

# Volunteer Policy



Document Type	Policy
Version Number	2
Ownership	CEO
Date Approved	20 October 2023 (GRHRC)
Date of next review	20 October 2025
Reference Number	WCS-P-019 V2
Overview of changes	Wholesale rewrite of the policy to improve clarity – October 2023

This policy provides guidance and direction to volunteers, prospective volunteers and staff engaged in volunteering or supporting volunteering at Wessex Cancer Support.

## Definition of volunteering

A volunteer is anyone who gives their time, skills and experience without financial remuneration (beyond out-of-pocket expenses). It is support that is undertaken by choice and is unpaid. It addresses a **need** for the charity primarily, although it is recognised that volunteers can gain significant benefits from volunteering.

## Why and how does Wessex Cancer Support involve volunteers

Volunteers are vital to the work of the charity, and the charity is committed to involving a diverse range of people through volunteering. Without the support of volunteers across all areas of the organisation, the charity would not be able to continue supporting thousands of people affected by cancer.

We involve volunteers because they:

- Offer additional resource with a pool of skills, experience and perspective that we might not otherwise have access to, enhancing what we can achieve as a charity.
- Bring extra credibility to our work – volunteers are making the choice to donate their time and talents freely to the charity.
- Champion our mission and extend our reach into diverse communities.

## Wessex Cancer Support uses volunteers for roles including:

- Befriending and other general support for our client services, delivered in person and remotely on-line and on the phone, through our cancer support centres, and through community outreach projects.
- Counselling or complementary therapy.
- Working in our shops as retail assistants.
- Supporting our online retail sales.

- Helping at fundraising events.
- Helping out with administration or fundraising in the office.

## **Responsibility / accountability**

### **Wessex Cancer Support aims to encourage, support and motivate volunteers. We commit to:**

- Employing a volunteer co-ordinator who is the focal point for support of volunteers.
- Widely promote any volunteer opportunities within the local community, with a clear role description.
- Respond to all volunteer enquiries within a maximum of 5 working days.
- Have a clear recruitment process that considers the needs of the charity and the interests of the individual.
- Provide a role description, volunteer policy and volunteer handbook, so volunteers understand their role, responsibilities and who they can talk to.
- Ensure volunteers are clear about who they are reporting to.
- Meet all relevant legal and good practice requirements for recruiting volunteers, including taking up references and DBS checks where relevant.
- Provide relevant training to enable a volunteer to undertake their role.
- Provide support to volunteers to help them cope with any emotional effects they face as a result of dealing with clients with cancer.
- Communicate with volunteers about the charity including about our vision, mission, values and behaviours; and consult with them on the vision and strategy of the organisation.
- Regularly thank our volunteers.

### **Volunteers are expected to:**

- Support the aims of the charity and demonstrate our Values and Behaviours in all their work for the charity.
- Represent the charity in a professional manner at all times.
- Carry out their role to the best of their ability.
- Complete training that the charity considers to be mandatory for the role.
- Treat everyone associated with the charity, with respect and dignity.
- Take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and others.
- Comply with all appropriate policies and procedures.
- Understand the scope of their role and involve a manager in decision making as needed.

## **Recruitment, induction, and training of volunteers**

Volunteers may need to apply for a specific volunteering role, discuss the role with a department manager or volunteer coordinator and may be expected to provide referee details, and have a DBS disclosure. These steps will depend on the role in which the volunteer will be involved. All volunteers will be given a suitable

induction/briefing and training as appropriate to the role and be supported throughout their time volunteering within the organisation.

## **Who can be a volunteer**

We are a charity that relies on volunteers and welcome volunteer applications from anyone. There are some circumstances in which Wessex Cancer Support may consider it would not be appropriate for someone to join the organisation as a volunteer or in a particular role. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Age and maturity. Some roles may come with a minimum age limit due to insurance, or the sensitive nature of some roles. If someone is close to the minimum age limit, we will take into account their relative maturity.
- Personal experience of cancer. If someone has had their own recent experience with cancer or bereavement, we will take this into account for any client facing role. There is no set timeframe to this, it will depend on the individual circumstances.
- Conflict of interest. In some circumstances, it might be considered that there is a conflict of interest. This might include for example, family members of staff volunteering alongside them; employees/supporters of other charities that deliver similar services or fundraising activity, where they will gain access to sensitive information or contacts; or volunteers that want to promote / enhance their own interests above those of the charity.
- Former employees or volunteers. It will not always be appropriate for past employees or volunteers of Wessex Cancer Support to volunteer for the charity e.g. a new employee may find it difficult to settle into their role, if a past employee is volunteering at activities, events or in the office.

This list is not exhaustive and, in all cases, whether or not to accept a volunteer for a role is entirely at the discretion of Wessex Cancer Support.

## **Addressing issues with a volunteer and terminating volunteer agreements**

On occasion we find that a volunteer is not suitable for the role they have volunteered for. This may be because their circumstances have changed, the role is not how they expected it to be, or there is a mismatch between what the charity needs and what the volunteer is able to offer.

In these circumstances WCS will:

- Have an honest conversation with the volunteer and tell them about our concerns.
- If appropriate and possible, offer the relevant help or information needed to support the volunteer.
- Consider and discuss any other volunteering opportunities which may be more appropriate.

If it is decided the volunteer agreement should be terminated WCS will:

- Be clear about the reasons for the termination of the agreement.
- Offer the volunteer an opportunity to have a follow-up meeting with our Volunteer Coordinator.

### **If a volunteer wants to raise a concern or make a complaint**

Should a volunteer have a concern or would like to complain about any aspect of their volunteering, they should in the first place, discuss the matter with their line manager.

If this is not appropriate / possible, the volunteer should speak to the Volunteer Coordinator, or another manager, who can escalate as needed.

In some cases, the concern or complaint might be outside of the volunteer's immediate role. In which case it is possible to raise these issues through other channels, please see:

[Privacy policy](#)

[Safeguarding policy for adults at risk](#)

[Safeguarding policy for children](#)

[Whistleblowing policy](#)

[Complaints policy](#)