# NAPA Volunteer Policy

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Owner** | Finance and Operations Manager | **Approval** | CEO on behalf of the NAPA Trustees |
| **Version** | 1.0 | **Effective date** | 30 September 2026 |
| **Evaluate** | Annual | **Review** | 30 September 2029 |

## 1. Purpose

NAPA values the time, knowledge and perspectives contributed by volunteers. This policy establishes a fair, safe and supportive framework for volunteering while preserving the voluntary nature of the relationship.

NAPA aims to:

- provide meaningful and appropriate roles;
- recruit fairly;
- protect volunteers and people affected by their work;
- provide suitable induction, support and expenses;
- respond fairly to concerns;
- avoid arrangements that unintentionally create employment or worker status.

## 2. Volunteer Status

A volunteer gives time freely and is not an employee, worker or contractor merely because they volunteer for NAPA.

The volunteering arrangement:

- is not intended to create a contract of employment;
- does not guarantee work or a minimum number of hours;
- does not require NAPA to provide volunteering opportunities;
- does not require the volunteer to accept or continue an activity;
- does not provide wages or benefits;
- may be ended by either party at any time;
- is based on mutual expectations rather than legally binding obligations, except for duties that apply independently, such as confidentiality, data protection and intellectual-property agreements.

A volunteer agreement should describe hopes and arrangements rather than use employment terminology such as salary, compulsory shifts, holiday entitlement or disciplinary sanctions.

The label “volunteer” will not be used where the practical relationship is employment or paid work.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to NAPA’s formal volunteer roles.

It does not normally apply to:

- employees undertaking their contracted duties;
- trustees acting solely in their governance role;
- contractors or consultants;
- work-experience placements;
- interns where employment status may arise;
- people providing a one-off professional service under contract;
- members participating in ordinary membership activity.

Where a person holds more than one role, NAPA will distinguish the arrangements clearly.

## 4. Principles

NAPA will seek to ensure that volunteering is:

- freely chosen;
- inclusive and accessible;
- safe and appropriately supported;
- beneficial to NAPA’s charitable purposes;
- clear about boundaries;
- not a substitute for fair paid employment;
- free from unlawful discrimination and harassment;
- responsive to volunteer feedback.

## 5. Role Design

Each ongoing volunteer role should have a written role description covering:

- purpose;
- typical activities;
- skills or experience;
- location;
- likely time commitment;
- named supervisor;
- training;
- safeguarding level;

- expenses;
- equipment;
- boundaries and authority;
- confidentiality;
- risk considerations;
- how either party can end the arrangement.

The description should state that times and activities are flexible and subject to mutual agreement.

Volunteers must not be given responsibility or authority beyond their competence, checks or support.

## 6. Minimum Age

NAPA's standard minimum age for unsupervised volunteering is 18.

NAPA may offer a role to a person under 18 only where it has:

- assessed safeguarding and health and safety;
- obtained appropriate parent or guardian involvement;
- provided suitable supervision;
- considered working-time and child-employment restrictions;
- adapted the role to the person's age;
- obtained approval from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Young volunteers must not be placed in inappropriate one-to-one, financial, driving or high-risk duties.

## 7. Recruitment

Volunteer recruitment will be proportionate to the role and may include:

- application or expression of interest;
- informal discussion or interview;
- role matching;
- references;
- identity checks;
- eligibility or professional-registration checks;
- criminal-record checks where lawful and appropriate;
- conflict declarations; and
- a trial or settling-in period.

NAPA will not ask unnecessary health, criminal or personal questions.

Recruitment information must not promise employment or guaranteed hours.

## 8. Equality and Inclusion

NAPA welcomes volunteers from diverse backgrounds.

It will:

- use fair selection criteria;
- provide accessible information;
- consider reasonable adjustments;
- avoid unlawful discrimination;
- recognise different communication and participation needs;
- review barriers to involvement;
- address harassment or victimisation.

Where a role cannot be adjusted safely or effectively, NAPA will explain the reasons and consider alternatives where available.

## 9. Criminal-Record Checks

A criminal-record check will be requested only where the role is eligible and the level is appropriate.

NAPA will:

- obtain consent and provide required information;
- consider relevant information fairly;
- comply with rehabilitation-of-offenders requirements;
- avoid automatic exclusion unless legally required;
- protect certificate information;
- repeat or update checks where justified;
- refer to the Safeguarding Policy.

A check is one part of safer recruitment and does not replace supervision or risk management.

## 10. Volunteer Agreement

Ongoing volunteers should receive a written volunteer agreement summarising:

- the role;
- support;
- training;
- expenses;
- confidentiality;
- safeguarding;
- use of information and equipment;
- insurance;

- how concerns are handled;
- flexibility;
- ending the arrangement.

The agreement must state that it is not intended to create employment or worker status.

A signature acknowledges the arrangements but should not describe them as legally binding employment obligations.

## 11. Induction

Induction will be proportionate to the role and may cover:

- NAPA's purpose and values;
- role boundaries;
- named contacts;
- Code of Conduct;
- safeguarding;
- equality and harassment;
- health and safety;
- confidentiality and data protection;
- information security;
- expenses;
- incident reporting;
- complaints;
- use of NAPA branding;
- emergency arrangements.

Volunteers must not begin higher-risk duties before required induction and checks are complete.

## 12. Training

NAPA will provide training reasonably necessary for the role.

Mandatory volunteer training will:

- be free to the volunteer;
- be proportionate;
- be accessible;
- be scheduled by mutual agreement; and
- not create an obligation to continue volunteering.

Optional professional development may be offered but does not create an entitlement to employment, promotion or payment.

## 13. Time Commitment and Attendance

NAPA and the volunteer may agree an anticipated pattern or level of involvement, but both retain flexibility.

Volunteers should notify their supervisor where they cannot attend an agreed activity so that NAPA can make alternative arrangements.

NAPA will not:

- penalise a volunteer financially for non-attendance;
- require the volunteer to provide a substitute;
- impose employee-style absence management;
- require excessive hours; or
- prevent the volunteer from ending their involvement.

Repeated unavailability may mean that a particular role is no longer practical, but this should be discussed respectfully.

## 14. Supervision and Support

Every ongoing volunteer will have a named supervisor or point of contact.

Support may include:

- regular check-ins;
- role guidance;
- feedback;
- access to relevant information;
- wellbeing discussion;
- adjustment review;
- debriefing after difficult activity; and
- recognition of contribution.

The frequency will reflect the role's complexity and risk.

## 15. Boundaries and Authority

Volunteers must:

- act within their role description;
- follow reasonable safety and safeguarding instructions;
- not commit NAPA to expenditure or contracts;
- not provide professional advice beyond their competence;
- not speak officially for NAPA without authority;
- not access unnecessary personal data;
- maintain appropriate boundaries;
- refer decisions outside their authority to the supervisor.

## 16. Safeguarding

Volunteers must comply with NAPA's Safeguarding Policy.

They must:

- complete applicable checks and training;
- maintain professional boundaries;
- avoid unauthorised private contact;
- report concerns immediately;
- not promise secrecy;
- preserve relevant information;
- avoid investigating concerns personally;
- call emergency services where someone is in immediate danger.

Allegations involving a volunteer will be managed fairly and may require suspension of activities, external referral or termination of the arrangement.

## 17. Health and Safety

NAPA will provide information and arrangements proportionate to volunteer activities.

Volunteers must:

- take reasonable care of themselves and others;
- follow risk assessments and safety instructions;
- use equipment properly;
- report hazards, accidents and near misses;
- disclose relevant support needs where they feel able;
- not undertake activities they reasonably believe are unsafe.

NAPA will consider adjustments and additional controls.

## 18. Home and Remote Volunteering

Remote volunteers must:

- maintain a reasonably safe working area;
- protect confidential information;
- use approved systems;
- prevent unauthorised access by household members;
- report equipment and security concerns;
- take appropriate breaks;
- agree communication arrangements.

NAPA will not assume unrestricted access to a volunteer's home.

## 19. Expenses

Volunteers should not be left out of pocket for reasonable expenses properly incurred in their role.

NAPA may reimburse actual authorised costs such as:

- public transport;
- approved mileage;
- parking;
- meals where the qualifying conditions are met;
- accommodation;
- accessibility or support costs;
- postage or materials;
- other necessary role-related expenditure.

Expenses require:

- prior approval where practicable;
- receipts or appropriate evidence;
- submission through NAPA's expense process;
- compliance with approved rates and limits.

The existing automatic £10 meal payment should be replaced by reimbursement of actual eligible expenditure up to the approved limit. A routine flat payment exceeding actual costs may create tax, benefits or employment-status risks.

NAPA may provide an advance where a volunteer cannot reasonably fund the cost personally.

## 20. Gifts and Benefits

Volunteers are not entitled to wages or employee benefits.

Modest recognition, refreshments, training and reimbursement of actual expenses do not normally constitute payment.

Cash honoraria, gift vouchers, regular allowances or valuable benefits require prior Finance and status review.

Personal gifts received because of a NAPA role must be declared under NAPA's gifts and conflicts arrangements.

## 21. Equipment and Property

NAPA may provide equipment needed for a role.

Volunteers must:

- take reasonable care of it;

- use it for authorised purposes;
- follow information-security requirements;
- report loss or damage;
- not permit unauthorised use;
- return it when requested or when volunteering ends.

Ordinary wear or an honest accident will not normally result in a charge.

## 22. Insurance

NAPA will maintain insurance appropriate to authorised volunteering activities.

Volunteers will be informed of relevant limits or exclusions.

Insurance may not cover:

- unauthorised activity;
- use of a personal vehicle without appropriate insurance;
- deliberate unlawful conduct;
- personal possessions;
- activities outside the agreed role.

Volunteers using a personal vehicle must maintain legally required insurance and any necessary business or volunteer-use cover.

## 23. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Volunteers may access confidential information only where required for their role.

They must:

- use approved systems;
- protect passwords;
- avoid unnecessary copying;
- not use personal email or storage without approval;
- report data incidents immediately;
- return or securely delete information when instructed;
- continue to protect confidential information after leaving.

Confidentiality does not prevent safeguarding reports, protected disclosures, reporting crime or another lawful disclosure.

## 24. Intellectual Property

Ownership and use of material created by a volunteer must be agreed in writing where NAPA expects to publish, adapt, license or reuse it.

Volunteer-created intellectual property does not automatically belong to NAPA.

The agreement should identify:

- existing material;
- assignment or licence;
- attribution;
- editing;
- permitted uses;
- confidentiality;
- third-party rights.

## 25. Social Media and Public Representation

Volunteers must not create an official NAPA account, issue public statements or use NAPA branding without authority.

Personal social-media use remains personal, subject to confidentiality, safeguarding and any genuine material connection to the volunteer role.

Volunteers authorised to post officially must follow the Social Media Policy.

## 26. Conflicts of Interest

Volunteers must disclose an interest or relationship that could affect their role, including:

- connection to a supplier or partner;
- another organisation competing with NAPA;
- personal relationship affecting impartiality;
- use of NAPA information for private benefit; or
- an external role creating safeguarding or confidentiality risk.

NAPA will manage conflicts proportionately.

## 27. Feedback and Recognition

NAPA will seek volunteer feedback and may recognise contributions through:

- thanks and feedback;
- certificates;
- references based on accurate information;
- development opportunities;
- volunteer events;
- agreed public acknowledgement.

Recognition will not be linked to an obligation to perform minimum work.

## 28. Raising a Concern

A volunteer may raise a concern with:

- their supervisor;

- Volunteer Lead;
- Finance and Operations Manager;
- Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- Whistleblowing Lead;
- Chief Executive;
- Chair of Trustees where appropriate.

NAPA will respond respectfully and will not retaliate against a volunteer for raising a genuine concern.

## 29. Concerns About a Volunteer

Where a concern arises, NAPA will normally:

- explain the issue;
- allow the volunteer to respond;
- consider support, clarification or training;
- assess safeguarding and safety;
- decide on a proportionate outcome;
- keep appropriate records.

Possible outcomes include:

- no action;
- clarification or support;
- change of role;
- increased supervision;
- temporary pause;
- ending the arrangement;
- referral to an authority.

NAPA's employee disciplinary procedure does not apply unless the person is separately an employee.

## 30. Ending a Volunteer Arrangement

The volunteer or NAPA may end the arrangement at any time.

Where practicable, NAPA will provide an explanation and reasonable notice, but immediate termination may be necessary because of:

- safeguarding;
- serious misconduct;
- safety;
- confidentiality or data breach;
- loss of funding or role;
- conflict of interest;

- legal or regulatory requirements;
- significant risk to NAPA or others.

The volunteer must return property and information.

## 31. References

NAPA may provide a factual volunteer reference where it has sufficient knowledge and records.

References must be:

- accurate;
- fair;
- authorised;
- limited to relevant information;
- consistent with safeguarding duties.

NAPA cannot guarantee a reference of a particular form or content.

## 32. Transition to Paid Work

Volunteering does not guarantee employment or preferential appointment.

A volunteer applying for a paid role will normally participate in the applicable fair recruitment process.

Where NAPA wishes to require regular duties, control hours or make payments beyond genuine expenses, it must review whether a paid employment or worker arrangement is appropriate before continuing.

## 33. Records

NAPA will securely retain proportionate records concerning:

- application and selection;
- checks;
- role and agreement;
- training;
- expenses;
- supervision;
- incidents;
- adjustments;
- ending the arrangement.

Records will be retained according to NAPA's data-retention arrangements.