



*Dame Agnes Weston's Royal Charity for the
Naval Service*

Volunteer Policy

Dated 2022

AGGIE WESTON'S VOLUNTEER POLICY

Introduction

1. Aggie Weston's seeks to provide pastoral support to the serving members of the Royal Navy, including Royal Marines and Royal Fleet Auxiliary, and their families. This pastoral support is defined as listening, encouraging, comforting and supporting and includes the provision of practical help when necessary and signposting beneficiaries on to more specialist advice when appropriate. The charity's work can be viewed as a Christian ministry of presence, and Pastoral Workers endeavour to operate amongst the beneficiary group persistently, earning trust and making themselves available to listen whenever someone has the need to talk. Financial restrictions limit the charity's ability to keep Pastoral Workers close to the full beneficiary community, but volunteers can be a good way to optimise the efficiency of its resources.

2. Whilst volunteers are not paid, their use by an organisation is not without financial cost and therefore the decision to utilise them has been carefully considered by the charity's trustees. This document outlines Aggie Weston's policy for the use of volunteers and provides a framework for managing the volunteer programme. It defines what a volunteer and the charity may seek to gain from the relationship, the roles of volunteers within the organisation, and how volunteers can expect to be treated.

The Volunteer Experience

3. Aggie Weston's is grateful for the voluntary work of any individuals who choose to assist the charity in meeting its objectives. The organisation is committed to ensuring that its volunteers find increased fulfilment through their association with the charity. It is recognised that there are (at least) seven key factors which affect the quality of experience for a volunteer. The executive team are directed to consider each of these to ensure that every volunteer feels valued by the charity.

- a. Impactful: a volunteer must feel that he/she is making a positive difference for the beneficiary group.
- b. Enjoyable: the activity should provide a pleasurable experience for the volunteer.
- c. Connected: although volunteers are not paid, they must still feel that they are full and valued members of the team.
- d. Comfortable: each volunteer must be suitably trained and experienced to undertake the role allocated.
- e. Flexible: volunteers are using their spare time to help, and the management team must therefore make allowances for an individual's life circumstances and other commitments when allocating roles.
- f. Efficient: volunteers will want their time to be focused on doing useful things and are less likely to accept tasking which they perceive to be "unnecessary process" or "red-tape."

- g. Matched: the role allocated to a volunteer should resonate with his/her interests, experience and skills. However, the management team should respect the fact that many volunteers will want their voluntary work to provide a break from their professional life.
4. Individuals will volunteer for a variety of reasons. It could be a simple altruistic urge to make a valuable contribution to a cause which resonates with their personal interests. It may be a way to fill their spare time and to meet new friends. Or it may be a way to learn new skills and strengthen a CV with view to later employment. The reason why someone volunteers will affect which one of the seven factors above will impact most upon the quality of their experience. It is incumbent upon the management team to understand each volunteer's personal circumstances and tailor their work accordingly.

A Volunteer's Commitment

5. Although Aggie Weston's is grateful for the input of volunteers and committed to providing a positive experience for them, in return each volunteer must demonstrate a level of personal commitment to the charity. They will be part of the team and so must be fully 'bought in' to the role and image of Aggie Weston's. When working for the charity their volunteer status will be invisible to the beneficiaries, and thus their work, appearance and demeanour all have the potential to impact upon Aggie's reputation. The charity must therefore demand a certain level of commitment from each volunteer; this is summarised in the 'Volunteer Agreement' which is at Annex A.

Types of Volunteers

6. There are 3 key roles which can be fulfilled by Aggie Weston's volunteers:
- a. Trustee. The Board of Trustees is made up of volunteers with a variety of life-skills and management expertise levels. In legal terms they are collectively responsible for the charity and all that happens within it, albeit that they delegate much of the day-to-day management to the salaried executive staff. Trustees are recruited by invitation. After attendance at one Board meeting and discussion with the Chairman they will be elected onto the Board by current trustees and will generally remain for one or two five year terms. By exception the Board may vote to offer a trustee a third term due to specific skills which are of value to the Board. All trustees are required to sign up to a voluntary 'Trustee Code of Conduct' and the Aggie Weston's Articles of Faith.
 - b. Pastoral volunteer. Pastoral Volunteers can fill a spectrum of roles in support of Pastoral Workers. They will be required to sign a Volunteer's Agreement form, but not the Aggie Weston Articles of Faith, and will be line managed by a Pastoral Worker in a specified location. Some volunteers, if suitably trained and qualified, will be able to undertake pastoral conversations, others will undertake practical tasks such as administration, cooking bacon or making coffee.

- c. Storybook Waves Editor. The Storybook Waves project relies on a cadre of individuals working from home who will take story recordings made by serving personnel and edit them into a final version, with sound effects etc, ready for dispatch to children.

Recruitment of volunteers

7. Volunteers are generally only sought at a specified location to fulfil specific needs when they arise. If someone calls to offer their services as a result of hearing about the charity's work then opportunities may be sought; but it is important to ensure that there is a clearly defined role, otherwise the expectations at paragraph 3a-3g above will not be met. Potential volunteers will be required to complete a volunteer application form and will be interviewed by a member of the executive team, generally the Ops and HR Manager.

8. Recruiting for Pastoral Volunteers will be in close collaboration with the local Chaplaincy Team Leader although funding and support for any recruiting campaign will be provided by the Aggie's Head Office team.

Induction

9. The induction process is a key part of making the volunteer feel valued and part of the team. The process will be designed to meet the individual circumstances but must ensure that the volunteer is fully prepared for their role. The Ops & HR Manager will oversee the introductory package, but the local Chaplaincy Team Leader will be responsible for the delivery of the local aspects of induction for their volunteers.

Administrative

10. Aggie Weston's policies will generally apply equally to volunteers as to salaried staff. In particular, volunteers should be aware of the policy on the following matters, which are contained within the Staff Handbook unless otherwise annotated:

- Expenses
- Supervision and support
- Health and safety
- Safeguarding (Stand-alone policy)
- Privacy and data protection (Stand-alone policy)
- Grievances and complaints
- Boundaries (Stand-alone policy)
- Diversity and Inclusion

The Difference between Volunteers and Employees

11. Volunteers and employees are valued equally, but Aggie Weston's is mindful of the risks if volunteers are seen as employees, and therefore seeks to keep appropriate boundaries between them. Volunteers are not expected to have the same commitment and flexibility as a

paid member of staff, and they do not have the same employment rights. However, they will be treated fairly and consistently.

12. In particular, volunteers have the same right to make a complaint or grievance as a salaried member of the team, and if they do so then Aggie Weston's is committed to addressing it in an appropriate manner.

13. In order to mitigate against the risk of confusing the status of paid staff and volunteers, the following policy guidelines have been established:

- Anything that could be seen as a payment for work is to be avoided. For example, expenses claimed should be a genuine reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses rather than a fixed amount per week.
- Training offered should be linked to the role that the person is carrying out, whereas for salaried staff there may be an element for personal development.
- Any formal documentation should avoid language that suggests employment – for example the individual will come to Aggie Weston's under a volunteer agreement rather than contract, they will have a role rather than job description, **and a coordinator rather than a line manager.**
- The role description should phrase the volunteer relationship in terms of expectation rather than obligation.

Supervising and Supporting Volunteers

14. The Ops & HR Manager is responsible for overseeing the management of all volunteers and ensuring that they are appropriately inducted and locally managed. Each volunteer will also have a coordinator who is responsible for allocating their roles and responsibilities. This coordinator will be their first point of contact with the charity. The **coordinator/line manager** for volunteers will be:

- Trustees: Chair
- Pastoral Volunteer: Salaried Pastoral Worker
- Storybook Waves Editor: Storybook Waves Project Manager

15. Many Pastoral Volunteers will operate within a chaplaincy team. They are therefore subject to the governance arrangements set out within the MOU between the Naval Chaplaincy Service and Aggie Weston's. Being line managed by Pastoral Workers the volunteers will, therefore, come under the leadership of the Chaplaincy team Leader (CTL). However, their presence should not add to the work load of the Naval Chaplaincy Service which is why their day-to-day management should be delegated to a salaried PW. Any HR type issues, for example disciplinary or grievance issues will be handled by Aggie Weston's.

15. Volunteers will not receive appraisal reports, but Aggie Weston's recognises the importance of supporting volunteers and will seek regular feedback to assess their level of satisfaction. The Executive Team will take time to understand what volunteers find satisfying about their roles and will listen and respond to any concerns about the organisation. Wherever possible an exit interview will be conducted when a volunteer leaves the organisation.

Annex A to
Aggie Weston's Volunteer Policy
Dated 22 August 2022

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

This Volunteer Agreement describes the arrangement between Aggie Weston's and you. We wish to assure you of our appreciation of your volunteering with us and will do the best we can to make your volunteer experience with us enjoyable and rewarding.

Part 1: Nature of the relationship

This agreement is binding in honour only. It is not intended to be a legally binding contract between us and may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. Neither of us intend any employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future.

Part 2: The role

Your role as a volunteer is to xxxxxxx

The start date for this position is xxxxxxxx

Your **coordinator/line manager** is xxxxxxx

Your time for volunteering will be xxxxx

Please note that this role is subject to receipt of references satisfactory to Aggie Weston's, also Disclosure Baring Service clearance is required before the role can be ratified.

Part 3: The Organisation

What you can expect from Aggie Weston's:

a. Induction and training

- Induction training to cover the work of Aggie Weston's and its policies, your volunteering role and the training you need to meet the responsibilities of your role.
- Training in support of our health and safety policy so that you stay safe in your volunteer workplace.

b. Supervision, support and flexibility

- A named person who will be you **coordinator/line manager** and first point of contact within the charity. Your coordinator will meet with you regularly to discuss your volunteering.

c. Expenses

- Reimbursement for any expenses; you cannot be paid but should not be out of pocket for you volunteer role.

d. Insurance

- Adequate indemnity insurance cover for you whilst carrying out your agreed volunteering role.

e. Equal opportunities

- Fair treatment which is accordance with our equal opportunities policy.

f. Problems

- Any problems, complaints, grievances or difficulties you may have while you volunteer with us will be taken seriously.
- Matters which are not resolved locally will be treated in accordance with our policies as contained in the Staff Handbook.

Part 4: The Volunteer

As a volunteer we expect you:

- To help Aggie Weston's fulfil its role to provide support to serving members of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines and their families.
- To perform your volunteering role to the best of your ability;
- To follow the organisation's procedures, policies and standards, including health and safety and equal opportunities, in relation to its staff, volunteers and clients;
- To maintain the confidential information of the organisation and of its clients;
- To meet the time commitments and standards which have been mutually agreed to and to give reasonable notice so other arrangements can be made when this is not possible;
- To provide referees as agreed who may be contacted, and to agree to a DBS check being carried out where necessary.

Signed:

Name of Volunteer:

Date of signature:

Signed on behalf of Aggie Weston's:

Name:

Date of signature:

