**London’s Air Ambulance Volunteer Policy**

**Introduction**

This policy sets out the broad principles for volunteer involvement at London’s Air Ambulance. It is of relevance to all within the organisation, including volunteers, staff, members, and those elected or appointed to positions of responsibility.

This policy will be reviewed every two years to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of London’s Air Ambulance and its volunteers. The date of next review is located at the bottom of this document.

**Our commitment to volunteers**

London’s Air Ambulance acknowledges the importance of volunteers in our work and the valuable contribution that they make to the charity. London’s Air Ambulance is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions throughout the organisation and in ways that are of value to the volunteer and the organisation.

London's Air Ambulance recognises that:

* Volunteers form a core part of the London's Air Ambulance team and play a complimentary role alongside paid staff.
* The experience should be beneficial for both volunteers and the organisation.
* We should provide equality in accessing volunteer roles and strive to create a diverse and inclusive organisation.
* We should treat all volunteers equally and provide clear guidance in our volunteer policies and procedures.
* Volunteering should be an enjoyable experience and we will endeavour to take into account the individuals’ motivations and aspirations when finding suitable volunteer roles.
* The relationship between the organisation and the volunteers is mutually beneficial and that we must respect the opinions and thoughts of volunteers by listening to them and learning from what they say.

**Definitions of Volunteering**

A London’s Air Ambulance volunteer is someone who, of their own free will and without expectation of financial compensation beyond the reimbursement of expenses, performs a task at the request of and on behalf of London's Air Ambulance.

Volunteering will not replace paid employment in any instance and will complement the work of paid staff.

**Recruitment & Selection**

* London’s Air Ambulance is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs or offending background that does not create a risk to vulnerable groups including children.
* All volunteers will be required to complete an application form and attend an informal interview. We will also require two references.
* Volunteers will be asked to fill in a Diversity Monitoring form which will allow us to monitor the diversity of our volunteer pool and allow us to plan for recruitment of underrepresented groups.
* Our selection criteria for appointing volunteers is based on the individuals suitability to carry out the role. Information about the volunteer not relevant to the performance of the volunteering tasks concerned will be disregarded by the organisation
* Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task will be given feedback on request and either be offered alternative voluntary involvement with the organisation or signposted to other external opportunities.
* Volunteer recruitment will be conducted by the Volunteer Coordinator who aims to allow both parties to give and receive sufficient information to assess whether available roles match the volunteer’s skills, qualities and interests.
* Volunteering opportunities will be widely promoted in ways that makes them accessible to all members of the community. Roles and opportunities will be advertised in a variety of places including, but not exclusively on our website, via Volunteer Centres, on volunteer recruitment website, via Social Media and within the local community.
* All volunteers will be required to be over the age of 16, although there may be some further restrictions on age depending on the role and activity.
* All volunteer roles will have clear role descriptions, outlining the responsibilities of that role and the necessary skills, attitude, experience and commitment required to undertake that role. These will be reviewed at least every two years.
* Risk assessments will be conducted for each role. These will be regularly reviewed and updated as appropriate.
* Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks will not be required for any London's Air Ambulance volunteer roles at present.

**Involving ex-offenders in volunteering**

London's Air Ambulance is committed to involving ex-offenders as volunteers where possible and demonstrates this by working with organisations such as ‘Working Chance.’ A criminal offence will not necessarily disbar anyone from volunteering but each case will be considered individually.

During the application process we will only ask potential volunteers about unspent convictions and a formal risk assessment may be done if appropriate.

We have a duty to minimise risk to our organisation, staff, other volunteers and members of the public and will consider the below when recruiting ex-offenders as volunteers:

* The nature and seriousness of the offence.
* The relevance of the offence in relation to the volunteering opportunity.
* The circumstances under which the offence was committed.
* Any patterns of offences and the date of the offence.
* The candidates’ attitude towards the offence now.

Unsuccessful applicants will be informed and where appropriate, signposted to other organisations for further opportunities.

**References**

All volunteers will be asked to provide contact details for two individuals who can provide references. This could be an employer, previous employer, tutor or another individual who can make comment on your suitability as a volunteer.

For any applicant who is unable to provide this information, we will be able to discuss further to assist them in identifying a suitable person.

**Volunteer management**

All volunteers will be introduced to their volunteer supervisor for each volunteer role that they undertake. This individual will be able to provide support and guidance during your time volunteering with London's Air Ambulance.

Sophie Anderton, Volunteering Coordinator has overall responsibility for the development of voluntary activities within the organisation. She is responsible for the management and welfare of the organisation's volunteers and providing support and training to other members of staff who manage volunteers. Any questions or concerns that you have during your time volunteering can be directed to Sophie.

**Induction and training**

New volunteers will receive an induction pack which will include further information the charity and its work, role specific information and all volunteer policies and procedures. Volunteers will be invited to attend a group induction session once they have started volunteering and this will include the opportunity to find out more about the charity and staff. These sessions will take place on a quarterly basis.

An Induction checklist will also be completed for all new volunteers.

Volunteers will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform with confidence. Ongoing training will be provided as necessary.

**Support and supervision**

Volunteers should take any concerns and questions relating to their volunteering to the Volunteer Coordinator. Any concerns regarding specific volunteering tasks and activities should be discussed with the volunteer’s manager. Volunteers will be informed of who will be managing them when they commence their role.

Volunteers will have access to regular support and supervision should they wish to. This will enable both the volunteer and the supervisor to identify, monitor and evaluate the volunteer's involvement, recognise achievements and identify individual training needs, including that relevant to their particular volunteering role and to their wider personal development. The frequency, duration and format of these sessions will be negotiated between the volunteer and the Volunteer Coordinator or volunteer’s supervisor and may also depend on the volunteer role being undertaken.

**Complaints and problem solving**

Situations may arise where a volunteer wishes to complain about their treatment by paid staff, users, committee members or other volunteers. Also the organisation may have to address situations where the volunteer has behaved inappropriately.

The process for dealing with these situations is outlined in the Problem solving procedure.

**Providing feedback**

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions about the organisation. An annual volunteer survey is conducted (usually at the end of the year) and other opportunities to contribute ideas and opinions will be communicated with all volunteers, including focus groups.

Feedback from volunteers is welcomed at all times and should be directed to the Volunteer Coordinator or Head of Community and Volunteering. Feedback will be acknowledged and responded to within two weeks of receipt. Any changes implemented as a result of the feedback will be reported back to the volunteer.

When volunteers leave the organisation they will be invited to take part in an exit survey to offer thoughts and feedback.

**Providing references**

We are able to act as referees for volunteers who wish to apply for other opportunities. These requests should be addressed to the Volunteer Coordinator and will provide factual information about the volunteers’ role. Personal and character references will not be provided.

**Recognition**

Volunteers are recognised in a number of ways including at events, through social media, on our website and through newsletters. We endeavour to provide recognition for volunteers where possible and volunteers will be invited to attend events as appropriate.

**Expenses**

London’s Air Ambulance recognises that the reimbursement of expenses incurred in traveling to and from the place of volunteering or in the course of volunteering is important from an equal opportunities point of view. This is necessary to ensure that all individuals have access to voluntary opportunities.

The organisation's volunteers are able to claim reasonable out of pocket expenses, subject to the production of receipts as evidence of the expenditure. What can be reclaimed from the organisation and the calculation of expenses will be explained to the volunteer before they start any activity likely to give rise to expenses.

Please see Volunteer Expenses Policy for further details.

**Insurance and Driving**

The organisation's liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them.

The organisation does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage.

**Volunteers using their own vehicle**: If a volunteer is using their own vehicle as part of their volunteering role, they will need to provide a copy of their driving licence and inform their insurance company that they will be using the vehicle as part of their volunteering. Some companies may add an additional cost which unfortunately we are unable to cover.

**Using a London's Air Ambulance vehicle**: If a volunteer will be using a London's Air Ambulance vehicle as part of their volunteering they will be required to undertake a driving assessment with our Driving Standards Manager.

**Confidentiality**

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information to which they are exposed. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination of the volunteer’s relationship with the organisation.

Volunteers will be briefed about our data protection policy during their induction and if appropriate issued with a copy of the Data Protection policy.

**Volunteering agreement**

Our volunteers are vital to the work we do and support us in many different ways. We aim to provide a professional environment and help you develop your skills and experience during your time with us. We strive to ensure that you get the most out of your volunteering. The below illustrates what you can expect from us as a volunteer and our expectations of our volunteers.

**As an organisation we will:**

* Provide you with a clear written description of your volunteer role.
* Deliver full training allowing you to undertake agreed roles and provide ongoing support to help you to develop within your role if desired.
* Supervise your work and provide support.
* Fully explain the missions and goals of the charity to give you a clear understanding of our work.
* Listen to your expectations and match you to appropriate volunteer roles.
* Ensure the health, safety and welfare of all volunteers whilst undertaking their volunteering activities, including relevant insurance cover
* Recognise your contribution to our work, celebrate successes and reward loyalty and dedication.
* Listen to your feedback on our volunteering offer and provide regular support to help you contribute in the most effective way.
* Treat all volunteers equally regardless of gender, sexual orientation, age, parental or marital status, disability, religion, colour, race, ethnic or national origins, or socio/economic background.
* Ensure that volunteers are aware that any requests to participate in volunteering activities can be refused.
* Provide you with regular communication, keep you up to date on our work and the impact that you have had as a volunteer.
* Reimburse reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred in your volunteering.

**In return, we expect our volunteers to:**

* Support our aims, values and objectives and be able to communicate these effectively on behalf of the service.
* Remember that whilst volunteering you are representing the charity and should strive to uphold the good name and reputation of London’s Air Ambulance.
* Be reliable and committed to your role, for example recognising the importance of good time keeping and fulfilling all commitments. If you are unable to fulfil your commitments, we expect you to communicate this to your allocated contact as soon as possible.
* Communicate with us and keep us informed of any issues, concerns or feedback.
* Respect the need for confidentiality whenever there is access to restricted charity information.
* Treat all other volunteers, employees of the Charity and stakeholders of the Charity equally, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, age, parental or marital status, disability, religion, colour, race, ethnic or national origins, or socio/economic background.
* Take care of your own health and safety whilst volunteering outside the office.
* Let us know when they no longer wish to volunteer or if they feel that requests are unrealistic.

**Further information**

For further information and more detailed policies listed below please contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

* Volunteer expenses policy
* Problem solving procedure
* Data protection policy

Date of next review: March 2019