

Volunteer Policy

1. Volunteering with Aesop

1.1. Aesop aims to develop arts solutions based on social needs; show health, care and other sectors how the arts can work for them; accelerate the pace of adoption of arts solutions; develop research and practice networks for arts solutions. We recognise volunteers as an integral part of our organisation. Their contribution supports Aesop's strategic aims and complements the role of paid staff. Aesop seeks to involve volunteers to ensure our services meet the needs of our clients, increase our contact with the local communities we serve and empower our service users and the wider community to develop ownership of Aesop's arts and health programmes. We aim to support and maintain volunteer involvement to ensure that Aesop, our staff and the volunteers themselves continue to benefit from volunteering.

2. Purpose of the volunteer policy

2.1. This volunteer policy sets out the values, principles and standards by which Aesop involves volunteers. The policy creates a common understanding and clarify roles, rights and responsibilities thus ensuring that good practice and high standards are achieved in our support and management of volunteers. This policy confirms Aesop's commitment to involving volunteers in its aims and ensures the ongoing quality of volunteering opportunities and activities.

2.2. Aesop reserves the exclusive right to change any aspect of this policy and to expect adherence to any amended policy. Matters in areas not specifically covered by the policy shall be decided by the Programme Manager – Volunteering and further information can be found in the written Guidance Notes for volunteers.

3. Who is a Volunteer with Aesop?

- 3.1. We define a volunteer as someone who undertakes a specific role or activity at the direction of and on behalf of our organisation which is unpaid and of their own free choice. We recognise that internships and work experience placements are not volunteer roles. Aesop does not accept the services of its own staff in a voluntary capacity. The Trustees of Aesop are volunteers with special responsibility for governance of the organisation. These roles are not intended to be covered by this policy.

4. Role of the Programme Manager – Volunteering

- 4.1. The Programme Manager – Volunteering provides a central coordination point for effective volunteer support and management within Aesop. They direct and assist staff and volunteer joint efforts to provide productive services. They are primarily responsible for planning the volunteer programme, identifying volunteer roles, managing recruitment of suitable volunteers, overseeing group-volunteer and Aesop-volunteer relations, developing training and support, and tracking and evaluating the contribution of volunteers to Aesop's services.
- 4.2. The Programme Manager - Volunteering works in partnership with Local Partner organisations who may recruit some volunteers themselves. This partnership ensures consistency in the recruitment and management of volunteers across our programmes.

5. Principles of good practice

- 5.1. Volunteers will not be used to replace paid staff. We ensure all paid staff and volunteers are aware of the boundaries around these roles. This ensures good working relationships between our paid staff and volunteers.
- 5.2. We are committed to offering a range of opportunities and upholding our organisation values of inclusiveness and diversity. Aesop operates an Equal Opportunities Policy with respect to both staff and volunteers and a copy is available in the Volunteers Handbook. Aesop expects volunteers to abide by its Equal Opportunities Policy in their activities.
- 5.3. Volunteer personnel records are protected with the same level of confidentiality and data protection as staff personnel records consistent with the requirements of Data Protection Act UK 2018. Volunteers are expected to abide by Aesop's Data protection and

security policy. Volunteer data will be deleted three years after a volunteer has left the organisation.

- 5.4. Volunteers are protected under Aesop's organisational Health and Safety and Safeguarding policies and volunteers are expected to abide by these policies and the procedural guidance which accompanies them when working with service users.
- 5.5. Volunteers may be eligible for reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred in the fulfilment of their role, for example photocopying or postage costs. The Programme Manager – Volunteering shall distribute information to volunteers regarding specific details of reimbursable items. Prior approval must be sought for any major expenditure.
- 5.6. No person who has a conflict of interest with any activity or programme of the organisation whether personal, philosophical or financial shall be accepted or serve as a volunteer.

6. Role descriptions and agreements

- 6.1. Aesop recognises that volunteers require a clear, complete and current description of the tasks and responsibilities associated with their role. Prior to any volunteer assignment or recruitment campaign, a role description will be developed for each volunteer position. Role descriptions will be reviewed and updated at least every two years or whenever the duties involved in a position substantially change.
- 6.2. Volunteers are issued with a volunteer agreement outlining the expectations and responsibilities of both Aesop and the volunteer themselves within their role.
- 6.3. Role descriptions and volunteer agreements are not a contract, Aesop has no intention of creating a contract with any volunteer.

7. Recruitment

- 7.1. Volunteers are proactively recruited by Aesop to support its services in conjunction with Local Partners. The minimum qualifications for volunteer recruitment is the ability to perform the required duties on behalf of Aesop, a suitable volunteer vacancy being available and the applicant being over 18 years old. Satisfactory background checks and references are required. Prospective volunteers will complete an application form and be interviewed to find out their interests, skills and suitability.

8. Induction and training

- 8.1. All volunteers will receive induction into Aesop and their own area of activity. Each volunteer will also receive supporting documentation.
- 8.2. Volunteers will receive training where appropriate for them to fully carry out their role. Training may take place regionally in conjunction with specialist staff involved with programme delivery.

9. Requirement of Supervision

- 9.1. Each volunteer working with Aesop will have a named member of Aesop staff who they should contact or report to.
- 9.2. We understand that there are times when it may not be possible for volunteers to fulfil their role in the short or longer term and should a volunteer need to take a leave of absence due to pregnancy, ill health, a changing family or work situation, planned travel abroad etc. they should inform their supervising member of staff. We will consider the temporary suspension of someone's volunteer role with a view to them returning in the future.

10. Concerns and Problem Solving

- 10.1. Aesop acknowledges that while a volunteer role has no protection in law, it is good organisational practice to enable volunteers to have a voice and express concerns about any corrective actions. This also ensures Aesop's responses to conduct concerns are proportionate and do not discriminate. Volunteers can raise concerns about any matter with their supervising member of staff or the Programme Manager – Volunteering.

11. Insurance

- 11.1. Aesop provides public liability insurance for volunteers working with our programmes. The cover is held with aQmen, the CaSE Select policy and covers employer's liability for employees and volunteers, personal accident and public liability including care and treatment.

12. Volunteer Recognition

- 12.1. Volunteers are invited to take part in programme conferences. Volunteers are acknowledged through inclusion in newsletters,

social media, websites and other media representation with their consent.

Review of Policy

This policy is reviewed internally by the Programme Manager - Volunteering in consultation with the Management Team and relevant colleagues.

Reviewing of the Volunteer Policy takes place annually.

Date of most recent review of policy 7th of March 2023.