



# AKT Volunteer Policy And Procedure

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# VOLUNTEER POLICY & PROCEDURE

## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy is for volunteers of The Albert Kennedy Trust (akt). The purpose of the policy is to let everyone know how we will treat volunteers within our organisation and to let volunteers know what they can expect when they join us.

The policy will define what a volunteer is and how we will recruit, manage and support volunteering in our organisation. A copy of this policy will be given to every volunteer and be stored by all those who support or manage volunteers.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

Volunteering is:

*any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives. Central to this definition is the fact that volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual.*

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akt will ensure volunteers feel secure in the knowledge that they are valued, working in a safe environment, managed effectively and performing an agreed role for the LGBTQ+ young people we serve.

akt's services are delivered through a partnership between volunteers and staff. As a volunteer, your gift of time, skills and experience will enable akt to support young people who are homeless or living in a hostile environment. By doing so, it is akt's aim that volunteers gain satisfaction and that the relationship is one of mutual benefit.

When you volunteer for akt it is our aim that:

- you will be properly inducted to our work, aims, values and policies



- you can help make a difference to the lives of LGBTQ+ young people
- your gift of time, skills and experience will be used well
- your volunteering will be appreciated and recognised
- you will be provided with the relevant training and support to carry out your volunteer role
- you will be encouraged to develop in your volunteer role
- you can expect akt to seek your views on our work and to utilise your experience and skills when required
- you volunteer in an organisation that is striving to be non-discriminatory and diverse
- expenses will be covered in line with the expenses policy
- you can expect akt to help you resolve any difficulties you may have with akt or your volunteering

### 3. VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

We will use appropriate means to advertise for volunteers locally in an equal and diverse manner. The applicant will have to complete an expression of interest or full application form, dependent on the role applied for. For roles working directly with young people the applicant will be interviewed. For other roles e.g., events and fundraising the volunteer will be invited to a group induction to prepare them for their role.

References will be taken up if the volunteer will be working with young people directly. An Enhanced DBS check with the Disclosure and Barring Service will be made for volunteers who work directly with young people.

**Having a criminal record will not be a bar to volunteering unless the Services Manager thinks that a conviction means that the applicant is unsuitable.** The DBS and referencing process can take some time to complete so you must be prepared to wait before volunteering commences.

All volunteer opportunities will be defined via a Role Profile, to ensure that potential volunteers are clearly informed of the requirements and duties of the role.

It must be noted that any new person volunteering as a mentor will be required to sign a volunteer agreement. This does not form a binding contract.



## 4. INDUCTION AND TRAINING

All volunteers will be required to participate in an organisational induction. Additional induction training may be offered or required by the area in which the individual wishes to volunteer.

The induction will be prepared and delivered by the appropriate staff member and include:

- A full explanation of your role and the expectations of the organisation
- The history, aims and values of the organisation
- Introduction to the team
- Essential procedures e.g. if there is a minimum commitment, timekeeping etc. and information about the relevant code of conduct and other essential policies
- Induction training and details of on-going training
- (If office based) Geography of the building, tea and coffee making facilities, toilets, stationary etc.
- Safeguarding, data protection, confidentiality policies; read and signed

There will be a trial period of 3 months to give the organisation and the volunteer time to decide if we are suited to each other. A review will be carried out at the end of the trial period by the Volunteer Coordinator or your line manager.

Having completed a successful trial period, akt will be happy to provide a reference (in line with akt's reference policy). akt values and respects the motivation and skills of our volunteers and in order to give an accurate and meaningful reference we feel a minimum of 12 volunteering sessions is needed to allow us to gain a measure of the volunteers' skills, knowledge and personal qualities.

The reference will be completed by the member of staff working most closely with the volunteer, however if we feel there is sufficient reason, we may decline to give out a reference.

## 5. SUPPORT AND TRAINING



Support of volunteers is coordinated by the member of staff who manages the area in which they volunteer.

You will receive regular one-to-one meetings with your line manager or the Volunteer Coordinator to ensure that you are happy with your role and resolve any problems that may arise. Your line manager will be responsible for the day to day supervision of your tasks and role.

If you have concerns about the level of support and supervision you or others are receiving, you should speak to the Volunteer Coordinator in the first instance.

All volunteers will receive good quality training, appropriate to their volunteer role. akt will ensure volunteers are provided with opportunities to acquire or develop new or existing skills.

## 6. RESOLVING PROBLEMS

Our volunteers are at the heart of the support we give to our young people, however we recognise that the young people accessing our service are often made vulnerable by their situations.

For this reason our main expectations are that volunteers are motivated to be reliable and punctual. We understand that sometimes events can happen that cannot be foreseen but to support our young people fully we ask that you:

- Perform your role and tasks to the best of your ability
- Let us know as soon as possible if you are unable to complete your volunteering session
- Let us know in advance when you are going on holiday so we can prepare the young people and tasks in your absence
- If you are running late let us know so we can inform the staff member or young person so they are able to adjust their plans
- Where possible wear sensible clothing and shoes, suitable to your role

akt appreciates volunteers giving up their time but if a volunteer has several no-shows to sessions they have signed up for or if there are issues with timekeeping, we will talk to you about whether you still are able to commit to volunteering.



There are some actions and behaviours that akt will not accept and you will be asked to leave straight away if you:

- Submit fake expenses
- Disclose confidential information
- Commit a serious breach of the Code of Conduct
- Are abusive to, or bully/harass, our young people, staff members or volunteers
- Steal or vandalise akt property
- Volunteer under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Use IT inappropriately e.g. visiting websites of a violent or sexual nature

We recognise that volunteering is a two-way process and that you have other commitments outside of akt. We will take every opportunity to ensure that your role is what you expected and that you are enjoying your volunteering experience. If at any point you feel that you have been unfairly treated or asked to leave, then you will be able to discuss this issue with an akt Director who is available to discuss your role and tasks with you and ensure that is it right for you and for akt.

## 7. **COMMUNICATION**

akt recognises that volunteers may not be available between 9am-5pm weekdays. Some do not have phone or email facilities and attendance at meetings may be difficult. akt will ensure that volunteers are kept as informed as possible and that channels of communication remain open. akt is committed to the idea that one to one personal contact is a principle part of ensuring that volunteers feel valued, supported and included. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to provide any updates on their contact details to the person who line manages their volunteering activities.

## 8. **EXPENSES**

We value our volunteers and want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. Out of pocket expenses for travel and meals, if required, will be reimbursed.

You can claim for the cheapest form of travel to and from your volunteering. Keep your receipts and ask for a volunteer expenses claim



form, this can be signed off by your supervising staff member of the Volunteer Coordinator. We can either reimburse you in cash or via BACS.

If refreshments aren't being provided, volunteers participating in activity between 4 – 8 hours can claim for food and refreshments up to £5.00

If volunteering for over 8 hours in one day, volunteers can claim up to an additional £5.00

## 9. **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All volunteers are expected to adhere to our Confidentiality and Information Management policy whilst volunteering. Volunteers should familiarise themselves with this policy and must sign to confirm their agreement to comply with it.

## 10. **REWARD AND RECOGNITION**

akt acknowledges volunteers' dedication and time and will endeavour to reward volunteers on a 1-year engagement, 3 year engagement and lifetime engagement (5+ years) and all volunteers will receive a certificate of recognition at the end of their volunteer placement.

## 11. **VOLUNTEERING ON BENEFITS**

As legislation varies over time it is always best for volunteers to check the latest information either with their benefits advisor or on the website <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering/volunteering-and-benefits>. It is the volunteer's responsibility to do this.

## 12. **GIFTS**

We ask that volunteers do not accept gifts from our young people. We realise this is a sensitive issue but any gifts should be declared to your supervising staff member, who will then return it to the young person or donate to the organisation for redistribution with the young person's agreement.



### **13. DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND SMOKING**

Volunteers should not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol whilst volunteering within our organisation, on its grounds or supporting our activities. Volunteers should also avoid alcohol at least 12 hours before their volunteering session. Our organisation asks that volunteers do not smoke whilst volunteering and also to avoid smoking when entering or leaving the building – if you need to smoke can this be carried out on breaks and out of sight of the event/young person/stall you are volunteering on.

### **14. MONITORING AND REVIEWING THE POLICY**

It will be the responsibility of the coordinator and the Trustees to regularly review this Volunteer Policy to make sure it is always in accordance with our Equal Opportunity Policy, legal requirements and best practice in relation to volunteer management. This will be done annually or when the need arises.