

# Candidate Charter

## Our Commitment to Candidates

We are committed to creating an improved and consistent recruitment and onboarding framework that reflects our values, reduces bias, and ensures every candidate is treated fairly and respectfully. Our approach is aligned with legislation and best practice in safeguarding, equality, diversity, and inclusion.

## Our Recruitment Vision

To attract and recruit the very best talent for our team, aligned with our culture, values, and ambition. A consistent and improved recruitment framework at every stage that supports our commitment to diversity, inclusion, and organisational values, ultimately delivering quality candidates to Volunteering Matters.

## Our Recruitment Philosophy

With inclusion in mind, we recruit for attitude, values, cultural fit, and skills. We follow a recruitment and onboarding process that aims to get the best out of candidates at every stage. Positive action will be taken where appropriate, but not positive discrimination.

## Our Aim

To create a consistent, values-led, efficient, and quality-focused recruitment and onboarding process with an inclusive lens, attracting a broad and diverse range of high-quality candidates. At every stage, we aim to appeal to as wide a spectrum of candidates as possible, ensuring the best opportunity for each to demonstrate their potential.



## 1

**Before the Recruitment Process**

- We will take a broad range of positive actions to generate a wide and rich pool of applicants (we will not positively discriminate).
- We will adopt a standard format for all Job Descriptions with consistent, inclusive language that aligns with our values.
- We will consider short-listed candidates from previous processes for similar roles, choosing to 'widen the gate' rather than 'lower the bar'.
- Where possible and appropriate, we will connect with Faith groups, BAME, LGBTQIA+, Women's, and Disability networks to build relationships and improve representation.
- We will use **gender-neutral and inclusive language**.
- Where possible and appropriate, we will consider requests to translate recruitment materials into different languages to support inclusion.



- We will display and honour our **Disability Confident, Show the Salary, and The Promise pledges** (where appropriate) in all adverts and job descriptions.
  - All vacancies will be advertised internally, and priority will be given to displaced employees. Internal adverts will be posted for a minimum of five calendar days before being opened to other applicants.
  - All external adverts will then run for a minimum of ten calendar days to ensure accessibility for part-time applicants and those on leave. Where possible, longer advertising periods will be applied.
  - We will promote our policy of '**Flexible working by default**'.
  - We will engage with local communities via community hubs, our beneficiaries, and local partners.
  - We will utilise local channels and our volunteer network for recruitment.
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- The recruitment process will strike a balance between **values-based questions, evidence-based questions, competency questions and practical tasks** designed to demonstrate candidates experience and suitability for the role. We will ask early in the process whether any reasonable adjustments are needed to allow candidates to demonstrate the best of themselves.
  - We will maintain a strong focus on diversity and equality throughout.
  - **Candidate briefing packs** will be created for all roles (and translated where appropriate).

- We aim to be mindful of school holidays, religious festivals, and other significant dates when scheduling recruitment activity.
- We aim to give Candidates **at least five days' notice** ahead of interviews.
- All panel members will be trained in unconscious bias, equality, diversity, inclusion, and our organisational values.

## 2

**During the Recruitment Process**

- We aim to share **sample interview questions and themes** in advance as a reasonable adjustment if requested and, if shared with one candidate, will offer too all.
- Positive action will be taken to increase inclusion at every stage.
- An **equality-based approach** will be taken at all stages.
- Career gaps will be explored with positive intent.
- Life experience will be considered alongside work experience as an indicator of future contribution.
- A minimum of two managers will review each application to reduce bias and act as a safety net.
- We recognise that years of experience do not always equate to competence, and this will not be used to unfairly disadvantage candidates.
- The recruitment process will focus on potential and future contribution, not solely past achievements.
- Reasonable travel expenses (HMRC rates for mileage claims and a second-class train ticket) to attend interviews will be reimbursed by contacting the recruitment manager.
- Childcare costs may also be covered to support interview attendance, whether virtual or in person.
- Any other reasonable adjustments required by the candidate will be considered.
- A recruitment timeline will be confirmed and communicated clearly to manage candidate expectations.

**AI Use in Applications**

Applications are accepted on trust, and we expect all submissions to reflect the applicant's own words, experiences, and motivations.

While tools such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) may support the application process, applications should not be generated wholly by AI.

## Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) & Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG)

Where a role requires a **DBS or PVG check**, this will be explicitly stated in the job advert and job description. Offers will be made conditional upon satisfactory pre-employment checks. Where a DBS/PVG check is pending post-offer, individuals may be onboarded into non-regulated activity until clearance is received.

### 3

#### After the Recruitment Process

- All candidates who attend interviews will receive a response within three working days of the final decision. If this is not possible, we will communicate a revised timescale.
- Candidates who are unsuccessful during the application stage will be notified via the Applicant Tracking System (ATS).
- Feedback will always be offered to candidates who attended an interview.
- We will take a high-quality approach to induction and orientation to support new starters in settling into Volunteering Matters and making a positive contribution quickly.

### 4

#### Onboarding and Probation

- All successful candidates will receive a structured onboarding plan, including:
- A clear induction process introducing them to Volunteering Matters, our mission, values, and team culture.
- Support during their probationary period to help them feel welcomed, informed, and confident in their new role.
- Continued communication and development opportunities to align their work with our wider organisational goals.

**This charter reflects our deep commitment to making every part of our recruitment and onboarding experience inclusive, values-led, and empowering for everyone who applies to work with us.**

