

# VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

This provides a Code of Conduct which is applicable to all RNLI volunteers, whatever their role. It is not an exhaustive list, but sets out clear expectations of the conduct required of all volunteers by the RNLI.



## All volunteers must ...

### Role

- have read, understood and agree with the *Volunteer Commitment*
- have read and be familiar with their volunteer role description
- have read and be familiar with the generic *Volunteer Handbook* and related induction materials
- accept RNLI policy and the authority and decisions of those entrusted by the RNLI to manage RNLI activities
- be aware of and comply with the generic and role specific RNLI policies and procedures
- follow all reasonable requests by staff or volunteers who support and manage their volunteer role activities
- participate in any necessary training related to the role and maintain any relevant competency-based training
- when reporting RNLI activities via social media, ensure the *RNLI Social Media Policy* has been read and understood, ensure any appropriate training has been undertaken, and ensure that social media content promotes and protects the reputation of the RNLI at all times.

### RNLI property and assets (resources)

- recognise that all public monies received belong to the RNLI and must be processed in line with issued policy and guidance
- report any loss or damage to personal or RNLI property to their volunteer manager while volunteering
- return all property belonging to the RNLI on or before the last day of their volunteering
- respect, maintain and care for any property belonging to or paid for by the RNLI.

### Safety, safeguarding, health and environment

- carry out their volunteer role activities with due care and diligence for themselves and others
- be aware of Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) guidance seeking clarification where necessary
- wear any protective clothing/equipment provided for their volunteer role
- immediately report all injuries, incidents, near misses, accidents and safeguarding concerns which occur while volunteering for the RNLI by updating the relevant database, or reporting to their volunteer manager or to the Safeguarding Team if appropriate
- notify the organisation immediately of any illness or change in health relevant to the role, by advising their volunteer manager
- comply with any health assessment/s and or health surveillance activities required in line with their volunteer role/s
- comply with the requirements of the *RNLI Safeguarding Policy* and associated guidance
- ensure the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults at all times making sure they are adequately supervised within their area of responsibility – see *Safeguarding Policy* and associated guidance
- ensure children are with a parent or adult who legally assumes parental responsibility at all times when at an RNLI location, including when responding to service calls or training requirements (excluding planned visits, for example organised by the Water Safety Team or visits officers)
- seek approval from the volunteer manager before bringing pets to volunteer activities and locations including lifeboat stations
- respect the confidentiality of all confidential information they become aware of when volunteering and not disclose this information to third parties. This also includes sharing confidential information on personal social media. Be mindful to protect the information of others, and do not disclose any confidential information relating to other volunteers, staff or members of the public
- comply with the requirements of responsible computer use and data protection. Maintain confidentiality regarding the organisation's information, records, and/or data (except as provided for in the *Raising Organisational Concerns/Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure*)
- minimise waste production and disposal by using RNLI resources responsibly.

### Conduct and behaviours

- abide by, uphold and demonstrate the RNLI Values and Behaviours
- act within the law at all times. This includes complying with the Road Traffic Act, adhering to drink or drug related regulations and speed limits. In relation to operational volunteers, these are equally applicable when responding to a service call
- immediately report to a volunteer manager or the Volunteer Adviser Team if they are held by, questioned, arrested, cautioned, charged with a criminal offence by the police, or involved in any statutory safeguarding process (for example local authority)
- maintain the trust and confidence of the RNLI and their colleagues at all times
- uphold the reputation of the RNLI and set a positive example to other volunteers
- be courteous and respect other people's views, interests and uniqueness
- behave in a way that values diversity and promotes inclusion – see the *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy*
- challenge inappropriate behaviour, discrimination and/or unfair treatment appropriately
- discuss any problems or issues in a reasonable and constructive manner
- ask for guidance and support when they don't understand
- be reliable and considerate to their team
- take responsibility for their own actions and acknowledge when mistakes are made
- speak up and use appropriate channels when providing feedback and views.

### Volunteers must not ...

- act outside the spirit of the *Volunteer Code of Conduct* and the *Volunteer Commitment*
- engage or participate in any form of inappropriate behaviour or act in any way that brings or may bring the organisation into disrepute when volunteering, when wearing RNLI clothing or when identifiable as an RNLI volunteer, including online. This includes, but is not limited to: physical, written or verbal abuse; bullying; threatening behaviour or harassment, including unwanted attention; and inappropriate language and/or touching
- participate in any form of disrespectful or inappropriate behaviour or activity within the remit of their RNLI volunteer role, for example sexual activity, unprofessional conduct or practical jokes that cause embarrassment or offence to another person
- behave in a way as detailed above where a volunteer's actions outside of the RNLI may directly or indirectly affect the safety of others within the RNLI and/or the reputation of the organisation
- leave a child in any RNLI premises unsupervised or with another adult who does not assume parental responsibility. The adult who legally assumes parental responsibility must be with the child at all times when at an RNLI location
- put the health, safety or wellbeing of themselves or others at unnecessary or unassessed risk
- ignore policies, procedures or standards
- bully, harass or unlawfully discriminate against anyone at any time
- tolerate disrespectful behaviour towards each other, supporters or members of the public. This is underpinned by equality legislation and RNLI policy
- falsify records, expenses or defraud or attempt to defraud the RNLI in any manner
- smoke when on RNLI property, afloat, ashore or when actively supporting events. The definition of smoking includes all tobacco-based products as well as all forms of electronic cigarettes. (In extraordinary circumstances smoking may be permitted on all-weather lifeboats at sea, at the discretion of the coxswain and in accordance with current RNLI policy and guidance)
- carry out volunteer duties when in an unfit state due to the influence of alcohol, or other drugs or substances
- be in possession of firearms or any offensive weapon while undertaking volunteer activities
- carry out private trading on RNLI premises or use the RNLI brand or equipment to promote private trading
- participate in RNLI volunteering activities while signed off sick from paid employment, unless express permission from the RNLI has been given
- damage or misuse RNLI property, money or assets.

## The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution, a charity registered in England and Wales (209603), Scotland (SC037736), the Republic of Ireland (CHY 2678 and 20003326), the Bailiwick of Jersey (14), the Isle of Man (1308 and 006329F), the Bailiwick of Guernsey and Alderney, of West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ

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