wider community and of society. Pact volunteers give precious time and share life-skills with people who often feel shunned by wider Society; people who may feel vulnerable, marginalised and unheard. In giving time, for no reward and without any fixed agenda other than to respond to a person's needs, a volunteer is telling a service user that they are a person of value and worth. By simply being present, and accompanying them on their difficult journey, volunteers can provide much-needed encouragement that people can change their own circumstances for the better, and real hope. Like our staff, volunteers don't 'help'. We 'enable'. We 'empower'. We 'support'.

Volunteers also provide a glimpse of different kinds of lives and enable service users whose horizons have sometimes been very narrow due to their socio-economic circumstances or upbringing.

Pact's philosophy, and way of working, is rooted in some very deep values. These stem from our identity and tradition as a charity founded within the Catholic Christian community. We believe in the innate dignity and worth of every person. We believe that people are meant to live in relationship and community. We believe in the possibility of 'redemption' for everyone, no matter what crime they may have committed.

These are not uniquely Catholic, Christian or even religious values, but we are known as a Catholic charity, and are supported by the Church. We therefore warmly welcome and encourage people who volunteer because their faith calls them to it. We equally warmly welcome people from all faith and cultural traditions, and people who may describe themselves as not having a faith. We are welcoming, inclusive, firmly committed to equality of opportunity for all, and believe that diversity is something to be celebrated. We wish to have a workforce that is as representative as possible of the people we serve, including younger people (18+), older people, people with convictions, people from different ethnic communities and heritages, and people with disabilities.

Volunteers are essential to Pact. For every employed member of staff, we aim to have at least 5 active volunteers. Volunteers enable us to reach more people, and offer better services to prisoners, people with convictions, their children and their families, and to our wider society.

This policy sets out the principles for volunteering with Pact and it outlines what volunteers can expect from Pact as well as how volunteers are expected to behave when volunteering.

This policy is designed to reflect current legislative provisions in respect of volunteers and is non-contractual.

PACT GROUP

Unless otherwise stated, Pact Group policies apply equally across Pact and Pact Futures CIC. Throughout this policy the Pact Group incorporating Pact and Pact Futures CIC will be referred to as Pact.

WHO THIS POLICY APPLIES TO

All Pact People, including employees, relief and sessional workers, volunteers, associates, students and prisoner volunteer placements will be provided with our volunteering policy and procedures where it is appropriate to them or the role. Individuals will be required to adhere to these at all times when representing Pact. Some elements of this policy are directed to employees only and where appropriate will explicitly say so.

WHERE THIS POLICY APPLIES

This policy applies to all Pact services, locations and offices.

POLICY

Definition of a volunteer

A volunteer is a person who donates their time, skills and experience without receiving any form of compensation from Pact.

A volunteer is not an employee of Pact and there is no legally binding contractual relationship between Pact and the volunteer.

Why does Pact involve volunteers?

Volunteers allow Pact to expand and improve its services to prisoners, people with convictions, their families and children and their local communities.

Local volunteers have the opportunity of putting their time, skills and experience to good use and to contribute to the community in which they live.

Volunteering offers people the opportunity to gain experience and the opportunity to 'try something new' as well as meeting like-minded people.

Pact's commitment to volunteers

Pact is committed to the following principles of:

- **Choice**
Volunteering is undertaken as a matter of free choice. Pact will ensure volunteers are matched to opportunities best suited to their abilities and skills.
- **Inclusion**
Volunteering is open and accessible to all with fair, simple and consistent processes. We welcome feedback from volunteers on how we organise our services.
- **Support**
Volunteers are properly introduced to their role and provided with ongoing support and training appropriate to their individual needs, abilities and skills.
- **Safety**
The safety and wellbeing of all volunteers has been considered and adequate insurance is in place. Volunteers are aware of how to raise concerns and how they will be handled.
- **Reimbursement**
All volunteers are appropriately and promptly reimbursed for their travel and other agreed out of pocket expenses incurred whilst carrying out their role.
- **Reward**
Volunteers receive appropriate recognition for their efforts and often hear the words ... thank you.

The Volunteering relationship

Whilst the relationship between Pact and its volunteers is entirely voluntary and does not imply any contract, it is important for volunteers to know what they can expect from us as an organisation. Similarly, it is important that Pact is clear about its expectations of volunteers, because the role of volunteers is so vital to the work we do. These expectations are set out in the volunteer agreement which will be agreed and signed by the volunteer and volunteer coordinator at the beginning. Further details about the expectations of both parties can be found in Appendix A.

Recruitment

Pact advertises volunteering opportunities widely and locally, and seeks to attract volunteers that are representative of the communities we serve. Pact actively encourage people with criminal convictions to apply for both paid and voluntary positions at Pact. We therefore welcome applications from former service users and people with convictions subject to risk assessment and the nature of the volunteering role.

We require people wishing to volunteer with Pact to complete an application form (online, electronic or paper versions are available), but help can be given if requested. Applicants will be interviewed to ensure we can match the time, skills and experience of volunteers to a suitable volunteering opportunity. Pact does not guarantee to provide any volunteering opportunities.

If successful, references will be taken up. Depending on the nature of the volunteering opportunity, Pact may need to understand specific health issues in order to assess whether reasonable adjustments can be made. For more information, see the Vetting Policy.

A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check may need to be carried out where the volunteering opportunity involves working within the proximity of a prison, or involves having contact with children and/or vulnerable adults as defined by the law and current DBS guidelines. Some volunteering opportunities may be prison-based and may also be subject to prison vetting. Clarification about these checks will usually be provided at the application and interview stages.

Any necessary references and other checks, including any risk assessment checks will need to be completed before the volunteer is able to start any volunteering activity with Pact.

Induction and Training

Pact will provide all volunteers with an introduction to the organisation as well as mandatory training and an induction tailored to the volunteering opportunity, usually this will include:

- Face to face training on the role of the volunteer, safeguarding, equality and diversity, and professional boundaries,
- Details of staff members and where appropriate volunteers involved in the service/volunteering opportunity,
- Details of relevant policies including health and safety, equal opportunities and diversity, confidentiality and data protection, safeguarding etc.,
- Essential procedures relating to the service, and
- Other information as appropriate.

There are also Pact centred e-learning modules on topics such as health and safety and data protection which volunteers are expected to complete as part of their training/induction.

There may be a trial period or opportunity to shadow at the start of the volunteering opportunity depending on the nature of the activity and service.

Support

Pact acknowledges the importance of supporting volunteers and will provide appropriate supervision with their line manager throughout the course of the volunteering opportunity. Volunteers will have the opportunity to discuss any problems or issues that may arise.

Expenses

We value our volunteers and want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. Out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed, including expenses for travel and in some cases meals. Expenses for travel may be subject to project specific caps as advised in our expenses policy. In order to claim expenses, an expenses form must be completed by the volunteer and given to the line manager for authorisation (please refer to the expenses policy).

Insurance

Volunteers are covered by Pact's insurance policy whilst engaged in volunteering activities. Further information can be provided upon request.

Confidentiality and data protection

Due to the nature of Pact's work it is absolutely paramount that service user information is handled confidentially and treated with sensitivity, and should not be disclosed to third parties. All Pact People, including volunteers, are required to observe and comply with the confidentiality policy.

Volunteers' information will also be treated in a similar manner. Some volunteer information may be shared with third parties but solely for the purpose of supporting the management of the organisation (e.g. volunteer information stored on the Better Impact volunteer management database). If for any reason Pact wishes to use volunteers' information for anything other than what is usually expected then Pact will obtain consent from the volunteer first.

Copies of Pact's Volunteer privacy policy can be found on our website and is also available upon request.

Safeguarding

Pact is committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, protecting them from harm and promoting their welfare and well-being. We aim to create an atmosphere where adults and children who use our services feel welcomed, valued and safe. Volunteers are trained in safeguarding and are expected to comply with Pact's safeguarding policy. Volunteers must report any safeguarding concerns immediately to their volunteer coordinator or via Pact's out of hours safeguarding telephone number: 020 7920 6474.

Health and Safety

Pact is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all volunteers and has a health and safety policy in place.

Volunteers are made aware of this policy during their induction and must be familiar with it before undertaking any volunteering activity.

Volunteers must report any accidents, incidents or other dangerous circumstances immediately using the appropriate process.

Resolving problems

We recognise that occasionally there may be problems in the volunteering relationship, and it's important that volunteers know they can raise any concerns.

Should a volunteer wish to make a complaint about their volunteering experience the volunteer should either explain, or put in writing their dissatisfaction to their line manager who will investigate the complaint and respond accordingly. If the complaint is about their manager, they can raise this via Pact's Central Office who will refer the matter to the appropriate manager to consider and investigate where appropriate.

On the rare occasion there is a problem with a volunteer's behaviour or contribution, Pact will discuss the issues with the volunteer and agree steps to address them. Pact may also provide additional training or increased support. However if concerns cannot be resolved, we may have to end that person's volunteering relationship with us.

During any attempts to resolve complaints or concerns, volunteers will be able to freely state their case and can be accompanied by a friend.

Moving on

We understand that personal circumstances change and that volunteers may need to stop volunteering for Pact earlier than originally intended.

There may be occasions where it is necessary for Pact to withdraw any volunteering opportunity at any time and for any reason.

On leaving, volunteers are welcome to ask for a reference if they have volunteered for a minimum of 6 months. To help us continue to improve our services we may ask former volunteers for feedback on their experience with Pact.

RELATED PACT GROUP POLICIES

- Expenses Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy
- Driving Policy
- Privacy Policy

RELEVANT LAW/GUIDANCE

- Disclosure and Barring Service Code of Practice and guidance
- Volunteer Agreement

Version	Amendment	Date	Author	Authorised
1	First authorised issue	14/12/16	SS, Director of Human Resources and Workforce Development	Board of trustees
2	Clarify DBS and reference processes; add e-learning; minor wording changes.	14/11/19	SL, Volunteer Manager	AKD, Chief Executive

Appendix A – Volunteer Agreement Form

Volunteers are an important and valued part of Pact. We hope that you enjoy volunteering with us and feel part of our team. This agreement tells you what you can expect from us, and what we hope from you. We aim to be flexible, so please let us know if you would like to make any changes and we will do our best to accommodate them. This document is not intended to be a legally binding contract between us and it may be cancelled at any time by either Pact or you.

Pact is committed to provide you with:

- A written role description so you understand your role and the tasks you are authorised to perform
- A full induction, orientation and any training necessary for the volunteer role, as well as a copy of our Volunteer Handbook
- A safe environment in which to perform your role
- Respect for your privacy, including keeping your private information confidential (in line with GDPR regulations, 2018)
- Reimbursement for your reasonable expenses so you are not out-of-pocket as a result of volunteering for us, in line with Pacts expenses policy
- Insurance to cover you for the volunteer duties you are authorised to perform
- A line manager, so that you have the opportunity to ask questions and get feedback

You are committing to:

- Volunteer for a minimum of 6 months (Pact will be able to provide you with a reference if required, after this time)
- Support Pacts' aims and objectives
- Participate in all relevant induction and training programmes
- Only undertake duties you are authorised to perform and always operate under the direction and supervision of nominated staff and follow reasonable directions and instructions
- Understand and comply with the organisation's policies and procedures including equal opportunities and diversity, health and safety, data protection, safeguarding, and confidentiality policies.
- Conduct your role in line with the organisation's Code of Conduct
- Declare any potential conflicts of interest
- Notify your line manager or another member of staff of any health and safety issues or potentially hazardous situations that may pose a risk to you or others and report any accidents or incidents relating to staff, volunteers, or the workplace
- Behave appropriately and courteously to all staff, service users and the public in the course of your role
- Use any property or equipment given to you in your role safely and only for the purpose it has been given and return it when you finish your volunteer role
- Be open and honest in your dealings with us and let us know if we can improve our volunteer programme and the support that you receive



- Keep your business insurance up to date if you are required to use your own vehicle (Pact will pay any additional costs) and provide Pact with a copy of your insurance document

Volunteer name: Volunteer signature:
Date:

Line manager name: Line manager signature:
Date: