



Volunteer Policy

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1. Purpose of this policy

Ignite Life recognises that volunteers play a vital role within our charity and their contribution enables us to deliver our services. Ignite is committed to ensuring that there are good working relationships between staff and volunteers, and that volunteers are well supported.

This policy aims to lay out how we will support our volunteers and how we expect volunteers to work within the charity. Ignite Life supports vulnerable young people and families, and we want our volunteers to feel confident to also support these families, ask for help when needed and provide a service on behalf of Ignite.

2. Contact information

If you have any questions about Ignite Life's Volunteer policy, please contact us at:

Contact: Bethanie Cundy
Email: bethanie@ignite-life.co.uk

Address:
Ignite Life
Unit 6 Bridge Road
Kingswood
South Gloucestershire
BS15 4FW

3. Definitions

References to 'we' or 'us': when the policy references 'we' or 'us' this is referring to Ignite Life

Volunteer: Ignite defines a volunteer as a person who does something, especially helping other people, willingly and without being forced or paid to do it.

4. Why include volunteers?

Our role is to encourage voluntary activity, and therefore we want to take a leading role in the involvement of residents as volunteers to help deliver our services.

We encourage people from different walks of life and all communities, who can bring their different skills and experiences to our work.

Volunteers bring a different perspective to the organisation, often reflecting the views of the local community and we want to include these views in the design and delivery of our services. Finally, volunteers can also help to extend the services we are able to offer.

5. Who is a volunteer?

A volunteer is any individual who undertakes unpaid activities on behalf of Ignite Life of their own free choice. Work experience placements are different to volunteering.

Volunteers may be involved in short or long-term activities or as a one off. Typical activities may include:

- Food parcel delivery driver
- Food parcel packaging
- Supporting project management
- Fundraising or awareness raising events
- Office and admin work

6. Roles and responsibilities

Each volunteer will be supported and supervised by a designated member of staff within the charity. The designated staff member will provide guidance, support and supervision to the volunteer to ensure that the volunteering experience is a positive and rewarding one.

The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no contractual obligation for the volunteer to attend or to undertake particular tasks. However, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability and a reciprocal set of expectations:

Volunteers can expect:

- To have clear information about what is and is not expected of them
- To receive adequate support and training
- To be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment
- To be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner
- To have opportunities for personal development

- To be recognised and appreciated
- To be able to say 'no' to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable
- To know what to do if something goes wrong

Ignite Life expects volunteers:

- To be reliable, open and honest
- To uphold the charity's values and comply with policies
- To contribute positively to the aims of the charity and avoid bringing the organisation into disrepute
- To treat everyone, specifically our service users, with respect and dignity in a non-judgmental manner. Due to the nature of our services, we support extremely vulnerable families, and we expect our volunteers to be compassionate and understanding.
- To carry out tasks within agreed guidelines
- To adhere to Ignite's safeguarding policy

7. Recruitment

Recruitment will usually involve a standard application form, interview, and induction and the taking of references. Some roles may require further checks such as DBS checks which will be undertaken in accordance with the latest guidance. Recruiting staff will discuss the most appropriate recruitment process. For example, for some roles it might be reasonable to avoid application forms and meet all applicants.

Equal opportunities principles will be adhered to when recruiting volunteers.

Where it is reasonable to do so we will be flexible with the tasks within role descriptions – e.g. where some tasks may be difficult for a person with anxiety, or to better fit the motivations of the individual.

Where applicants are not able to be placed into their preferred role, they will be given feedback and the opportunity to discuss other roles with us or other local organisations.

8. Induction and Training

Volunteers will receive a full induction which will include:

1. An introduction to staff
2. A tour of Ignite's offices and facilities
3. A copy of relevant policies and role description
4. A formal induction session which will include information on the role, safeguarding information and expectations

In general, training will be provided by the volunteer's supervisor in an 'on the job' basis, but some roles may require formal training – e.g. in safeguarding issues.

9. Support and Supervision

Each volunteer will have a named supervisor. The supervisor is responsible for training and supervising the volunteer, as well as giving feedback and answering queries. They will also plan work for the volunteer.

Volunteers and supervisors will agree on appropriate arrangements for catch-up sessions. This will vary according to the nature of the role and how often the volunteer comes in.

Volunteers will be given the opportunity to share their views and opinions of their experiences of volunteering with us. We will also recognise their contribution through social media, newsletters and by saying thank you.

10. Confidentiality

All volunteers are bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as staff, as laid down in any Ignite Life policy or by verbal instruction from their supervisor. Breach of confidentiality is taken very seriously and may result in us asking the volunteer to leave.

We are bound by the Data Protection Act to ensure that we treat volunteer information with respect. Only staff who need to see information for purposes related to volunteer involvement will be able to access it. We will not pass information on without permission.

11. Health and Safety

Ignite appreciates that all staff and volunteers have the right to work and volunteer in a safe environment.

Volunteers are covered by Ignite's Public Liability Insurance but if they wish to use their car to carry out any aspect of their volunteering role, the onus is on the volunteer to notify their insurance company to ensure that they are covered on their vehicle insurance.

12. Moving On

When volunteers leave their role, they will be asked to complete an exit survey to provide feedback on their volunteer experience. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss their responses more fully if they wish to do so. Responses from exit surveys should be anonymised and kept confidentially, although key information should be used to inform Ignite's volunteering offer and ensure continuing good practice.

13. Youth volunteers

Ignite Life aims to provide volunteer opportunities to young people in our community where we can. We believe that providing volunteering opportunities to young people can help with reducing isolation, accessing work experiences, supporting others within their community, and raising confidence and self-esteem.

Recruitment:

- Ignite Life is committed to equal opportunities when recruiting and selecting volunteers.
- We will advertise our available roles predominantly within Impact Mentoring, this will help us offer volunteer opportunities to those who may be deemed 'hard to reach young people'.
- We will hold a brief interview so that we can share a mutual understanding of the role the volunteer will have and what they would like to get out of the role.
- We will work closely with the young person's mentors to ensure there is no conflict of interest in them volunteering in the role they have.

Induction and training:

- Young people will be given inductions where required.
- The majority of the volunteer roles provided (mainly packaging food parcels and organising the charity shop) to young people will not require a formal induction or any training.
- If a youth volunteer wants to advance into a different volunteer role, we will provide them with the same induction and training as our other volunteers receive.

Expenses:

- Youth volunteers will never make payments on behalf of the charity which will require reimbursements or expenses.

Supervision and support:

- Youth volunteers will always be supervised by at least one adult, this either being their mentor from Impact Mentoring or with a senior member of the Ignite Life team.
- Youth volunteers will have continuous check ins.

Volunteer voice:

- We encourage all our volunteers to express their views on matters concerning Ignite Life.
- We may encourage a youth volunteer to sit on a deciding panel or be a part of management committee.

Health and safety:

- The health and safety of all our volunteers is paramount to us. We will ensure all volunteering conditions are safe and ensure that volunteers are able to express if they ever feel unsafe.
- We also believe that the mental health of our volunteers is paramount, and we will regularly check in to ensure all volunteers are well supported.

Grievances and disciplinary procedures:

- We make it clear to all our volunteers that Ignite is a safe space for people to express any concerns they may have.
- As each youth volunteer is supported with their 1:1 mentor, we ask mentors to ensure their young person feels safe to discuss any grievances they may have, and their mentor can talk on their behalf if they want.
- Volunteers are aware of our code of conduct and if they go against this we will meet with them and their mentor about their future in the volunteer role.

Reviewed: January 2022

Review: January 2023

Reviewed: January 2024

Reviewed: October 23

Reviewed: October 24

Reviewed: October 25

Next reviewed: October 2026