



**DiABETES UK**  
KNOW DIABETES. FIGHT DIABETES.

## VOLUNTEERING POLICY

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1. Purpose .....	3
2. Volunteers at the heart of Diabetes UK .....	3
3. Our commitment to volunteers .....	3
4. What is volunteering? .....	5
5. Recruitment and selection .....	5
6. Learning and development .....	6
7. Ongoing support .....	6
8. Motivation and recognition.....	7
9. Leaving Diabetes UK.....	7
10. Problem solving.....	7
11. Volunteer expenses .....	7
12. Keeping Safe, Legal and Healthy .....	8
13. Social media.....	9
14. Other volunteering policies and resources.....	9

Policy Owner(s)	Head of Communities & Volunteering
Date approved:	December 2025
Approved by:	Executive Team
Date of last review and update:	December 2025
Date of next scheduled review:	December 2026, or sooner as required

## 1. Purpose of this policy

This policy applies to our staff and volunteers. It makes clear the key principles and standards that guide our work with volunteers, outlines our approach to volunteering and commitment to volunteers. It guides the work of staff who work with volunteers and helps volunteers to understand what they can expect from the charity.

## 2. Volunteers at the heart of Diabetes UK

Volunteers are crucial in helping us support people with diabetes and working towards a world where diabetes can do no harm. Volunteers are at the heart of everything we do as a charity. Volunteers increase our impact and enable us to reach thousands of people in local communities each year.

Diabetes affects more people than any other health condition in the UK, which means we need to take action now. Our vision is a world where diabetes can do no harm. We have a number of key ambitions. Those that are most closely aligned to our volunteering are:

- Reaching and support people newly diagnosed with type 2
- Getting essential diabetes care right
- Prevention for people at higher risk of type 2
- Reducing inequity in diabetes health outcomes
- Tackling diabetes-related stigma
- Supporting young people to manage type 1 diabetes more confidently

Most of our work is underpinned by volunteers in some way. Our work influencing government, improving care and our work on inequality are supported by volunteers. Our research is guided by volunteers and our campaigns are a huge success because of the passion, dedication and strong voice our volunteers bring.

## 3. Our commitment to volunteers

We are committed to making sure that all our volunteers have an enjoyable experience with us. Our work with volunteers is informed by national standards of good practice in volunteer management and support. We will create clear and meaningful roles for volunteers, and flexible, relevant learning and development opportunities. We will consistently recognise the contribution of volunteers across our work.

Volunteering is crucial to the work we do. You help us do more for people living with, affected by and at risk of diabetes. We want to make sure you get the most out of the time you give and that you are able to make a valuable contribution to our work and the overall ambition of the charity. To help us do this we've set out what you can expect from us, as well as what we expect of you when volunteering.

## What we offer volunteers

- A clear volunteer role that is linked to our strategy to reach and support more people living with and at risk of diabetes
- Access to our volunteer management system, Assemble, where you'll get the latest Diabetes UK news, events, resources, networking opportunities and training
- Full training for your role, alongside other learning and development opportunities
- Access to all relevant volunteering policies to help you understand our approach to volunteering and to stay safe, legal and healthy while volunteering. These will be given to you before beginning your role
- A named staff contact at Diabetes UK who you can talk to about your role, other volunteering opportunities and other ways to be a part of our work
- If you spend money on things like travel or lunch while volunteering, we will pay you back for this
- You will be covered by our public liability insurance while volunteering for us

Any concerns that you raise will be dealt with fairly and consistently in line with our guidance on [How we solve problems together](#).

We're committed to making sure you volunteer in an inclusive and supportive environment, where processes are fair and free from discrimination. We value you for who you are and what you bring. If you ever experience any discriminatory or non-inclusive behaviour, you can report it to us (anonymously if you prefer) through [our online form](#).

## What we ask of our volunteers

- You'll follow our volunteering policies and procedures and any guidance in your induction to help keep you and those around you safe. You'll attend any training relevant to your volunteer role
- You'll let us know who you're reaching with your volunteering so we can understand the impact that our volunteers have
- You'll commit to the minimum frequency and length of volunteering outlined in your role description. This helps us and volunteers get the most out of their volunteering
- We want all volunteers to be positive examples of our value and work. Our four key values are: We put people first, we are driven to more, we make change happen and we keep things simple.
- We expect Diabetes UK volunteers to be respectful of people from all cultures and backgrounds. We are an anti-racism and an anti-stigma organisation and take allegations of racism, discrimination and stigmatising behaviours extremely seriously.
- You'll engage with and speak to all Diabetes UK staff and other volunteers in a positive, courteous, and constructive way

- You'll record your impact through our Assemble system. You can find [more information about how to do this here](#), or speak to your volunteer manager
- Bring a can-do attitude to your volunteer role and give us feedback in a positive way to enable us to improve how we help people.

## 4. What is volunteering?

Volunteering is the relationship between us and someone who freely gives their time and skills to carry out a clear role on our behalf. Volunteers are not paid but should claim any reasonable out-of-pocket expenses as a result of their volunteering.

This policy covers people who carry out a defined volunteer role for the charity. It does not cover people who take part in one-off, ad-hoc campaigning or fundraising opportunities, like signing a petition or cheering on runners at a sporting event. Anyone taking part in any activity on our behalf will always be given clear instructions and support wherever it is needed. It is important to remember that you represent the charity when you're volunteering with us, and we want you to feel confident and capable of doing that.

## 5. Recruitment and selection

We welcome and celebrate the diversity of our volunteers and are committed to making sure that our recruitment process is accessible and non-discriminatory. We want to remove barriers to volunteering with us and are committed to providing adjustments where we can.

Diabetes UK is committed to being an anti-racist and inclusive charity which values diversity. Volunteers play an important role in our culture and represent our charity to communities we serve, so it's important that they reflect this commitment in the work they do.

Each volunteer will be given a clear and up-to-date role description that outlines the purpose, main activities, skills needed and time commitment of the role. Every potential volunteer is required to complete an application form and will have the option to fill out an equal opportunities form. As part of our commitment to making volunteering inclusive, being able to gather diversity information helps us to know how well we are meeting this commitment. Our aim is for our volunteering community to be representative of the wider UK diabetes community.

Some roles may require a form of assessment with a staff member, like a phone call, face-to-face interview or discussion. With some roles, we will continue the selection process throughout induction and initial training to help the volunteer and staff to make a final decision as to whether the role is right for the person applying and where flexibility and adjustments can be offered.

For most volunteer roles, people will need to supply references before they begin volunteering. For some roles, like a trustee, volunteering with a local group volunteer or any roles that involve working with children or vulnerable adults, a cleared DBS in England and Wales, or equivalent in Scotland and Northern Ireland is needed before people can start. Please note

that some of our volunteer roles are subject to a minimum age of 18 due to the nature of the checks that may be needed.

## 6. Learning and development

Learning and development covers all the resources and training we give to volunteers to develop their knowledge and skills.

### 6.1 Induction

Volunteers are an essential part of the Diabetes UK team. Although our volunteer roles vary in time commitment and skills required, we make sure that all volunteers are fully prepared for their role and understand how it fits into our wider work. When starting with us, volunteers receive a welcome email and an induction to Diabetes UK.

As volunteers are giving up their time and will likely have other commitments, we aim to make sure that our induction resources and essential training are flexible and easy to access, without compromising on quality. We aim to ensure all training materials are inclusive for all, and where possible are available in alternative formats.

### 6.2 Ongoing learning and development

Following induction, we will provide further training and resources that are relevant and appropriate to the volunteer role, including refresher training if needed. As well as recognising the existing skills volunteers bring with them, we offer optional learning opportunities for volunteers to develop their skills and knowledge to help them to move into other volunteering roles and/or employment in the future. We regularly evaluate the learning and development we offer to ensure its fit for purpose.

## 7. Ongoing support

**7.1** Every volunteer has a named contact at Diabetes UK. The level of support that a volunteer can expect will be outlined in the role description. It will be tailored and will depend on the activity you are doing as a volunteer – our aim is that we're spending our collective time delivering our strategy for people with diabetes. All new volunteers will receive a phone call or email after the first time they volunteer for us.

**7.2** Following on from this call, regular contact will be maintained and the volunteer manager available as needed for ongoing support. This includes if your circumstances change which might affect when and how you volunteer for us. We'll aim to be flexible wherever we can.

**7.3** We will develop opportunities for networking and peer learning between volunteers.

**7.4** We will keep volunteers updated with information about their role, other volunteering roles and relevant information about the charity.

7.5 Staff members will maintain a professional relationship with volunteers in line with our guidance for working with volunteers. These standards will be maintained between staff and volunteers, stopping any inappropriate exchange of personal information or behaviour.

## 8. Motivation and recognition

Volunteers are a vital part Diabetes UK, and this is reflected in our day-to-day approach to managing volunteers and the support we provide. We will proactively recognise the contribution of volunteers, say thank you and report back to volunteers on the difference that their volunteering makes.

To make sure people want to keep volunteering for us we will recognise their existing skills and expertise, offer refresher training where necessary and encourage them to move on to other volunteer roles as other opportunities arise.

If you receive a gift from a supporter or external party related to your volunteering, you should let your local volunteering team know as soon as possible because gifts legally have to be recorded for reporting purposes.

## 9. Leaving Diabetes UK

All volunteers will be told how they can stop volunteering. This means we can thank volunteers, offer them advice on other relevant opportunities where appropriate and can provide references for future employers or volunteer placements. We will provide opportunities for volunteers to feedback on their experience [through our exit survey](#) so that we can keep improving our support for volunteers. If you do stop volunteering with us, please also remember to remove any mention of being a Diabetes UK volunteer from your online social media profiles. When you stop volunteering with us, we will close your Assemble account.

## 10. Problem solving

We want to make sure that all volunteers have a positive and fulfilling experience. But we know problems may happen. When they do, we will resolve them fairly, consistently and in a timely manner. It is crucial that both volunteers and staff feel able to raise and discuss concerns.

A procedure for problem solving in situations that involve volunteers can be found in our guidance on [How we solve problems together](#).

## 11. Volunteer expenses

All of our volunteering roles should be accessible, and no one should be left out-of-pocket because of their volunteering. To make this possible we have a [Volunteer Expenses Policy](#), which is benchmarked against national volunteer management standards, and can be found on our [website](#) or in [Assemble](#).

The expenses policy provides information and guidance about volunteer expenses for Diabetes UK staff, volunteers and local group treasurers. Local groups should use the policy when paying back volunteers from group funds. Diabetes UK staff who volunteer should use the staff expenses process to claim back their expenses, using the relevant budget holder codes. You can find the volunteer expenses claim form on our [website](#) or in [Assemble](#).

## 12. Keeping Safe, Legal and Healthy

There are some regulatory or legal requirements that volunteers, just like staff, must follow. This means our volunteers must understand some of the things they have to do in a number of areas that are covered in this section. It is vital that these aspects of keeping safe, legal and healthy are followed. If they are not, we may have to end our volunteering relationship with you. You can find out more in our [Keeping Safe, Legal and Healthy Policy](#).

### 12.1 Safeguarding

Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is an essential part of our work. Safeguarding is taking a common-sense approach to keeping children or vulnerable adults safe from harm and understanding what you need to do if you are worried about the safety or well-being of someone.

Safeguarding will be covered in the induction for each volunteer so that everyone understands how it relates to their role. Refresher information and training will also be provided. We have a central safeguarding team and a local safeguarding lead in each region and nation to support volunteers with any safeguarding queries or concerns. Volunteers are never expected to investigate safeguarding issues themselves. All volunteers should make sure they have read and understood our safeguarding policy and procedures. These will be given to all volunteers on induction and are available at any time from your local volunteering team or in [Assemble](#).

### 12.2 Data protection

British law sets out some very clear rules about how people's information should be handled. These rules are part of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and The General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR). The GDPR sets out the standards expected of anyone who has access to records of personal or sensitive information. People trust us to store and use their information properly and all our staff and volunteers are expected to follow the principles and guidance set out in our [Keeping Safe, Legal and Healthy Policy](#).

### 12.3 Health and safety

As a charity we have responsibilities for the health and safety of people when they are volunteering for us and any other attendees or guests who could be affected by our work. We will assess the hazards and risks faced by volunteers in the course of their activities and act to control those risks to an acceptable level.

To keep everyone safe, our volunteers must meet their duties under health and safety legislation whilst volunteering. It's also important to take reasonable care of yourself and for others who might be affected by your activities. These duties are explained at volunteer induction and are also set out in our [Keeping Safe, Legal and Healthy Policy](#).

## 12.4 Volunteering alone and keeping safe

There will be times when people volunteer alone. Volunteering alone refers to volunteering without close or direct supervision. To make sure you are safe we expect you to follow important guidance and procedures that are outlined in section 4 of our [Keeping Safe, Legal and Healthy Policy](#). Included in this policy are your responsibilities as a lone volunteer.

- You are expected to take reasonable care of your own safety and that of others
- Follow any personal safety practices outlined in our policy
- Report any accidents, incidents, injuries and near misses to your local office.

If you have not already read our [Keeping Safe, Legal and Healthy Policy](#), please ask your local volunteering team to send a copy. It is important that you read this before taking part in volunteering activities for us. If you experience discriminatory behaviour, sexual harassment, or any other kind of non-inclusive behaviours while you're volunteering, you can report this through the [Non-Inclusive and discriminatory behaviours form](#).

## 13. Social media

We use social media across all of our work. We use it to campaign, to raise awareness, to ask people to support our events and listen to people living with diabetes or at risk of it. It's a great way of reaching lots of people and making sure they know all about our work.

A lot of our volunteers, supporters and staff are on social media too. They use it to help share information about Diabetes UK but also their personal lives.

We recognise that the internet provides unique opportunities to participate in discussions and share information on particular topics relevant to our work using a wide variety of social media, like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and blogs.

To help you do this safely, we have a comprehensive [Social Media Policy](#) that aims to protect anyone volunteering with us and to encourage you to take responsibility for what you write, exercise good judgment and common sense.

## 14. Other volunteering policies and resources

We have a set of volunteering policies and documents that may help you when volunteering with Diabetes UK. These can be found on our website, on Assemble, or are available from your local volunteering team.

1. Volunteering Policy
2. Keeping Safe, Legal and Healthy Policy
3. Volunteer Expenses Policy
4. How we solve problems together

5. Whistleblowing Policy
6. Social Media Policy