**DURHAM DIOCESE VOLUNTEER POLICY**

**FOR THE ROLE OF**

**VACANCY AUIDT PROCESS FACILITATORS’**

**Introduction**

The Diocese of Durham is the Church of England from the River Tyne in the North; to the River Tees in the South; the Durham Dales in the West; and to the Sea in the East whose purpose is to ‘Bless our communities in Jesus’ name for the transformation of us all.’

Through the Sacrament of Baptism, we are called to share our gifts with one another, with and in the world, and it is the dedication and energy of our volunteers who help uphold this. Given the importance of this call from God, it is essential that we as a diocesan community, do all we can to assure that the right gifts are shared in the right way, at the right time, by the right people.

This policy is designed to ensure that the time and commitment given by volunteers is respected, recognised, and valued and that processes are fair and consistent.

**Definition of Volunteering**

Durham Diocese is committed to an environment where all volunteers, who freely choose to contribute their time, energy and skills can perform to their best ability to support the aims and priorities of the diocese. Albeit our volunteers are unpaid, they should expect reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses.

In addition, it is also helpful to recognise the definition developed by Ivan Scheier (1980):

* *The activity is uncoerced.*
* *The activity is intended to help.*
* *The activity is done without primary or immediate thought of financial gain.*
* *The activity is work, not play.*

Ivan Scheier also defined the term from the perspective of the volunteer as: “*Volunteering is doing more than you have to, because you want to, in a cause you consider good*.”

“*Volunteering brings joy, purpose and belonging … a gift that we give that goes on giving back to us*.” Archbishop Justin Welby

Volunteers are integral to delivering the mission and activities of the diocese, however, a volunteer is not an employee and does not have a contract of employment with the diocese. The diocesan Mission, Discipleship, Ministry, & Growth Team *(hereafter MDMGT)* will agree a role with a volunteer and there will be an expectation that the volunteer will meet the role’s requirements. Roles are identified as suitable for volunteers by the MDMGT. Role descriptions are provided, and these set out the requirements and expectations of the role and any relevant skills, experience or training needed.

**What volunteers can expect from us?**

To ensure volunteers enjoy their role, get the most out of it and that there is a mutually beneficial relationship with the MDMGT, our commitment to volunteers is to:

* Always treat volunteers with respect, consideration, and appreciation.
* Ensure volunteers have a clear idea of their responsibilities, including the length of time we would like them to be involved in a project.
* Give volunteers information about the training and support available to help them carry out their role.
* Provide volunteers with support through regular meetings or discussion (the format will depend on the role).

**What we expect from our volunteers**

We would ask volunteers in return to:

* Always treat MDMGT, Parish representatives and fellow volunteers with respect, consideration, and appreciation.
* Act in a professional way when carry out the volunteer role.
* Act in a way that does not discriminate against or exclude anyone.
* Provide a much notice as possible if they are unable to fulfil their volunteering commitment, or if they no longer wish to be involved in a project.
* If volunteers do not fully understand their role and responsibilities to ask the MDMGT contact for guidance.

**Recruitment**

All volunteers will be asked to complete a standard volunteer application form. Informal interviews are carried out to ensure that the person is suitable for the role in question and that they will be suitable representative of Durham Diocese. Selection procedures for individual volunteers must protect Durham Diocese’s interest and references are sought in every case. This being in line with Diocesan Safer Recruitment Policy.

**Induction and Training**

We want to ensure our volunteers are happy and confident to carry out their role so the MDMGT asks that all new volunteer facilitators attend an induction session as appropriate, alongside which any mandatory and optional training modules will be offered.

**Supervision and support**

All volunteer facilitators will be supported by the VAP coordinator who has a coordinating role for a team of volunteers. The coordinator has oversight of volunteering for this VAP facilitator’s role, answering to the Director of MDMGT and Head of Human Resources.

**Dealing with difficulties**

If a volunteer experiences a difficulty with any aspect of their role, we ask they speak to the VAP coordinator as soon as possible for advice and support. Depending on the role and situation, the VAP coordinator will do their best to resolve the problem.

If there are concerns around a volunteer’s behaviour or contribution, the matter will be discussed amicably, and steps agreed to address it. These may include additional training or mentoring. However, if these areas of concern cannot be resolved after more formal discussions, their volunteering relationship with Durham Diocese may have to cease.

**Safeguarding**

Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, a conviction will not necessarily exclude individuals from volunteering with us but will be considered when assessing suitability for certain roles.

We are committed to the safety and welfare of the people within Durham Diocese. If the volunteer role is within a regulated activity with children and/or vulnerable adults, the volunteer will be required to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, as recommended in the Durham Diocese’s Safeguarding Policy.

The volunteer application form includes a self-disclosure and references ask whether the referee has any reason to be concerned about the applicant being in contact with anyone considered vulnerable.

The importance of safeguarding is referenced as much as possible on volunteer paperwork. Volunteers attend an informal meeting with the relevant member of staff before commencing any roles.

Durham Diocese takes the safeguarding and welfare of its staff, clergy, volunteers, and visitors extremely seriously and will take immediate action in any circumstance where the safety and protection of children and vulnerable adults is at stake.

It is expected that all volunteers share this commitment. Safer Recruitment Principles are used throughout recruitment. The Church of England national Basic Awareness Module and Foundation Module is required of all volunteers.

**Communication**

Communication is key in informing volunteers and helping them to feel valued and supported. The MDMGT will endeavour to include volunteers in internal and external communications and opportunities as much as possible.

**Insurance**

All authorised volunteers are insured whilst undertaking approved volunteering duties through:

* Public Liability.
* Employers’ Liability.
* Personal Accident - our insurers will only cover personal accident insurance for volunteers between sixteen and eighty years of age.
* Personal possessions - volunteers must take responsibility for their own personal possessions as they are not covered by insurance.
* Using your vehicle - if volunteers use their own vehicle in a volunteering role, that they should inform their insurer that they are using their vehicle for this reason.

The insurance will not cover unauthorised actions or actions outside the volunteering role(s).

**Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion**

Durham Diocese has a commitment to encouraging applications from diverse backgrounds, ages, cultures, religions, and genders, and is supported by the Diocesan Equality and Diversity Policy.

**Health and Safety**

The MDMGT will ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare of its volunteers whilst they are undertaking their roles. The Safety at Work Act 1974 is a duty of care which applies equally to everyone. At any age, where a risk is identified, a review will be undertaken with a volunteer to determine whether safeguards need to be implemented or whether the volunteering arrangement should continue.

Volunteers have a duty to take care of themselves and others who may be affected by their actions. Volunteers should not act outside their authorised remit of work. They should always follow Durham Diocese health and safety policies and procedures and are encouraged to record and report accidents and incidents to a member of the team.

Durham Diocese will provide volunteers with appropriate information on health and safety and guidance on any specific health and safety issues or relevant Government guidance that may arise.

**Data Protection and Confidentiality**

Personal data is requested, stored, used, and disposed of in relation to the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

Volunteers may become aware of confidential information about Durham Diocese, other volunteers, its staff, visitors, partners, and suppliers. Volunteers should not disclose such information or use it for their own or another’s benefit without the consent of the party concerned. This does not prevent disclosure once the information is in the public domain (unless this is specified, or it has been made because of the volunteer’s breach of confidentiality) or where the law or safeguarding concerns permits or requires disclosure.

**Parting company**

The MDMGT or the volunteer can terminate the volunteering agreement at any time. Volunteers are requested to inform the VAP coordinator in writing if possible. Each volunteer should receive an Exit Questionnaire and / or informal meeting. This offers the volunteer the opportunity to assess their volunteering experience and make any comments or recommendations which can be used by the diocese to inform best practice.