

VOLUNTEER POLICY

Approved by Trustees: Reviewed/Altered 01/10/2026

Review date: 01/10/2027

1. Purpose

Volunteers are an important part of V-Aid's work.

Our aim is to provide practical, welcoming and meaningful opportunities for people to contribute to humanitarian and community activity, develop skills, build confidence and support others.

V-Aid recognises that volunteers come from many different backgrounds and may have different levels of experience, confidence and support needs.

This policy sets out the principles by which V-Aid recruits, supports, develops and works with volunteers.

2. Our approach to volunteering

V-Aid believes that volunteering should:

- be voluntary and freely chosen;
- provide a meaningful opportunity to contribute;
- be inclusive and accessible wherever reasonably possible;
- recognise the individual strengths and circumstances of each volunteer;
- provide appropriate support, guidance and training;
- treat volunteers with dignity and respect;
- give people opportunities to develop where they wish to do so.

V-Aid particularly seeks to create opportunities for people who may not previously have considered themselves volunteers or who may face barriers to traditional volunteering.

3. Who can volunteer

Subject to the requirements of individual roles, V-Aid welcomes volunteers from all backgrounds.

This may include:

- members of the wider community;
- veterans;
- refugees and people seeking asylum;
- people involved with or leaving the criminal justice system;

- people supported through domestic-abuse or women's services;
- people experiencing social isolation or financial hardship;
- people with disabilities or additional support needs;
- students and young people where appropriate;
- people supported by community, faith or voluntary organisations;
- people who have themselves previously received support.

Participation will be considered according to the requirements of the activity and the individual's circumstances rather than assumptions based on their background.

Where a particular role is not suitable, V-Aid will where reasonably possible consider whether another appropriate opportunity can be offered.

4. Community Humanitarian Response volunteering

A significant part of V-Aid's volunteering takes place through its Community Humanitarian Response activities.

Rather than expecting everybody to travel to V-Aid, activities may be delivered at trusted partner locations such as:

- community centres;
- veterans' organisations;
- refugee and asylum-seeker organisations;
- women's services or refuges;
- Probation and Approved Premises;
- justice-related settings;
- schools, colleges or cadet organisations where appropriate;
- churches and faith organisations;
- disability and additional-needs services;
- other community venues.

This allows people to volunteer in an environment where they may already feel comfortable and where appropriate specialist support may already be available.

V-Aid will work alongside partner organisations and their staff to help ensure volunteering opportunities are appropriate to the people and setting involved.

5. Volunteer roles

Volunteer opportunities may range from one-off or occasional participation to regular volunteering or leadership roles.

Examples may include:

- preparing and packing humanitarian meals;
- assembling aid, hygiene or emergency packs;
- supporting Community Humanitarian Response sessions;
- logistics and preparation;
- helping set up and clear down activities;
- supporting other volunteers;

- administration or community outreach;
- fundraising or events;
- Volunteer Lead or peer-support roles;
- other activities appropriate to V-Aid's charitable work.

The precise duties, responsibilities and level of support will depend on the particular role.

The existing policy already recognises that volunteering may range from basic project assistance to logistics, leadership and mentoring.

6. Recruitment and selection

V-Aid aims to make recruitment proportionate to the volunteering opportunity.

Depending on the role, this may include:

- an expression of interest;
- an informal discussion;
- an application form;
- references;
- identity checks;
- relevant qualification or experience checks;
- safeguarding checks;
- Disclosure and Barring Service checks where the role is legally eligible;
- discussion with a partner organisation referring or supporting the volunteer.

A person attending a supported, supervised one-off community activity will not necessarily require the same recruitment process as someone taking regular responsibility for other volunteers or working independently.

V-Aid will seek to avoid unnecessary processes that create barriers to participation while maintaining appropriate standards of safety.

7. Equality, diversity and accessibility

V-Aid is committed to providing volunteering opportunities fairly and without unlawful discrimination.

Reasonable efforts will be made to remove barriers to volunteering.

Depending on individual circumstances, this may include:

- accessible information;
- alternative formats;
- language support;
- reasonable adjustments;
- support from a partner organisation;
- additional induction or supervision;
- travel support where resources allow;
- adapting tasks to suit an individual's abilities.

V-Aid recognises that equality does not always mean treating everybody in exactly the same way.

8. Induction and training

Volunteers will receive induction or briefing appropriate to their role and the activity they are undertaking.

This may include:

- an introduction to V-Aid;
- the purpose of the activity;
- safeguarding;
- health and safety;
- food hygiene and allergen awareness where relevant;
- use of equipment;
- confidentiality and data protection;
- expected standards of behaviour;
- relevant partner or venue requirements.

Additional training may be offered where appropriate.

This may include:

- food hygiene qualifications;
- health and safety;
- safeguarding awareness;
- first aid;
- leadership or volunteer-support skills;
- other relevant training or certificates.

The extent of training will be proportionate to the volunteer's role and responsibilities.

9. Support and supervision

V-Aid wants volunteers to feel supported and valued.

Support may be provided by:

- V-Aid staff;
- Volunteer Leads;
- experienced volunteers;
- sessional facilitators;
- staff from partner organisations.

The level of supervision will reflect the activity, volunteer's experience, setting and any relevant risks or support needs.

Volunteers should know who to speak to if they have a question, concern or need additional support.

10. Volunteer progression

Some volunteers may wish simply to take part occasionally. Others may wish to become more involved.

Where appropriate, V-Aid may provide opportunities to progress from:

first participation → repeat volunteering → additional training → increased responsibility → Volunteer Lead or similar role.

Some individuals may eventually be suitable for paid sessional or employment opportunities where such roles exist.

There is no expectation that volunteers must progress, and no guarantee that volunteering will result in paid work.

Any paid role will be treated separately from volunteering and will be subject to the appropriate employment or contractual arrangements.

11. Volunteer Leads

Experienced volunteers may be invited to take on additional responsibility as Volunteer Leads or similar roles.

Their activities may include:

- welcoming new volunteers;
- helping explain tasks;
- supporting participants;
- assisting with activity set-up;
- encouraging teamwork;
- supporting V-Aid staff or facilitators;
- helping volunteers develop confidence and skills.

The precise responsibilities of a Volunteer Lead will depend on the activity and setting.

Appropriate training, guidance and supervision will be provided.

V-Aid may particularly seek Volunteer Leads who understand the communities or environments in which activities are taking place.

12. Volunteering and paid work

A clear distinction will be maintained between volunteering and paid employment or sessional work.

Volunteers give their time freely and are not employees simply because they volunteer with V-Aid.

Where V-Aid offers a person paid work, the terms of that work will be clearly explained and treated separately from their volunteer role.

A volunteer should not be required to undertake unpaid work that would properly form part of a paid role.

13. Volunteer expenses

Volunteering should not unnecessarily leave people out of pocket.

Subject to available resources and V-Aid's expenses arrangements, reasonable and genuine costs associated with volunteering may be reimbursed.

These may include, where agreed:

- public transport;
- mileage;
- other necessary travel costs;
- reasonable costs directly connected to the volunteering activity.

Expenses are reimbursement of genuine costs and are not payment for volunteering.

Volunteers should understand what expenses can be claimed and any approval or evidence required.

14. Safeguarding

All volunteering will be carried out in accordance with V-Aid's Safeguarding Policy.

Safeguarding arrangements will be proportionate to the role and activity.

Volunteers may be required to undertake safeguarding training or checks where relevant and legally appropriate.

When activities take place at partner organisations, V-Aid will work with the partner's safeguarding arrangements where appropriate.

15. Health, safety and wellbeing

V-Aid will take reasonable steps to provide a safe environment for volunteering.

Volunteers also have a responsibility to:

- follow safety instructions;
- use equipment appropriately;
- follow hygiene and food-safety requirements;
- report hazards, accidents or concerns;
- tell the activity lead if they feel unable to carry out a task safely.

Volunteers will not be expected to undertake tasks that they are not reasonably capable of carrying out safely.

16. Behaviour and respect

Volunteers are expected to:

- treat others with dignity and respect;
- avoid discrimination, harassment or bullying;
- follow reasonable instructions relating to the activity;
- respect confidentiality;
- behave in a way that does not bring V-Aid or its partners into disrepute;
- respect the boundaries and privacy of beneficiaries and other volunteers;
- follow relevant V-Aid and host-organisation policies.

Serious or repeated inappropriate behaviour may result in a volunteer being asked to stop volunteering.

Where possible, V-Aid will explain any concerns and seek a proportionate response.

17. Confidentiality and data protection

Volunteers may sometimes become aware of personal or sensitive information relating to beneficiaries, other volunteers, staff or partner organisations.

Such information should not be shared unnecessarily.

Volunteers must follow V-Aid's Data Protection Policy and any relevant confidentiality requirements associated with their role or host organisation.

Personal information about volunteers will also be handled in accordance with V-Aid's data-protection responsibilities.

18. Social media, photographs and publicity

V-Aid recognises that volunteers may wish to share their involvement through social media.

Volunteers should use good judgement and must not:

- publish confidential information;
- identify vulnerable participants without appropriate permission;
- photograph or film people where this is restricted;
- disclose confidential locations, including refuges or other protected settings;
- post material that could place another person at risk;
- suggest that personal opinions are official V-Aid statements unless authorised to speak on behalf of the charity.

V-Aid may take photographs or videos at activities for publicity, reporting or fundraising purposes, subject to appropriate consent and safeguarding considerations.

Volunteers should be told where photography or social-media use is restricted.

19. Working with partner organisations

Where volunteers take part in activities hosted by another organisation, they may also be required to follow reasonable policies, safeguarding arrangements and venue procedures set by that organisation.

V-Aid and the partner organisation will work together, where appropriate, to ensure volunteers understand the requirements relevant to the activity.

20. Concerns and complaints

Volunteers are encouraged to raise concerns if something is affecting their volunteering experience.

Where possible, concerns should initially be discussed informally with the relevant V-Aid staff member, Volunteer Lead or activity leader.

Where this is inappropriate or does not resolve the matter, the volunteer may use V-Aid's Complaints Policy or other relevant procedure.

Safeguarding concerns should be raised in accordance with V-Aid's Safeguarding Policy.

21. Ending a volunteering arrangement

A volunteer may stop volunteering at any time.

V-Aid may also end or suspend a volunteering arrangement where:

- the role is no longer required;
- the volunteer is unable to meet essential requirements of the role;

- there are safety or safeguarding concerns;
- behaviour is inconsistent with V-Aid's values or policies;
- the arrangement is no longer working effectively;
- operational circumstances change.

Where reasonably possible, V-Aid will explain the reason and deal with the matter fairly and sensitively.

Volunteering does not create an entitlement to future volunteering opportunities or paid employment.

22. Recognition and feedback

V-Aid values the contribution made by volunteers.

Depending on the activity and resources available, recognition may include:

- certificates;
- training records;
- references where appropriate;
- volunteer events or recognition;
- progression opportunities;
- feedback on achievements;
- opportunities to help shape future activities.

V-Aid will also seek feedback from volunteers to help improve volunteering opportunities.

23. Promotion of volunteering

V-Aid may promote volunteering through:

- partner organisations;
- community groups;
- social media;
- its website;
- community events;
- schools, colleges or cadet organisations;
- veterans' organisations;
- justice organisations;
- refugee and asylum-seeker organisations;
- women's and domestic-abuse support organisations;
- faith groups;
- other voluntary and statutory-sector networks.

Recruitment information should be clear, welcoming and accessible to the intended audience.

24. Monitoring and review

V-Aid will periodically review its volunteering arrangements and seek to learn from:

- volunteer feedback;
- partner feedback;
- safeguarding or safety concerns;
- participation and retention;
- training and progression;
- changes in V-Aid's activities.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually or earlier where significant changes make this appropriate.

25. Related policies

This policy should be read alongside relevant V-Aid policies and procedures, including:

- Safeguarding Policy;
- Volunteer Recruitment & Selection Policy;
- Equal Opportunities Policy;
- Data Protection Policy;
- Health & Safety arrangements;
- Complaints Policy;
- Whistleblowing arrangements;
- Volunteer Expenses arrangements;
- relevant activity risk assessments.

Trustee approval

Approved by the Board of Trustees on: 01/10/2026

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Lau'.

Name: Christin Lau

Review date: 01/10/2027