



Volunteer agreement

Refugees Welcome North Somerset (RWNS) aims to empower and enable asylum seekers and refugees in North Somerset to find safety, friendship and opportunities in order to thrive.

We rely on a network of volunteers to help us build relationships and deliver the services we offer across the region.

This is an explanation of the charity's mission and the role of volunteers in achieving its goals. It will help you understand the mutual commitment between the organisation and the volunteer and where you can go for further information should you need it.

Scope

This document applies to all RWNS volunteers, across all setting and projects.

RWNS strives to ensure volunteers feel supported in their role, enjoy their experience of volunteering and learn about and from those who are using our services.

Please read this agreement carefully and if you have any questions please contact the Volunteer Manager. Please acknowledge via email that you have read this agreement before commencing your role.

What you can expect from RWNS

RWNS has a dedicated Volunteer Manager who is responsible for coordinating the network of volunteers, recruitment of new volunteers, organising training and helping to ensure volunteers feel supported in their role/s.

RWNS offer welcome resources and other key policies to help you in your role, offer training throughout the year and volunteer meetings to come together as a group and discuss your role/s, issues and challenges.

Other members of staff are also available to support you with specific queries relating to your role and/or support needs from service users.

As a Volunteer Welcome Centre Host you can expect a member of the RWNS team to be available on your day of volunteering.

RWNS aims to foster an open, friendly, and supportive culture where we all support one another, including creating communities of volunteers via the monthly meetings and other events.

Volunteer expectations

Personal qualities

As a volunteer there are some core expectations and principles we expect you to uphold in your role.

- To be kind and supportive in your approach, with members, staff and volunteers
- To be curious and open to learning from others, rather than make assumptions
- To be sensitive and aware of others, particularly of people from different cultural backgrounds and those who may have experienced trauma.
- To listen and be open in your approach – to not ask closed questions or request personal information
- To use respectful language and communication style
- To think the best of colleagues, partners and those using our services.

Language and terminology

We recognise and celebrate the diversity of languages among our volunteers, members, and the community. English may not be everyone's first language, and we encourage patience, understanding, and support in all communications. We should work together to create an inclusive environment where everyone feels comfortable and respected, regardless of their language background.

At RWNS, we encourage the use of positive language that acknowledges everyone as individuals with unique strengths and potential and avoids stereotypes. We avoid grouping people together with terms like "they" and refrain from using derogatory language, especially when referring to migrants and their modes of travel to the UK. Our goal is to foster an inclusive environment that respects and values the diversity of our community.

Professional development and fulfilment of role

To attend the training offered by RWNS wherever possible, including refresher trainings.

To adhere to policies and best practice as set out by RWNS (please refer to the Volunteer Handbook)

Fulfilling your role as outlined in the role description, adopting training provided to a satisfactory standard and to the best of your ability, in a safe, efficient and competent way

Meeting time and task commitments; and to inform the Support Manager and Volunteer Manager in advance if you are unavailable for your regular volunteering.

Privacy and confidentiality

To ensure personal and sensitive information about service users is kept private and confidential. This includes, outside of safeguarding processes, only discussing and sharing personal information with those who need to know for the purposes of delivering a safe and informed offer of support.

Please refrain from discussing personal information and business on the volunteers' WhatsApp group.

For guidance around maintaining professional boundaries please refer to the Managing Boundaries policy

Seeking authorisation before communicating externally on behalf of Refugees Welcome North Somerset

Safeguarding

Please ensure that you

- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report concerns to the safeguarding lead.
- Follow our safeguarding, child protection, and whistleblowing policies, including engaging with mandatory training
- Declare convictions that might affect your suitability for volunteering duties at application stage.
- Update the Volunteer Manager if you receive any criminal convictions or are under investigation.

Ending the volunteer arrangement

You are free to stop volunteering with RWNS at any time. Please inform the Volunteer Manager if you are no longer able to volunteer and to briefly explain the reasons to enable us to learn how to support volunteers further in the future.

We will strive to give us much notice as possible if a project or role is coming to an end.

If a volunteer is not able to follow the standards in this agreement or any other RWNS policies, they will be asked to meet with the Volunteer Manager in the first instance. This can be brought to the CEO or escalated to the Trustees if necessary. The outcome of any meeting may result in the volunteer arrangement ending.

Closing statement:

Thank you for taking the time to read this agreement. By volunteering with RWNS, you are contributing to a community where asylum seekers and refugees can find safety, friendship, and opportunities to thrive. We appreciate your commitment and look forward to working

together to support and empower our members. If you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Volunteer Manager.

Welcome to the team!

Read and signed by volunteer

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