

Volunteers Policy

Policy Name	Volunteers Policy
Executive Owner	Chief Financial Officer
Approval body	ELT
Frequency of approval	3 years
Date approved	October 2025
Date next approved	October 2028

Policy Statement

At Fight for Sight, we recognise the significant and valuable role that volunteers play in supporting us to achieve our aims. We are committed to managing and maintaining effective and positive relationships with our volunteers. We benefit greatly from the skill, experience and enthusiasm of our volunteers and we believe our volunteers should benefit from the experience also. We are dedicated to ensuring the needs of both the organisation and volunteers are met.

Please note there are two other additional volunteer-specific policies, which apply alongside this policy for those it affects:

- Under 18 Volunteers Policy
- Volunteer Drivers Policy

What is volunteering?

Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community, the environment, or individuals outside (or in addition to) one's immediate family. It is unpaid and undertaken freely and by choice.

Each volunteer will have a named Responsible Person who acts as supervisor and offers guidance to the volunteer.

Appointment & background checks

All volunteers must:

- be interviewed to ensure that they have the right skill set and understand what is expected of them.
- provide two satisfactory references from non-family members
- complete a self-declaration regarding any unspent criminal convictions

We undertake to treat all volunteers fairly, and not to discriminate unfairly on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

We reserve the right to ask any volunteer to complete a DBS check at any time.

What can you expect from us?

To be valued

Volunteers are highly valued and important to everything we do. We involve volunteers to allow us to meet our aims and extend capacity to help in furthering our charitable purpose. Volunteers are involved in roles which complement but do not replace the work of paid staff. Staff and volunteers work in partnership to maximise our work. All staff are encouraged to consider the involvement of volunteers where this can bring new approaches and be effective in extending their capacity.

To be part of a diverse and inclusive team

We are committed to promoting equality and diversity, providing an inclusive and cooperative environment in which all individuals volunteering for and working on behalf of the organisation feel respected and able to give their best. We are committed to providing equal access to volunteer opportunities. We aim to ensure you are volunteering in a place that is inclusive, safe, and free from discrimination, bullying and harassment.

We are committed to open and diverse recruitment of volunteers. We will strive to widely promote opportunities, while making recruitment materials accessible to individuals. We implement a fair, effective and open process in the recruitment and selection of volunteers. All information received in this process is treated confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation.

Individuals that are unsuccessful in the selection process will be offered the opportunity for feedback. Where available they may be offered alternative roles within the organisation.

To be protected by our insurance policies

As a volunteer, you are covered by our Employers Liability Insurance in accordance with the requirements of the Employers Liability (Compulsory Insurance Act).

There is no insurance cover for personal effects or personal possessions. We recommend that volunteers do not bring large sums of cash or any personal valuables with them.

Volunteers using their cars in connection with their volunteer role must inform their own insurance company to confirm adequate and continued cover.

To have a voice, and be heard

We always welcome your ideas on our work as well as on your volunteering. We are committed to listening to you and to taking your view into account when making decisions.

We encourage informal consultation between volunteers and staff, and you should speak to your Responsible Person in the first instance.

To keep your information confidential

In order to meet our duty of care to you as a volunteer and ensure we are continually providing a quality volunteer experience; we maintain a personal file on each volunteer which can include:

- contact details and other relevant personal information;
- details of the application and selection process;
- agreements made, including our code of conduct;
- hours contributed;
- support plans and risk assessments (if appropriate)

All such information is treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

To be reimbursed for appropriate expenses

We do not want you to be out of pocket and will reimburse you for your lunch and travel expenses.

Lunch

Lunch expenses can be claimed when both:

- you volunteer five or more hours in a day
- they are accompanied by a valid receipt.

A maximum of £5 per day can be claimed, and it cannot include alcohol or personal shopping.

Travel

If you require regular travel expenses from your home to your place of volunteering (and vice versa), this must be agreed in advance by the Volunteer Manager. Receipts must be provided.

For volunteer drivers, the agreed mileage rates are in line with the HMRC approved rates. For the 2025/26 financial year, these are 45p for the first 10,000 business miles and 25p for each business mile after the threshold of 10,000 miles. For mileage claims, the volunteer driver must fill out a collection docket sheet, which should be given to the shop manager.

Parking / Congestion Charge

You can claim for reasonable parking fees and tolls you incur while travelling on business. Receipts to be provided to the shop manager.

You cannot claim expenses for the cost of any parking/traffic offence fines or car wash/valet.

If you must enter a congestion charge or ULEZ zone when travelling on business, you can reclaim the cost.

You will not be able to claim for any fines or penalty payments you get for failing to pay or register for congestion charges.

Claiming Expenses

The shop manager must record the expense on Vector, store the receipt(s) and can then use money from the till to reimburse the expense.

For non-Retail volunteers, you should send details of your expenses (with receipts) to your Responsible Person, along with your bank account details. These will then be processed through our finance system and paid into your bank account.

To be supported

You will be provided with the training and guidance required for you to carry out you're volunteering. You will be encouraged to develop in your volunteering role.

You will receive an induction on commencing your volunteer role.

You will be supported to develop skills whilst volunteering with us and where mutually agreed, will have the opportunity to progress to roles with greater responsibility.

With regard to paid opportunities within our charity, you can apply for any vacancy at any time.

Working in a safe environment

We are responsible for providing and maintaining a safe and healthy environment for volunteers, in accordance with health and safety laws and our policies and procedures. You are required to co-operate with us to help achieve the required standards of health and safety. When volunteering with us, you have a duty to take reasonable care of yourself and others who could be affected by what you do or fail to do.

Our Health and Safety policy is available on Assemble and in the policy folder in your shop.

Safeguarding

We are committed to practice which promotes the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and protects them from harm as outlined in our Safeguarding policy.

We wish to ensure that everyone can volunteer in an enjoyable and safe environment. Staff and volunteers accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause harm to children, young people and vulnerable adults and to establish and maintain a safe environment for them. We are committed to reviewing our policy, procedures, and practice at regular intervals.

We require all volunteers to undertake safeguarding training, which will be covered in your induction. Our Safeguarding policy is available on Assemble and in the policy folder in your shop.

Dealing with difficulties and complaints

We aim to create an environment in which you can enjoy your volunteering, to ensure our relationship with you is of mutual benefit. There may however be occasions when a volunteer has a complaint about us or about their volunteering.

Informal Resolution

We believe that open communication and mutual respect are key to resolving concerns. Our aim is to listen, understand, and work together to find a positive way forward. If you feel comfortable, try speaking directly with the person involved.

If you'd prefer not to speak directly to the person, or if the issue continues, you can raise any concerns informally with your Responsible Person or Volunteer Manager first, so they can try to resolve the issue.

If the concern involves a member of staff, please speak with the Commercial Manager or Volunteer Manager. Managers will meet with you in private, listen to your concerns, and explore ways to move forward. This might include a supported conversation or a plan to help improve the situation. If the issue is more complex or doesn't get resolved, we may involve a senior team member to help guide the process. We will keep you informed and make sure you feel supported throughout.

Formal Complaint

If the concern can't be resolved informally, you can share your concern in writing via our Complaints procedure, details of which can be found on our website:

<https://www.fightforsight.org.uk/policies/complaints-and-feedback/>

Please include as much detail as you can, such as what happened, when, who was involved, and what kind of outcome or support you're hoping for. We'll listen to everyone involved and explore ways to move forward. This might include a supported conversation or a plan to help improve the situation.

You are free to stop volunteering

As a volunteer, you may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to end your relationship with us. You are requested to inform us in advance of your intention to end the relationship and to give reasons for this decision so we can continually reflect and improve on the volunteer experience we offer.

We may also, at any time, for relevant reasons, decide to end your relationship with the organisation. Volunteers who behave in a way which does not meet our code of conduct or our internal policies, may have their offer of volunteering withdrawn by their Responsible Person at any time. Where a criminal offence is suspected we reserve the right to refer the matter to the police.

What we ask of you

We require you to carry out your volunteering within the terms agreed, within the law and our policies and procedures.

We require you sign to say you will abide by our Code of Conduct. As a volunteer you have an important role to play as an ambassador for the organisation. As a volunteer you are required to ensure that your conduct is in keeping with the organisation's beliefs, values and aims.

Our Code of Conduct is available on Assemble.

We ask that you limit your use of computers to business purposes only. You are expected to follow Fight for Sight's Data Protection Policy (available on Assemble) and in particular not disclose any confidential information relating to Fight for Sight.

We request that you volunteer when you say you will and provide as much notice as possible if you are unable to fulfil your volunteering commitment, to allow us to make alternative arrangements. We will ask you to inform your Responsible Person of any change in your health, social or professional condition, as well as any problems or complaints you have with us or a colleague which may affect your volunteering.