



1 Introduction

1.1 The RSPCA's vision is a world where all animals are respected and treated with compassion.

Our mission is by all lawful means to prevent cruelty, promote kindness to and alleviate suffering of all animals.

The values of the RSPCA are:

- we are compassionate
- we are inspirational
- we are committed
- we are expert
- we act with integrity

1.2 The Society relies on volunteers in order to help achieve the vision and mission. This policy sets out the principles for voluntary involvement within the RSPCA National Society ('the Society') and commits to:

- recognising the commitment of volunteers to animal welfare
- harnessing professionalism and expertise in support of volunteers
- seeking the highest standards in all that it does
- encouraging open and effective communication

1.3 The policy was endorsed by the Society's Council and will be reviewed periodically.

2 Aim

2.1 The volunteering policy is driven by the following aim:

To create a culture within the Society in which volunteering is viewed positively and enthusiastically by all and to develop a programme which enables volunteers to make their full contribution to achieving the Society's goals, whilst developing their own skills and interests.

3 Principles

3.1 The volunteering policy is underpinned by the following principles:

In accordance with the Society's animal welfare and other policies to:

- ensure all volunteers are treated fairly and equally
- provide training, assistance and appropriate resources to support volunteering
- deliver effective relief of animal suffering
- deliver effective animal welfare provision
- increase the opportunities to raise funds for the Society
- increase the number of volunteers recruited for specific skills

4 Principles

RECRUITMENT

- 4.1 All prospective volunteers will be interviewed to determine what they would like to do, their skills, their suitability and how best their potential might be realised.¹ The Society is committed to equal opportunities in volunteering (see 4.9 below). Selection will be made on the individual's suitability for the specified task, establishment and location.
- 4.2 The Society aims to ensure that volunteers understand clearly their role and responsibilities and are provided with appropriate information on policies and guidelines that are relevant to their work. Ensure all volunteers are treated fairly and equally.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- 4.3 The development of volunteers is important to the Society and it recognises the need to ensure that volunteers are provided with the opportunity to develop their skills. Volunteers will receive an induction to the Society, which is relevant to their role. Additional training will be provided as appropriate and where it is a requirement for the volunteering activity that they are engaged in.

SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION

- 4.4 All volunteers will be provided with a named person as their main contact and will be provided with regular supervision to feed back on progress, discuss future development and to discuss any problems.
- 4.5 Appreciation of the work that volunteers carry out is actively encouraged amongst staff and other volunteers.
- 4.6 Society volunteers are provided with the opportunity to have their previously agreed reasonable out-of-pocket expenses reimbursed. Expenses must be authorised by the volunteer's supervisor and can only be reimbursed upon production of receipts.

INSURANCE

- 4.7 All Society volunteers are covered by the RSPCA's liability and personal accident insurance policy, a copy of which is available from the Society. It is the volunteer's responsibility to check the terms of the cover provided and obtain additional cover if necessary.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 4.8 The RSPCA is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all its volunteers, with appropriate instructions, training and supervision being provided. Appropriate risk assessments will be carried out as necessary. A copy of the health and safety policy can be obtained from the Society.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 4.9 The Society wholeheartedly supports the principle of equal opportunities in volunteering and opposes all forms of unfair discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, religious belief, age² or disability.

MEDIA CONTACT

- 4.10 The Society has a press department which liaises with the media about the work of the RSPCA and volunteers must contact the department and/or the regional press officer if they wish to raise any issues concerning the RSPCA.

¹ This excludes Society trustees who are selected by an election process governed by the Society's rules.

² Age restrictions apply to certain volunteering roles and in accordance with the Society's insurance cover.

DATA PROTECTION

- 4.11 Personal information about the volunteer may be recorded and stored by the Society in accordance with data protection legislation in force, for the purposes of administering and managing their volunteering and for operational purposes, where relevant.
- 4.12 Any volunteer who stores and/or records information about individuals in relation to their volunteering for the Society will also need to ensure that they comply with the Act and any related work rules governing the use or disclosure of personal information. Guidance can be obtained from the Society.

DISPUTES & RESOLUTIONS

- 4.13 The Society will aim to identify and solve problems that arise in the course of the volunteer's involvement with the Society at the earliest possible stage. In the first instance, a volunteer should inform their supervisor of the grievance and he/she will try to resolve the situation with the volunteer. Where the matter is not resolved at this stage, a volunteer may take their grievance to their supervisor's line manager. Further information about problem solving can be obtained from the Volunteering team at Southwater.