

VOLUNTEER POLICY

Ataxia UK is reliant on the valuable support of its dedicated volunteers in delivering its objectives. Central to the success of the organisation are its trustees, branch and support group coordinators, those who volunteer for events or at our office in London and those that help at our clinics. Without volunteers Ataxia UK would not be able to offer its full range of services to people with ataxia.

Volunteers keep the organisation in touch with our purpose and provide a wide range of relevant skills and perspectives that improve the work we do

INTRODUCTION

Ataxia UK's mission statement is:

- We fund research into developing safe, effective treatments. Our ultimate goal is to find a cure for ataxia.
- We help people to live with ataxia in the meantime by assisting them to access the best care and support available, to enable them to achieve the highest quality of life open to them and by providing a range of services that are not available anywhere else.
- We aim to support all people affected by ataxia; people with the condition, their families, carers, friends and colleagues.

This policy sets out how Ataxia UK intends to support its volunteers.

TYPES OF VOLUNTEER

Ataxia UK recognises there are different types of volunteers.

Occasional Volunteers

These are people who volunteer at events such as conferences or help with projects, for example by helping with mail outs. They volunteer occasionally, perhaps a few times a year.

Regular Volunteers

These are people who take on a particular task, on an ongoing basis. Regular volunteers include those undertaking administrative work at head office, helping at one of our clinics or perhaps compiling a newsletter and sending it out or running a branch or a support group.

Trustees

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Ataxia UK is governed by a board of trustees. As volunteers, trustees provide the organisation with vital skills and experience to shape the strategic direction of the organisation.

Interns

Interns can either be at university or other types of further education that require specific work experience which can be gained through project work, or those who are taking a gap year prior to pursuing further education. Graduates entering the job market often find it useful to do voluntary work for an organisation to gain practical office experience for 6-12 months before setting into a permanent full time job.

People that volunteer with us must have the skills and abilities that enable them to do the tasks that we have on offer.

PRINCIPLES

The volunteer policy is guided by the following principles:

- The organisation and its volunteers will follow this policy.
- All volunteers will sign to confirm their understanding of the volunteer agreement.
- The volunteer's role will be clearly explained and mutually agreed.
- The organisation will provide induction, information, training and support to its volunteers appropriate to their volunteer role.
- The organisation will, whenever possible, give volunteers work that is satisfying and appropriate to their interest.
- Volunteers have the right to express their views to their designated supervisor
- Volunteers and staff will work together within the organisation's rules, policies and procedures.
- Volunteers and staff will treat each other with respect and courtesy.
- The organisation is committed to equal opportunities in relation to the recruitment, selection and involvement of volunteers.
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PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Ataxia UK is committed to good practice when supporting its volunteers. For more detailed information on how the organisation supports volunteers, see the Volunteer Induction Pack.

Recruitment

Ataxia UK will make ongoing efforts to recruit volunteers who match appropriate needs. This selection process will be based on the skills and interest of the volunteer and the current needs of the organisation.

Volunteer agreement and work outline

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All volunteers will be asked to sign their understanding of a volunteer agreement outlining the commitment and expectations of Ataxia UK and the role or specific tasks that the volunteer has offered to undertake. A representative of Ataxia UK will also sign this agreement. *The agreement is not a formal contract of employment*; it is simply a guideline to help the volunteer feel supported and to understand their responsibilities. Volunteers will also receive a copy of the Volunteer Induction Pack to keep and refer to when necessary.

Induction, information and training

Volunteers will receive an appropriate induction, which will include information on the aims, background and organisational framework of the organisation. Additional information will be provided to help the volunteer in their work. Ataxia UK will strive to make the information sessions accessible and relevant to local needs. Opportunities to develop knowledge and skills will also be provided as appropriate.

Support

Volunteers will be supported by the Branch Development Manager or another designated person or volunteer. This person will provide the volunteer with support on their work, the opportunity to discuss future work and a chance to discuss any issues that may arise. The duties of the volunteer and who they will be managed by will be covered in their induction and included in their volunteer agreement.

We regret we cannot undertake or offer personal care; volunteers must be able to care for themselves or have a carer with them

Health and Safety

Ataxia UK will make every effort to care for the health, safety and welfare of its volunteers. Volunteers will be provided with copies of relevant health and safety procedures and receive appropriate guidance. Health and Safety is the responsibility of everyone.

Expenses

Those volunteering in the office or at events will be reimbursed reasonable travel and subsistence in accord with Ataxia UK's Expenses Policy. To claim expenses, supporting receipts must be provided. Volunteers running branches and groups will have their own process for expenses.

Having a voice

Volunteers will be given opportunities to express their views about issues concerning the organisation and its work through regular meetings with the volunteers' supervisor.

Insurance

Volunteers will be covered by the organisation's insurance policy while engaged in work in the office or at publically arranged events for Ataxia UK, subject to prior

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approval. Volunteers running branches can have a look at the branch guide which explains public liability insurance in more detail.

Equal opportunities

All volunteers are required to make a commitment to Ataxia UK's equal opportunities policy. Volunteers will be provided with a copy of Ataxia UK's equal opportunities policy as part of their induction and will be supported in its practice.

Confidentiality

All volunteers will be issued with Ataxia UK's confidentiality policy and guided as to how this affects the work they will be doing for Ataxia UK. Volunteers who, due to the nature of their work, have access to data on Friends of the charity may be asked to sign a copy of the confidentiality policy. If at any time a volunteer feels the conduct of any individual is not appropriate they should bring it to the attention of the person designated as the volunteer's supervisor.

Resolving concerns

Ataxia UK has a grievance and disciplinary procedure designed specifically for volunteers. Ataxia UK will seek resolutions to complaints or concerns as soon as they are raised. Where the actions of a volunteer warrant serious concern, the Disciplinary Procedure may be used and appropriate action taken. Copies of all these procedures can be found in the Volunteer Induction Pack.

Ataxia UK works across the whole of the UK and is a charity registered in Scotland (no SC040607) and in England and Wales (no 1102391) and a company limited by guarantee (4974832).