



Volunteering Policy

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

At NEFA, we believe that all older people in the north east of England should be seen as equal members of society. We aim to ensure that older people's voices are heard and listened to at local regional and national level, promoting a positive image of older people, increasing their confidence and knowledge, informing and educating them.

Volunteers play a crucial role in helping to achieve our mission and we could not achieve our goals without their help. We are incredibly grateful for their support and want to make sure all our volunteers have a safe, rewarding and enjoyable experience.

The Volunteer Policy recognises the significant and valuable role volunteers play in supporting the work of NEFA. This policy reflects our commitment to volunteering at NEFA and sets out a framework of procedures and best practice, which we will endeavour to follow when recruiting and working with our volunteers, to ensure that both volunteers' and NEFA's expectations are met.

This policy is for volunteers recruited by and volunteering for NEFA and colleagues working with those volunteers. It will be provided to all volunteers at the time of their induction.

Responsibility for this policy rests with the board of NEFA.

2. NEFA'S VOLUNTEERS – DEFINITION

A NEFA volunteer is someone who, unpaid and of their own free will, chooses to give their time, energy, skills and expertise to support NEFA in achieving its aims. The arrangement is voluntary on both sides. The charity's relationship with volunteers is based on trust and is not intended to have the obligations associated with employment. No payment, other than the reimbursement of agreed out-of-pocket expenses, is made by NEFA to people who give their time as volunteers.

NEFA's volunteers support the organisation in a number of ways, not exhaustively, including:

- NEFA Connectors enabling older people's voices to be heard, for example by facilitating small group sessions, zoom meetings, focus groups, telephone conversations or other means of communicating in order to seek out opinions of a wide range of topics effecting the lives of older people (to listen to their views)
- Partnering with colleagues, for example by providing administrative support to NEFA or delivering IT or other support.
- NEFA Ambassadors helping to spread the word and connecting us with communities and partners.
- NEFA Board members who are responsible for the strategic direction of the organisation
- Building the NEFA community, for example by helping to recruit, train or support other volunteers.

We expect that both our volunteers and paid staff always aim to embrace the values of NEFA by being:

- Approachable – open minded and value diversity

- Inspiring – lead by example
- Empowering – enable positive change
- Passionate about NEFA’s goals and delivering excellence

3. OUR VISION FOR VOLUNTEERING

We believe that by harnessing the passion and skills of all our volunteer community, we can achieve more for older people and we are committed to engaging volunteers in this mission wherever possible. We aim to deliver an exemplary volunteering experience so that our volunteers enjoy supporting us and feel well equipped to support the work of NEFA. We are committed to making NEFA the best organisation to volunteer with.

To ensure that volunteers are at the forefront of everything we do, we aim to:

- Ensure that our volunteers understand what we expect from them, and what they can expect from us in return.
- Attract volunteers with the right skills to support older people and NEFA.
- Deliver an exemplary volunteering experience, through processes and ways of working, which makes it enjoyable and easy to support us.

4. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

NEFA is committed to building a diverse organisation that is responsive to the needs of all older people, our partners and our stakeholders. NEFA is also committed to equal opportunities at all stages of recruitment, selection and volunteering. Short-listing, interviewing and selection of volunteers will always be carried out without regard to protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. This commitment is reflected throughout the organisations policies and procedures. NEFA will not condone, accept or ignore any forms of discrimination or unacceptable behaviour.

5. SAFEGUARDING

NEFA believes that all older people have the right to protection from harm, abuse and exploitation. The Safeguarding Policy will be shared with all new volunteers to NEFA. Where NEFA feels it is necessary, failure to meet the obligations of the Safeguarding Policy may lead to a volunteer being asked to step back from volunteering temporarily or permanently, or other appropriate action.

Volunteers taking on roles that are eligible for a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, or equivalent, will be required to undertake a relevant check. If required, this will be made clear on the volunteer role description and during the application process. We welcome volunteers from a range of different backgrounds and having a criminal record will not necessarily bar someone from volunteering with us. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of their offence.

6. RECRUITMENT

NEFA will collect information on all prospective volunteers during the recruitment and selection process. Additionally, volunteers might be required to attend an informal interview to provide relevant information and explore their aspirations and the experience they can bring to NEFA. It is important for all involved to appreciate that the interview is not a competitive process, and the sole selection criteria is suitability for the role. A personal reference might be required and taken up to help confirm suitability for volunteering and for specific roles.

All our regular volunteers must read and agree to the Volunteer Commitment which outlines what is expected from the volunteer and what they can expect from NEFA. In commencing their role, the volunteer commits to the aims, values and key policies of NEFA. They also commit to delivering the key tasks outlined in the relevant role description. This Volunteer Commitment does not and is not intended to create a contract of employment between NEFA and volunteers.

When appointed, an appropriate named contact will be identified to provide all necessary advice and support to the volunteer. This may be a colleague or a volunteer. The named contact is responsible for guiding and supporting the volunteer in their role and should be available to discuss any aspect of the volunteer's role. A volunteer will be informed in writing (letter or email) if their NEFA contact changes.

7. TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Volunteers will have a valuable set of skills, knowledge and attitudes gained from their education, work, previous volunteering, and life experiences. To help ensure that volunteers are appropriately equipped for their role, each volunteer will undergo the appropriate induction and training process prior to commencing their role, alongside continuous training, where appropriate, whilst volunteering with NEFA

Each volunteer will be provided with relevant management and support. This might include regular, appropriate and mutually agreed contact.

NEFA will also provide appropriate recognition and occasions to celebrate volunteers and their work, on an individual and group basis, according to specific role(s), commitment and length of service.

8. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Volunteers must take reasonable care of themselves and others while volunteering for NEFA, and follow any health and safety advice and instruction given for their role. Volunteers should cooperate with NEFA on health and safety matters, and immediately report accidents/incidents

(including near misses – accidents/incidents that may have led to injury). Volunteers should not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare.

NEFA will ensure that all volunteers are provided with the appropriate information, supervision and training required to enable them to complete voluntary work safely. This includes providing suitable systems and procedures and guidance is outlined in The Health and Safety Policy.

9. EXPENSES

The work of NEFA is critically dependent on our network of volunteers. We are very grateful to the vast number of volunteers who do not claim expenses; however, we will always look to reimburse reasonable expenses if there are financial barriers to volunteering. Please note that we will only reimburse expenses if previously agreed with the volunteer's named contact, based on their assessment of NEFA's requirements and the available budget.

10. INSURANCE

NEFA provides Employers Liability, Public Liability and Professional Indemnity cover for all volunteers whilst working on NEFA activities. The NEFA does not provide motor insurance cover. The insurance will not cover unauthorised actions or actions outside the volunteering agreement.

If the individual volunteers motor insurance is limited to social and domestic use then they will have to discuss their role as a NEFA volunteer with their insurance company to ensure that they are fully covered. Volunteers will be asked to sign the relevant section on the Expenses form to confirm that they have agreed to drive on NEFA business with their insurers before we can reimburse mileage costs.

11. DATA PROTECTION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

NEFA will protect volunteer information in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Data will be held securely and confidentially and will only be accessed by authorised individuals. We expect all volunteers to comply with the NEFA's Data Protection Policy and associated policies.

When volunteering with NEFA, volunteers are likely to become aware of confidential

With regard to information about NEFA, its team, older people NEFA is in contact with and NEFA partners, all volunteers are required to maintain confidentiality and should not disclose the organisation's information during their volunteering services and any time afterwards.

12. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

When signing our Volunteer Commitment, a volunteer assigns, by way of future assignment to NEFA, all Intellectual Property created by them as part of their role as a NEFA volunteer or credited to them during the term of their volunteering, provided that the assignment shall not include intellectual property which is not connected in any way whatsoever whether directly or indirectly with their volunteering.

13. FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS

Although NEFA makes every effort to ensure that any experience of volunteering with us is

positive and rewarding, we recognise that volunteers at times may experience difficulty within their role or they may want to share feedback or raise an issue with a member of the board, staff or another volunteer.

In the first instance, volunteers should talk to their named contact to try to resolve the issue, get advice or share feedback. We will make every reasonable effort to resolve difficulties at an early stage and we always review feedback and learn from it.

However, where the areas of concern cannot be resolved by these means, feedback and or complaints can be submitted to NEFA in the following ways:

- Online: using our contact form - <https://www.nefa.org.uk/contact-us>
- Email: contact@nefa.org.uk
- Post: writing to: FAO NEFA, Deckham Village Hall, Split Crow Road, Gateshead. NE8 3UB

There may be occasions where named contacts may have concerns around a volunteer's behaviour or approach. In this case, the volunteer will be contacted directly to discuss any concerns they may have amicably and openly and resolve difficulties at an early stage.

14. LEAVING NEFA

Volunteers are free to cease volunteering with NEFA at any time by speaking or writing to their named contact. When deciding to finish volunteering with us, we ask that volunteers give us as much notice as possible to help us organise alternative arrangements. Upon leaving a volunteer role, we may offer an exit interview to reflect on their experiences and improve our volunteer opportunities.

There are many different ways to support older people through NEFA and so we encourage volunteers to stay in touch and get involved in the future.

There may also be times when NEFA will ask a volunteer to cease volunteering. This may be because the role no longer supports the needs of the organisation and its current work, or because the volunteer is no longer able to satisfactorily carry out a particular role. When this happens, we will endeavour to give as much notice as possible to the volunteer and try to find an acceptable alternative role. In all cases, the volunteer will be treated fairly, with dignity and respect.

15. LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

Other policies which may be relevant to this policy are listed on our website and include:

Safeguarding Policy

Data Protection policy

Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

Health and Safety Policy

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