



animal rescue

Making a difference **together** for All animals

## Volunteer Policy



Produced with thanks to the National Lottery's Awards for All Programme

# 1. Our Vision

Through our exciting and diverse volunteer opportunities, we will work to provide the best possible volunteer experience, encourage all to exceed their personal expectations, to make a difference, gain a sense of personal satisfaction and be valued for their contribution.

In line with this Freshfields seeks to involve volunteers to:

- Be a positive advocate for the rescue as a whole.
- Make a positive difference to All animals through every role.
- Understand the motivations of each volunteer and work with each person to help achieve their aims.
- Develop new knowledge and skills.
- Build relationships and a sense of belonging within the Freshfields team.
- Gain confidence.
- Feel valued.

## 1.1 Principles

This Volunteering Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

**Choice:** Volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual. Any encouragement to become involved in volunteering should not result in any form of pressure. Freshfields will not knowingly make unfair demands upon volunteers', who have every right to refuse participation in any action which causes stress or is against their principles or beliefs.

Freedom to volunteer implies freedom not to become involved or to cease involvement.

**Diversity:** People bring varying qualities, philosophies and experience to voluntary roles.

Diversity is recognised, respected and valued. It is recognised that barriers to participation can be overcome by providing support, skills, experience, confidence and contacts gained while helping others.

**Access:** Access to volunteering opportunities should be available for all regardless of any constraints on an individual. To make this possible a broad range of opportunities should be made available to all wherever possible.

**Benefit all:** Giving voluntary time and skills must be recognised as establishing an equal relationship in which the volunteer, the animals, and the charity benefit. Together we will identify those benefits and commit to achieving them.

**Recognition:** The value of what volunteers contribute to Freshfields, to the community, and to wider social objectives, is highly significant and should be formally recognised on a regular basis.

## **1.2 Freshfields Responsibilities**

To provide the best possible volunteer experience Freshfields is committed to:

- Protect the health and safety of all volunteers.
- Provide an environment that is welcoming and free from discrimination
- Support volunteers to feel part of the wider Freshfields team.
- Provide support, feedback and encouragement with regards to their contribution.
- Provide the necessary guidance and training to perform the role to a good standard.
- Ensure each volunteer has a mutually agreed and suitable role with clear, achievable tasks.
- Provide clear information on who to go to with questions or requests.
- Understand the ethics, work, policies and procedures of Freshfields.
- Ensure volunteers feel valued and recognise the unique contributions and achievements of all volunteers.
- Provide opportunities to contribute helpful ideas and constructive suggestions to improve Freshfields work.

### **1.3 Volunteers' Responsibilities**

- Show commitment to the organisation's beliefs and values.
- Understand and follow Freshfields Animal Rescue policies and procedures.
- Treat the public, managers, staff and volunteer colleagues with respect at all times.
- Be a positive advocate for Freshfields whilst carrying out your role and in public.
- Carry out their tasks to the best of their ability and ask for help when needed.
- Uphold Freshfields meat free workplace policy when representing the rescue and respect the personal choices of everybody.
- To recognise the right of Freshfields to expect quality of service, trust and loyalty from its team members.
- Have a practical and flexible approach and a positive attitude.
- Inform their Manager in cases of absence or sickness.
- Report any accidents or incidents to a member of staff.
- Respect confidentiality and not participate in hearsay.
- Be prepared to undertake appropriate training and DBS check as required.
- Discuss concerns with their Manager in the first instance.
- Provide feedback and contribute constructive suggestions and ideas.

## **2 Volunteering - Practice Guidelines**

### **2.1 The Volunteer Recruitment Process**

#### Stage 1: Enquiry

A volunteer enquiry is made using the enquiry form; or volunteers are invited to apply for specific roles during a recruitment campaign.

Reception will log the enquiry and pass it to the appropriate team. This may be for example the cattery, the funding team, or the shops team.

#### Stage 2: Match people to opportunities

The Unit Head will be available to confirm if a suitable role is available.

The Head will meet the potential volunteer to see that the person is suitable for the chosen role. It is important to match the potential, the attributes and skills of the person to the role to make sure every applicant has a positive volunteering experience.

The applicant may then be offered a role, offered a different role, not offered a role or offered an opportunity to be kept on file until a role suited to them becomes available.

#### Stage 3: New starter process

Volunteer recruitment paperwork is completed. All new volunteers are recruited on the condition of a 6 month probationary period to ensure that all parties are happy.

Volunteers must be willing to provide 2 references, emergency contact details, I.D and equal opportunities information and have a DBS check if appropriate to the role.

#### Stage 4: The Freshfields and Volunteer Agreement and Voluntary Role

Each volunteer will have a Volunteer Agreement, based upon Freshfields Volunteer Policy, establishing what Freshfields and the Volunteer will provide for each other. They will agree to a clear and written role description. Neither of these documents is a contract.

Freshfields has no intention of creating a contract with any volunteers but we do ask volunteers to fully commit to the role and principles agreed.

#### Stage 5: Induction and training

All volunteers will receive an induction into Freshfields as a whole initially, and then to their own area of work. This may take up to 4 weeks to fully complete. It will involve a tour of Freshfields, introductions to other staff and volunteers, discussion of Policies and Procedures, identifying and delivering any training required for you to provide the best possible support to the animals and the rescue through your role.

### **2.2 Expenses**

Due to the high number of volunteers that Freshfields relies on to run the rescue, shops, events and other activities, we simply cannot afford to pay travel and lunch expenses for everyone at this point without it having a negative effect on our being able to care for the animals.

It may be possible *in exceptional circumstances* to provide travel expenses for volunteers when there is a need to travel more than just to and from the work location or if the volunteer is participating in a grant funded project.

Your Manager will be able to tell you whether your circumstances qualify during your introduction to Freshfields.

#### **Claiming expenses**

All eligible volunteers will only have reasonable travel expenses *reimbursed on production valid, signed receipts and the appropriate expenses claim form signed by your Manager.*

Volunteers will be required to sign in and out for each session as usual. Volunteers must confirm their eligibility with the Manager prior to claiming expenses before any expenses will be made.

- Travel - bus ticket receipts or petrol receipts reimbursed at 30p per mile travelled.

### **2.3 Support and training**

All volunteers will have a named person as their main point of contact for support.

The Manager- this may be a shop manager, unit head, operations manager, outreach or fundraising manager will provide additional support to volunteers in the form of informal catch ups in person, or in some circumstances remotely. The regularity of these will vary depending on the role. This may be once a year or once a week. The regularity need will be explored and agreed when you start. This will help all volunteers to take new opportunities and suggest improvements and keep up to date with team news.

Catch ups will help to identify training, knowledge, skills or equipment that may be needed. Upon agreement, arrangements will be made to provide this through on the job experience or an external course, qualification or placement.

### **2.4 The Volunteer's Voice**

Your opinions, ideas and feedback matter to us. The Freshfields Volunteer Forum is your opportunity to meet volunteers from other locations and share ideas around for how we can do things better. This meeting will take place every 3 months. You will find meetings reminders in the monthly mailer, staff notice boards and by direct email.

Views and opinions about matters concerning Freshfields and its work are always valued. Recommendations' for action resulting from the Action Forum are then fed back as advice for the management team, who will make a decision on which to action or not given resources or other factors.

### **2.5. Problem Solving**

We aim to identify and solve problems at the earliest possible stage. A procedure has been drawn up for dealing with complaints either by or about volunteers. A copy of the process is included in this handbook. We ask that all volunteers always use this process to deal with issues swiftly and avoid misinformation or misunderstanding.

## **2.6 Confidentiality**

Volunteers are assured that any personal information shared with Freshfields is kept confidential and meets current General Data Protection Regulation requirements. Our policy will be discussed during Induction. We also require you uphold our Confidentiality Policy during and after your volunteer role.

## **2.7 Absence and Holidays**

We ask volunteers to let your Unit Head know as soon as possible so they can make other arrangements. As a volunteer you are of course entitled to take leave whenever you wish. It would be very helpful if you can give us two weeks notice of holiday if you can

## **2.8 Dress Code**

During the course of your volunteering you may come into contact with our supporters and visitors to the premises. It is important that you present a professional image. It is a requirement that you give consideration to personal hygiene and wear clothes and footwear that are appropriate for the work that you perform and which are neat and clean.

If you have been issued with a uniform this must be worn at all times, as appropriate.

The requirements of particular faiths to wear specific types of clothing or to dress modestly is respected. Clothing should meet health and safety requirements as advised for your role.

Clothing should not in any case have text, logos or images that are indecent or offensive to others on the basis of equity or the animal welfare core values of Freshfields.

If you have any queries or difficulties regarding the dress code, you should seek advice from your Manager.



## **2.9 Anti-Bribery**

Freshfields expressly prohibits anyone from offering, promising, giving, or requesting, agreeing to receive or receiving an improper financial or other advantage. All have a responsibility to prevent, detect and report any instance of bribery.

If you are offered any gift or hospitality you should not accept it without approval from us. If you are found to have accepted or given any bribe, this may result in dismissal. This may also lead to criminal investigation

## **2.10 Money Handling**

Where you are involved in handling money in any form you must ensure that you are aware of and comply fully with Freshfields procedures as set out below:

- You must keep accurate record of all transactions on the appropriate document and issue a fully completed receipt for the duplicate receipt book.
- All monies must be handed in with the relevant documentation and discrepancies reported immediately.
- Fraudulent handling of financial transactions will result in dismissal and potential prosecution.

## **2.11 Telephone and Internet Use**

Personal use of Freshfields telephone or internet will not be permitted unless urgent and approved by your Manager.

Use of personal computer and phones for personal use is permitted during breaks and we kindly ask that you don't do this whilst performing your role.

Storage, downloading or uploading of personal files/images/software/Apps on the Company network or devices, through online updates or USB devices is not permitted.

You must not use the Company internet connections or devices to access content that is illegal, pornographic, or supports hate and/or discrimination.

You must not send communications via any Charity or personal device that could be deemed to be offensive.

You must not take or upload images without the written consent of the photographic subject and Manager approval.

Volunteers with personal social media accounts should ensure that these are used to express personal views only, and care should be taken not to bring Freshfields into disrepute in any event where you are identifiable as a current or past Freshfields volunteer.

### **2.12 Insurance**

All volunteers are covered by Freshfields public and employers liability insurance whilst they are on the premises or engaged in any work on Freshfields behalf. Volunteers are responsible for the Health and Safety of themselves and of others.

### **2.13 Finishing volunteering**

We will ask you to provide us with feedback about your experience with us and whether you have any future plans or require anything more from us. This can be completed with your Manager, another member of staff or anonymously online. Please be honest with your feedback or we may miss opportunities to improve our volunteer experience for others.

### 3 Health and Safety Policy and Procedures

Freshfields will safeguard the health, safety and welfare of volunteers. In particular, this extends to the provision and maintenance of:

- Safe equipment, personal protective equipment and safe systems of work
- Safe handling, storage, maintenance and transport of articles
- Necessary information, instruction, training and supervision
- A safe, risk assessed place of work, with safe access and egress
- Adequate welfare facilities

#### Health and Safety responsibilities of volunteers

Everybody has a duty of care to protect the health and safety of not only yourself, but of other staff, volunteers and members of the public. To do this we ask that you:

- Read the Health and Safety Policy and follow the guidance.
- Understand Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) regulations before using or storing cleaning products or chemicals.
- Understand and comply with Freshfields Manual Handling Policy if your role involves lifting and/or carrying. This can be found in Appendix number 2
- Prioritise good housekeeping to avoid slips, trips and hazards.
- Know the location of the first aid box and the name of your First Aider - displayed on the staff notice board in each of Freshfields premises.
- Report all accidents without delay and enter details into the accident book for action.
- Do not smoke anywhere on our premises.
- Do not consume alcohol, drugs or other substances on our premises or during working hours.
- Wear protective clothing or equipment issued to you, and report any defects.

## **Personal Safety**

- Avoid working alone in the rescues, on public visits and in the shops.
- Arrange meetings in public places or on Freshfields premises.
- Prior to making an appointment with someone you do not know, obtain as much information as possible about the person you are meeting and arrange to meet the person on Freshfields premises. Always ring back the telephone number you have been given to confirm that it is legitimate. If a mobile number is given you should always ask for an alternative fixed line number.
- Let your colleagues know where you are going, with whom and what time you are expecting to return. If you think that you are going to run over your original timescales, let your colleagues know.
- If you are at all concerned that you are being placed in a dangerous situation through your role, you must discuss this concern with your Manager.

## **Equipment**

- Equipment and new activities will be risk assessed and have been PAT tested annually
- Users will be provided with training on how to safely use the equipment.
- Equipment and Furnishing purchased will comply with the relevant British Safety Standards.