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## OUR VOLUNTEERING POLICY

**Welcome** to volunteering for Twins Trust.

As a volunteer, we recognise you contribute your time, energy and skills in support of our cause. We appreciate everything you do to help us save lives and support our families.

You will also be a representative of the charity and, as such, we ask and expect that you comply with our Volunteering Policy. We have attached it below for you to read and become familiar with.

Thank you for your commitment to Twins Trust and our remarkable work.

***Krista Pound***

Chair of trustees at Twins Trust

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## **Committed to Volunteering**

Volunteers are vital to Twins Trust and are our link to communities all over the UK. They are integrated into the structure and operations of the charity and contribute strongly towards Twins Trust's aims and objectives.

Who is this Policy For?

Volunteers support Twins Trust by giving their time to carry out roles which have been initiated by, or agreed with, the charity. The volunteering relationship is based on trust and does not involve the obligations associated with employment. No payment, other than the reimbursement of agreed expenses, is made by Twins Trust to people who give their time as volunteers.

This policy is intended for Twins Trust volunteers who have accepted an agreed role with the charity. It outlines the principles on which the relationship between volunteers and the charity is based and provides basic information about volunteering with us.

## **Recruitment**

Twins Trust welcomes and respects the breadth of experience, skills, dedication and goodwill that volunteers bring. Informal interviews are carried out to ensure that applicants are suitable for the role in question. We will base our selection on the ability of each applicant to fulfil the role concerned, taking into account any effect a volunteer may have on the safety of all parties, our brand and reputation.

The application process is outlined in appendix 1 at the end of this document.

## **Age**

In most cases you will need to be over 18 years of age to volunteer independently and under 18s will be asked for parental consent. Younger people may get involved in some aspects of volunteering with us if they are accompanied by a responsible adult. We do not have an upper age limit for volunteers but there may be situations that require us to ask someone to stop volunteering – for example when health issues are considered a risk to the person concerned or others around them.

## **Volunteering with Twins Trust**

### **Getting Started**

Welcome to the team! We want to make sure you have everything you need to get started so we'll provide you with either an induction or access to useful materials and information. Your staff contact will usually be the Twins Trust staff member who manages the area of work in which you volunteer.

### **Equal Opportunities and Diversity**

You will be volunteering in an organisation that is committed to equal opportunities and diversity.

This commitment is reflected throughout the charity's policies and practices.

### **Responsibilities and Expectations**

We want you to enjoy volunteering with us and we take our responsibilities towards you very seriously. As a Twins Trust volunteer, you will also be a representative of the charity and, as such, we ask that you act appropriately.

#### **Twins Trust's responsibilities:**

- To offer equal opportunities to everyone who wants to volunteer
- To match your skills and experiences with the right role for you wherever possible, listening to your motivations and aspirations
- To offer appropriate training and support for your role
- To celebrate success and recognise loyalty and dedication
- To respect all our volunteers and listen to what you have to say, consistently encouraging two-way communication
- To provide information about the charity's research work, policies and procedures
- To reimburse agreed out-of-pocket expenses
- To make necessary arrangements to ensure your health, safety and welfare as a volunteer
- To encourage a positive and friendly atmosphere
- To provide access to trained members of staff, to support, guide and advise you

#### **Our expectations of you as a volunteer:**

- To aim for high standards of efficiency, reliability and quality in your volunteering
- To work in partnership with other volunteers, staff and the general public
- To support, respect and adhere to our organisational policies, guidelines and management decisions – including all aspects of equal opportunities, health and safety, data protection and use of our brand
- To always consider and protect Twins Trust's good reputation in your actions and conduct (including on social media)
- To act responsibly and within the law
- To let your staff contact know first if you have any problems so that we can find a solution together
- To let your staff contact know if there are changes in your personal circumstances that may affect your volunteering

- To keep up to date with our work and attend relevant training whenever possible
- To have the best possible experience by getting involved and enjoying your volunteering

### **Health and Safety**

We are committed to ensuring your well-being and safety whilst you are volunteering and, in turn, we expect our volunteers to contribute to maintaining a safe working environment. For those volunteers who work away from home you need to ensure that the environment is safe and that you take precautions to protect yourself. For instance by advising someone of your location, who you are meeting with, when you will be home, and to have a mobile phone available at all times.

#### **All volunteers at Twins Trust must:**

- Take reasonable care for the health and safety of yourself and other persons who may be affected by your actions or omissions
- Co-operate with staff by assisting them to fulfil their statutory duties
- Follow our health and safety policy and measures put in place by Twins Trust or any organisation whose premises you may be working on
- Report accidents/incidents or dangerous circumstances to a paid member of staff, whether or not any person has been injured
- Be aware of actions to take when an emergency situation arises and who, from Twins Trust, to contact for support

### **Copyright, Intellectual Property and Photography**

The rights to any original works that you may produce in the course of volunteering will belong to the charity, unless otherwise agreed.

Examples include photography, artwork, graphic design and written work, including the results of research.

We may use photographs of volunteers carrying out their roles for promotional purposes, such as in a leaflet or online. You may, of course, request that an image is withdrawn.

### **Media Relations**

No comments or stories should be given directly to the media, unless your volunteer role specifically includes talking to the press or other local media. Generally, our media relations are handled by trained specialists and so any requests from the press, etc. should be referred to your staff contact or Regional Press Officer.

### **Data Protection and Confidentiality**

We take great care to protect your information as part of our data protection responsibilities. All application forms and references are stored securely. As a volunteer, we expect you to protect any personal or confidential information to which you may have access. We ask all volunteers to read and sign our Data Processor Agreement.

### **Protection of children and vulnerable adults**

As a family focused charity, there may be times when volunteers come into contact with children, vulnerable adults and families. Our efforts in these areas are covered by our child protection and vulnerable adults' policies. As part of our work, volunteers are asked to

complete child protection training, which is delivered by Twins Trust or a qualified third party. We may also ask to see the relevant up to date background checks for certain roles.

### **Expenses**

Volunteers may request reimbursement of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses, such as travel costs and, if devoting a full day to the charity, a sandwich lunch or equivalent. Payment of reasonable expenses must be authorised by your staff contact in advance and receipts or tickets will be required.

### **Insurance**

Twins Trust has appropriate types of insurance in place to cover its volunteers. These include employers' liability insurance and public liability insurance in the event of a volunteer being harmed due to the negligence of the charity, or a third party being injured as a result of the actions of a volunteer whilst performing Twins Trust duties. However, our insurance does not cover your personal belongings.

### **Using Your Own Vehicle**

Twins Trust does not provide motor insurance for you as a volunteer. Driving in connection with charitable volunteering is normally classified by insurers as "social, domestic and pleasure" which is part of your standard cover. We recommend that you check with your insurer but there should not be any additional cost. If we have agreed to reimburse your expenses for travelling in your own vehicle, we use the government standard mileage rate, which includes an allowance for insurance as well as fuel, maintenance, tax, etc.

### **Smoking and Substance Abuse**

All Twins Trust premises and events are smoke free. No smoking is allowed in or near our sites. Volunteers are asked not to smoke when wearing a badge, branded clothing or anything that would identify you with the charity.

Volunteering whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be accepted.

### **Training and Development**

You will have access to training or information to help you successfully carry out your volunteering role.

You will be offered an appropriate induction including information about the volunteering environment and any equipment you may be using in your role. If you choose to take on an additional or alternative role or activity as a volunteer, your staff contact will be happy to help you widen or develop your skills and knowledge accordingly.

### **Resolving Volunteers' Concerns & Complaints**

The charity aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. It seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly. We will attempt to deal with any problems informally and at the earliest opportunity. All volunteers will have a lead member of staff to whom they can turn in the case of any difficulty. Where informal resolution is not possible, stage 2 of the charity's ['complaints' procedures](#) will be adhered to. Volunteers will be made aware of the organisation's complaints procedure and how to use it.

### **Investigating Concerns & complaints against a volunteer**

If there are concerns, or complaints made against you during your time as a volunteer, in the first instance they will be raised informally by your lead member of staff. The intention is to seek a resolution that supports volunteers whilst addressing mistakes, areas for development, or improvement, or misunderstanding, or where organisational processes or activities require review and improvement. We have a [complaints procedure](#) that we follow in all instances.

This procedure confirms how investigations are investigated, by whom, potential outcomes including opportunities to appeal the findings. You will be expected to engage in investigations either verbally or in writing to ensure we can learn and seek to improve our work where appropriate. A refusal to do so would be construed as gross misconduct and the role brought to an end. Similarly if the investigation makes a recommendation to amend an approach to providing support, or further training, and this is refused then this would also be construed as gross misconduct and the role brought to an end.

In accordance with our safeguarding policies and procedures, if a serious allegation is made concerning the behaviour of a volunteer, a referral may be made to the relevant body without first notifying the volunteer.

### **Ending your role as a volunteer**

Where appropriate (e.g. the service closes), the role and placement of the volunteer may be asked to end their volunteering by their line manager at one week's notice, or immediately, where behaviour equivalent to gross misconduct has occurred. In all cases the volunteer will be entitled to an explanation of the decision and action taken.

### **Audit and Whistle Blowing**

Twins Trust is accountable to the Charity Commission and to the public who support us so generously. [The Charity Commission](#) is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. Its website explains that its primary focus as regulator 'is to work closely with charities to ensure that they are accountable, well run and meet their legal obligations in order to promote public trust and confidence'.

The Charity Commission is not able to act on complaints related to disagreements between individuals, but it will investigate if a volunteer's concerns relate to the organisation's wider work or the fulfilment of its charitable aims.

We have a responsibility to check and audit our activities to maintain our reputation as a trustworthy charity that manages donations honestly and efficiently.

If you find that any member of staff or volunteer is behaving in a way that is likely to bring the charity into disrepute or cause financial loss, you should let your staff contact know immediately.

If, for any reason, you would rather not talk to your staff contact, please call the confidential and independent Whistle Blowing Hotline run by Public Concern at Work on 020 7404 6609.

If you have concerns regarding health and safety issues that you feel are not being addressed by the organisation, you can contact the [Health and Safety Executive](#).

### **Monitoring and review**

It will be the responsibility of the CEO to review the operation of the volunteer policy to ensure that it is up to date and in accordance with best practice.

### **Support and Advice**

If you would like further information or advice on any aspect of your volunteering with us, please ask your staff contact

If you would like a copy of any of the above documents, please ask your staff contact

Thank You.

Twins Trust is a registered charity in England and Wales (1076478) Scotland (SC041055) and a registered company (3688825).

## **APPLICATION PROCESS – APPENDIX 1**

### **Recruitment of volunteers**

Volunteers will be selected through the following process:

#### **Step 1**

The following items should be in place

- a role description, outlining the specific tasks, responsibilities and reporting lines of the volunteer;
- details of the role including the duration, hours, expenses, insurance, etc, relating to the placement;
- a specification, outlining the relevant experience, skills, knowledge, abilities and equal opportunity awareness necessary to carry out the role effectively.

#### **Step 2**

The prospective volunteer will be invited to a meeting (either in person or via the telephone or skype) with the appropriate line manager. Using the role outline and the specification the parties will engage in a two-way discussion of the proposed role, of its requirements and of each other's expectations, with a view to assessing mutual suitability. Following the meeting, Twins Trust representatives will make a decision regarding the individual's suitability for the particular role.

#### **Step 3**

Before starting their volunteering either at head office or remotely successful volunteers must provide two references from suitable people (excluding relations) attesting to their character and suitability for the position. A copy of a driving licence or passport must also be provided.

#### **Step 4**

Before starting their volunteering at either Head Office or remotely each successful volunteer shall be formally allocated to a particular employee who will manage and supervise the volunteer throughout the duration of her/his placement.

The line manager responsibilities will include ensuring that the volunteer receives the following:

- a planned induction to Twins Trust and the organisation's activities and structure
- supervision and support sessions;
- training;
- positive feedback on their contribution; and
- adequate office accommodation, equipment and services to perform their tasks effectively.