

East Sussex Community Voice

Volunteer Policy

Policy Schedule

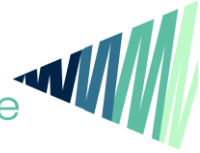
Version	Date of next review by ESCV Board	Date of adoption by ESCV Board
1	n/a	July 2021
2	July 2023	January 2024
3	August 2025	August 2025
4	August 2027	
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 East Sussex Community Voice (ESCV) is an independent community interest company that listens to people in the community to bring about positive change. We are committed to involving a diverse range of volunteers to support our work within the community.
- 1.2 A volunteer is anyone who freely chooses to support ESCV to help deliver our activities or services by giving their time, skills and expertise without financial remuneration beyond out-of-pocket expenses.
- 1.3 Volunteers are important in helping us achieve our aims and bring a wealth of expertise, knowledge, experience and skills. Our volunteer roles aim to provide volunteers with a rewarding, worthwhile and enjoyable experience.
- 1.4 This policy sets out the principles of how we involve volunteers, and what volunteers can expect by way of support whilst volunteering with us.

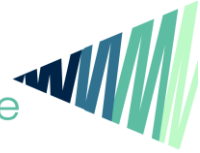
2 Equality, diversity and inclusion

- 2.1 ESCV is committed to building a diverse organisation that is responsive to the needs of all members of our local community.
- 2.2 All ESCV volunteers are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect in accordance with our Equal Opportunities Policy.
- 2.3 Volunteers are also responsible for treating people, including service users and ESCV staff with dignity and respect. Volunteers have a code of conduct that clearly states the commitment to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion.



3 Recruitment of volunteers

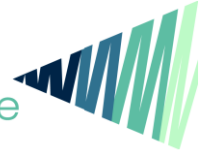
- 3.1 We are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion at all stages of recruitment and selection of our volunteers. Volunteer recruitment (shortlisting, interviewing and selection) is carried out with awareness of supporting people with protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 3.2 Volunteer role descriptions are available on our website and outline the types of volunteering opportunities available. These roles are regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain relevant. Volunteer roles include:
- Enter and View Authorised Representative
 - Mystery Shopper
 - Engagement Liaison Representative
 - Young Healthwatch
 - Patient Led Assessment of the Care Environment
- 3.3 We endeavour to ensure that all volunteering opportunities are accessible to people from diverse backgrounds by ensuring that they are available in multiple formats and shared on multiple platforms.
- 3.4 We will work with people to understand and remove barriers to volunteering and regularly review our volunteering involvement practices to ensure we are inclusive and that people from all sections of the community can volunteer.
- 3.5 We will make reasonable adjustments where possible to meet the access needs of potential volunteers. This will include payment of travel expenses for wheelchair accessible transport where required.
- 3.6 We will identify the knowledge, skills and experience of volunteers to support their participation in volunteer opportunities. We will build on the strengths of volunteers to maximise the contribution they can make.
- 3.7 Prospective volunteers are asked to complete a simple application form and invited to take part in an informal discussion with one of our volunteer and engagement staff members to share their expectations, knowledge, skills and experiences. This is not a competitive process, it is an opportunity for prospective volunteers to learn more about the role they have applied for and whether ESCV is the right fit for them.



- 3.8 The informal discussion is an opportunity for our volunteer and engagement staff to determine whether a prospective volunteer is suitable for the role at ESCV. It includes a discussion of any conflicts of interest the volunteer may have that might impact on their role.
- 3.9 Volunteers sign a Declaration of Interests form that records any conflicts of interest. Volunteers also sign the Code of Conduct, which includes a commitment to the Nolan Principles of Public Life.
- 3.10 Two written references will be required to help confirm suitability. For some roles which fall within the scope of regulated activity, we will also seek a Disclosure and Barring System (DBS) check.
- 3.11 Once all background checks and suitability are agreed then a volunteer can be confirmed as part of our team.
- 3.12 A welcome letter is sent to all new volunteers. If a prospective volunteer is not suitable for the ESCV volunteering role, then a letter is sent to them explaining this decision.
- 3.13 Volunteers will have a named contact from the staff team who will provide guidance and support throughout their time volunteering ESCV. The named contact will be a member of the management team at ESCV.
- 3.14 Volunteers will have a named contact for a Volunteer Representative elected to speak on behalf of volunteers at the ESCV Board. Volunteers will also have a named contact for the ESCV Board champion for volunteers.

4 Induction and training

- 4.1 Volunteers bring a wide range of knowledge, skills and experience. ESCV offers all volunteers an induction and training programme to ensure they are equipped for the role. Volunteers will attend refresher training on a two-year cycle.
- 4.2 The induction programme will include information on the following areas:
 - Claiming expenses
 - Code of conduct
 - Conflicts of interest
- 4.3 We provide an introduction to ESCV, including the principles of confidentiality and health and safety.



4.4 ESCV asks all new volunteers to undertake the following mandatory training:

- Safeguarding
- Equality, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Confidentiality, Information Sharing and Data Protection

4.5 Volunteers are offered role specific training, including Healthwatch Enter and View training if they wish to become Authorised Representatives of Healthwatch East Sussex.

4.6 Volunteers are also able to access training from Healthwatch England, including an [online induction model for volunteers](#). Additional information and support are available in our Volunteer Handbook.

4.7 ESCV offers briefing and debriefing sessions to all volunteers who participate in project work to prepare them for activities, and to learn from volunteer experiences.

5 Volunteer Expenses

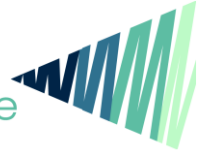
5.1 We will reimburse volunteers for reasonable out of pocket expenses, supported by valid receipts and claim forms, in accordance with the Volunteer Expenses section of the ESCV Finance policy.

5.2 The Volunteer Expenses section of the ESCV Finance policy sets out that expenses may be paid to reimburse volunteers in the following areas:

- Volunteer travel
- Subsistence costs
- Stamps / phone calls / IT consumables
- Childcare and carers costs

6 Supervision and support

6.1 Volunteers will have a designated member of the ESCV staff team to support them. Volunteers have a dedicated email address (volunteer@escv.org.uk), monitored by staff to provide a single point of contact for all enquiries.



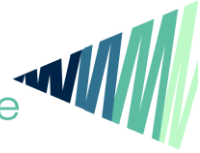
- 6.2 New volunteers will be paired with a more experienced volunteer for their first volunteering activities. The more experienced volunteer will act as a 'buddy' to the new volunteer, providing peer support to learn about the volunteering role.
- 6.3 All volunteers will have an annual one-to-one review at a mutually agreed time, usually between January and March, which provide an opportunity for the volunteer to discuss their role, share feedback and raise development and support needs.
- 6.4 ESCV undertake an anonymous survey of volunteers every six months to ask about their experience of the volunteering role and identify any support and development needs. The results are shared with ESCV managers and board members to raise awareness of volunteer themes and issues.

7 Health and Safety

- 7.1 All volunteers will be provided with information and training to complete their volunteer activities safely and effectively.
- 7.2 Volunteers must take reasonable care of themselves and others while volunteering for us, and follow the guidance given to them for their role.
- 7.3 ESCV provides Employee Liability and Public Liability cover for all volunteers whilst working on ESCV activities.
- 7.4 Risk assessments are carried out by ESCV staff before any volunteer activity takes place to ensure we are aware of (and where possible, mitigating) any potential risks.
- 7.5 ESCV does not provide motor insurance cover. Volunteers must hold appropriate motor insurance cover if they use vehicles while volunteering.
- 7.6 ESCV recommend volunteers talk to their insurance company to confirm their motor insurance cover is appropriate. Volunteers will be asked to sign to confirm they have appropriate cover before we can reimburse mileage costs. The NCVO has additional [information](#) on this issue.

8 Confidentiality and data protection

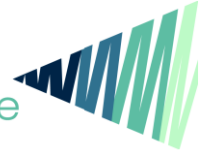
- 8.1 All volunteers will be asked to comply with the ESCV Confidentiality Policy.



- 8.2 ESCV complies with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and will treat in confidence the information it holds about volunteers. Volunteers have the right to request to see or amend all information held about them by East Sussex Community Voice or request its deletion.
- 8.3 Volunteer information will be stored in a safe and secure location and will not be kept for longer than necessary in accordance with our Record and Retention Policy.

9 Problem solving and complaint procedures for volunteers

- 9.1 We aim to make volunteering a positive experience for volunteers, but we know that sometimes problems can occur. Wherever possible, problems will be resolved through informal means, and volunteers are encouraged to raise any concerns they may have with ESCV staff, the Engagement Manager (Volunteering), the Chief Executive or Chair of ESCV as appropriate.
- 9.2 We have a procedure to help resolve problems that may arise, which ensures fair and equitable treatment and can be found in the volunteer portal.
- 9.3 The Volunteer Problem Solving Procedure sets out the procedure for responding to complaints made by volunteers, and complaints received about volunteer conduct.
- 9.4 There is a three-stage procedure where volunteers make a complaint or are the subject of a complaint: an oral conversation; a written letter; and an opportunity to appeal the outcome.
- 9.5 Where a volunteer makes a complaint, this should first be discussed between the volunteer and a member of the staff team. The volunteer has the option of being accompanied to any meetings by a nominated person of their choice.
- 9.6 If the volunteer is not satisfied by the outcome of the oral complaint they should make a formal complaint in writing. The Chief Executive will respond to the complainant within 10 working days (or notify the volunteer within two weeks if the response will take longer).
- 9.7 If the volunteer is not satisfied with the response to their written complaint, they may appeal in writing to the Chair of ESCV. The volunteer will be advised at the start of the appeals process of the timescales involved. The Chair's decision on the matter will be final.



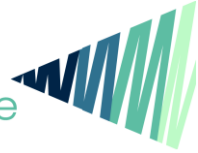
- 9.8 Where a complaint is made about a volunteer, the Engagement Manager (Volunteering) will arrange to meet with the volunteer to discuss the issues raised and gather information. The volunteer will be allowed to be accompanied by a person of their choice at meetings on the matter. The complaint may be resolved through an oral warning.
- 9.9 If the complaint has not been resolved by an oral discussion then the Engagement Manager (Volunteering) will issue the volunteer with a written warning. In extreme circumstances ESCV may decide to cease an individual's volunteering with the organisation. If the organisation decides to ask the volunteer to leave, then the volunteer will be given the opportunity to appeal.
- 9.10 If the volunteer has been asked to leave, they can appeal in writing to the Chair of the ESCV Board. The Chair's decision on the matter will be final. The volunteer will be informed of the Chair's decision within 7 working days of the appeal being submitted. If ESCV decides to ask a volunteer to leave, ESCV staff and/or Board members will meet with them to explain the decision, identify learning and agree next steps.

10 Ending of volunteering

- 10.1 For one reason or another people stop volunteering. This may be due to finding employment, starting a new volunteering role at another organisation or a change in circumstances. In all these, and other cases, we aim to provide a positive end of role experience for each volunteer as they move on from ESCV.
- 10.2 We will have an exit discussion to hear volunteer experiences and learn from these before they leave ESCV.
- 10.3 If we cannot establish contact with a volunteer for a period of 6 months or greater, we may remove them from our volunteer mailing list and no longer contact them with details of volunteering opportunities or activities.

11 Monitoring and review

- 11.1 The Board of East Sussex Community Voice has the ultimate responsibility for implementing and reviewing this policy. The Board will scrutinise our work on disclosure to ensure that we meet our legal, ethical and operational commitments.

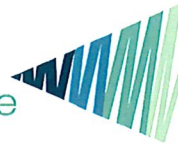


- 11.2 The East Sussex Community Voice Chief Executive holds the day-to-day responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented.
- 11.3 This policy will be reviewed and updated on a two-year rolling basis by the East Sussex Community Voice Board.
- 11.4 This policy may be revised sooner if there is a change in working premises, conditions or laws directly affecting disclosure or any other aspect embedded in the document.

12 Related Policies

12.1 The following policies, procedures and guidance that are related to this policy include:

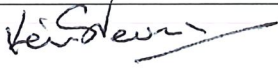
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) Guidance
- Complaints Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Data in Transit Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Finance Policy
- Lone Working and Personal Safety Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Record and Retention Policy
- Safeguarding Policy Statement
- Secure Storage of Data
- [Volunteering Our Community Involved](#)
- [Volunteer Problem Solving Procedure](#)
- Whistleblowing Policy



12.2 Approval and Adoption

Author/Reviewer	Matthew Ryan
Sponsor	Veronica Kirwan
Date of approval and adoption	August 2025
Date of next scheduled review	August 2027

Signature of East Sussex Community Voice CIC Board Chair

Name	Keith Stevens
Signature	
Date	21/08/25