



Hart First Response Volunteer Handbook

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Volunteering Policy

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Introduction

Hart First Response (HFR) is an entirely voluntary organisation with the following aims:-

- To relieve sickness and injury by the provision of first aid and ambulance services to any person who has need of such treatment.
- To advance the education of the public in first aid in particular, but not exclusively, by the provision of training in the principles and practice of first aid.

A volunteer is defined as:

“A volunteer is someone who is unpaid, who gives time and energy to benefit the organisation and contribute to its aims, while gaining a rewarding experience of working and enhanced personal growth”

Anybody can apply to volunteer with HFR if they want to contribute to our work, are prepared to work within our structure and according to our values, policies and procedures. All volunteering should be beneficial, purposeful and support our aims and values.

This policy applies to all HFR volunteers. Volunteers can take part in a wide range of activities across the organisation, including:-

- Provision of pre-hospital care at their skill grade
- Training
- General support / Administration
- Member of Board of Trustees



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Organisation

HFR is run by an Executive Committee (charity trustees) which will include a chair, a vice-chair, an honorary secretary and a treasurer.

There is an annual general meeting of the charity, which is usually held in the month of November.

A special general meeting of the charity may be called if at least three members or one tenth of the number of members, whichever is the greater, request such a meeting in writing to the honorary secretary.

Every member over 18 years shall have one vote.

Recruitment of Volunteers

The way we recruit volunteers is one of the key ways of ensuring the placement is a good experience for both the volunteer and for HFR. We welcome volunteer applications if we:-

- Have an appropriate role, or can develop a role around their specific skills and experience.
- Are confident they are able to carry out the role
- Can provide a reasonable level of support based on our previous experience of supporting volunteers in the same or a similar role.

Where possible, if we are not able to place someone within HFR, we will give them information to help them find voluntary work somewhere else.

Application Process Summary

Applicants need to provide contact details for two suitable referees. They will be required to undergo such checks as deemed to be relevant by the Executive Committee e.g. Disclosure and Barring Service Enhanced disclosure. There is no discrimination on grounds of sex, colour, disability etc. However, suitability for active service in certain fields may be limited by reasons of insurance or requirements laid down in statutory law.

- Complete HFR application form (provide relevant certificate photocopies)
- Provide current DBS Check copies to HFR for risk assessment check
- Provide digital photo for ID badge
- Complete new DBS application form, bring ID etc needed for sign off
- Ensure Hepatitis B vaccination up to date
- Undertake HFR Online Induction module
- Undertake online mandatory training
- Complete HFR Training and development needs assessment
- Informal interview with two members of HFR Exec
- Continue attending Tuesday evening training sessions – Maintain records of Competency Self-Assessments / personal training records
- Read HFR policies and procedures available online
- Sign volunteer agreement



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- Complete and return volunteer personal information and diversity monitoring
- Attend events under supervision – as first aider or observer depending on qualifications
- Attend 3 day First aid at work course (when funding is available)
- Assessed for: adult /child / infant resuscitation, AED, administration of medication as soon as possible.

Membership

Membership of HFR is open to any suitable person over the age of 16 years.

The following grades of membership exist

Supporter: non-trained volunteers who support the organisation financially or by arranging fund raising events or in other ways that do not require formal training.

First Aider (FA): Volunteers who hold a valid First Aid at Work certificate (FAW), or equivalent, child and infant resuscitation and administration of medication certificates and who have been granted full first aider status by the Executive Committee. Volunteers will be deemed first aider trainees, prior to first aider status being granted.

Ambulance Aider (AA): Volunteers who hold first aider status and have undergone manual handling training and have gained ambulance skills certification such as Emergency Medical Technician, or its equivalent and who have been granted ambulance aider status by the Executive Committee. Volunteers will be deemed ambulance aider trainees, prior to ambulance aider status being granted. Volunteers may be re-graded to 3rd person status if weekly training is not maintained.

Recently qualified FAs and AAs will enter a probationary period as trainees during which their work will be supervised. After which the Executive Committee will decide whether full status has been achieved.

Other applicants with qualifications not listed above will join at a grade appropriate to their qualifications and experience. This grade will be determined by the Executive Committee and based on documentary evidence of accredited prior learning, experience and whether they can be insured at that level.

Each member will be issued with a unique personal identification number which will be printed on their identification card.

Induction and Training

All volunteers must take part in an induction suitable to their role and the environment in which they will work.

Other training is available through the organisation (see HFR Training programme).



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Responsibility

All volunteers have a responsibility to work within all relevant HFR policies.

Any service or training undertaken for the public on behalf of Hart First Response by its volunteers must be authorised in writing e.g. an event sheet, by the honorary secretary (or their representative) prior to commencement of the event. Unauthorised events will not be covered by insurance.

Volunteers will conduct themselves in such a manner as to engender public confidence in the delivery of pre-hospital care.

Volunteers have the right to refuse to enter a situation which they feel may constitute a danger to their personal safety.

Volunteers have the right to refuse to treat any person who they feel may constitute a danger to their personal safety.

If any volunteer is pregnant they must inform a member of the Executive Committee, before attending any event or training, in order to assess their health and welfare needs.

If any volunteer has a relevant medical condition they should inform a member of the Executive Committee, before attending any event or training, in order to assess their health and welfare needs.

All volunteers are responsible for ensuring the currency of any relevant qualifications.

Communications and involvement

Volunteers will be included in existing communications, and be kept fully informed of what is going on throughout HFR.

Suggestions

Volunteer suggestions can be raised at any time during training or other events. However, it is most useful to put these in writing to the honorary secretary, so that they can be discussed at the next Executive Committee meeting.

Support, Supervision and Review

On joining a training and development needs assessment will be completed resulting in a individual Skills Development Plan. Volunteers will monitor their progress by the use of a competency Self-Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ) and personal training record.

New volunteers will be assigned a mentor with whom they are able to discuss any problems or issues that arise and there will be an initial probationary period for new FA or AA volunteers during which an appropriately qualified and experienced volunteer will always be present at events.



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It is recognised that some events can seem quite traumatic, with serious or multiple patients. Everyone reacts differently and some people appear to cope more easily than others. If you have any concerns regarding incidents you have seen or patients treated during an event, discuss them with the officer in charge as soon as you can, or once the event has finished. If you still have concerns after the event, contact the officer in charge or a member of the Executive Committee. We will usually have a debrief session on all the more serious patients at the next HFR Tuesday training session. We are all available to talk through things; you just need to contact us. Nothing is ever too small, or insignificant to be discussed, if it is worrying you, talk to someone about it

Supervision plays a key role in ensuring that the contribution of volunteers is recognised, valued and respected and supervision provides a space where any concerns that either the volunteer has, or about the volunteer can be raised.

Resolving Problems

The relationship between HFR and its volunteer members is entirely voluntary and does not imply any contract. However, it is important that the organisation is able to maintain its agreed standards of service to the clients who use it, and it is also important that volunteers should enjoy making their contribution to this service.

Role

If your role as a volunteer does not meet with the organisation's standards, it will be dealt as follows:

- Initially with a meeting with a member of the Executive Committee who will explain the concerns.
- If your work still does not meet with our standards then we shall have to stop using your services.
- The Executive Committee may by unanimous vote and for good reason terminate membership of any volunteer.
- At all times you will be able to freely state your case and can have a friend to accompany you.

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of your work you should:

- Initially explain your dissatisfaction with the Officer in Command.
- If that does not resolve the concern then a meeting with a member of the Executive Committee will be convened.
- If that does not resolve the issue then you will have to raise your concerns via the HFR Exec.
- At all times you will be freely able to state your case and can have a friend to accompany you.



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Grievances

It is recognised that volunteers may wish to raise issues with the Executive Committee about their roles and responsibilities, or about the Executive Committee or fellow volunteers' actions that affect them. These issues may include, but are not limited to: health and safety, personal relationships within the charity, and organisational change.

Volunteers may not use this procedure to disrupt any disciplinary action being pursued against them, nor any disciplinary penalty subsequently invoked.

Any grievance should be brought to the attention of a member of the Executive Committee as soon as reasonably practicable.

Initially, there will be an informal meeting to discuss the grievance with the relevant parties. If this is not successful the issue will be raised at the next Executive Committee meeting for discussion. The volunteer will be invited to attend.

Bullying & Harassment

All volunteers should be treated with respect and dignity.

Harassment is any conduct, action or behaviour which is uninvited, unwanted or unwelcome by one or more persons against another person or group of persons. It can be verbal, physical or psychological and can be experienced by both males and females. Harassment also includes bullying and unfair discrimination on any ground.

Electronic harassment (eg via text, email, facebook) is a legally acknowledged problem. Receiving any kind of unsolicited, malicious message is unpleasant, remember this is their problem and not yours, they are trying to provoke a response from you. Do not hit reply, instead press save or make a note of the text, including the time and date and inform a member of the Exec as soon as possible.

Any volunteer who experiences harassment should bring this to the attention of a volunteer of the Executive Committee as soon as reasonably practicable and the issue will be raised at the next Executive Committee meeting for discussion.

Complaints against Volunteers

Any allegation against a volunteer will be dealt with in complete neutrality. No assumption of responsibility will be made until all investigations have been completed.

If complaint is made against a volunteer, the Executive Committee will decide if suspension is appropriate. There will be a meeting of the available Executive Committee (minimum of two members) within 24 hours.

Any volunteer who is suspended will be allocated a member of the Executive Committee to act as their point of contact, and if possible, facilitate any support which they require.



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If appropriate the Police or Social Services will be invited to investigate the allegation, and only when such an investigation has been completed will any internal investigation take place.

If a Police or Social Services investigation reaches specific conclusions and makes recommendations regarding a volunteer's status, HFR will be obliged to comply. The volunteer involved will be kept informed of the progress of any HFR investigation in writing.

Volunteers must understand that in the event that an investigation cannot fully resolve the issue, the HFR Exec may have to review the volunteer's membership status. In this instance any such review will be taken in full consultation with the volunteer and the volunteer will be encouraged to seek appropriate advice and support.

The decision of the HFR Exec is final.

Alcohol, drugs and substance misuse

In order to promote a safe and healthy environment for all, the attendance of volunteers at any event on behalf of HFR whilst their performance is impaired by alcohol, drugs or substance misuse will not be tolerated.

HFR recognises that alcoholism and drug abuse are illnesses and wish to support volunteers where there is a genuine problem by referring them to their GP.

The smell of alcohol on the breath is unacceptable and may lead to doubt about adequacy of performance.

Complaints from patients, their relatives and/or colleagues will be investigated.

Any unauthorised removal or misuse of drugs will be classified as theft and dealt with accordingly.

Expenses

HFR volunteers can claim for all legitimate 'out of pocket' expenses, including the cost of:-

- Return travel between home and the place of volunteering, this does not include weekly training sessions
- Travel for training and conferences, as agreed in advance.
- Meals taken when the voluntary work or training is more than four hours in any given day.

Any expenses over £10 in total must be agreed by the HFR Exec in advance.

Any reasonable expense incurred in the course of voluntary work can be submitted as a claim, but anything outside the above list should be checked before spending the money.



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We recognise that the cost of care of dependants while doing voluntary work is a legitimate expense. We regret that we cannot afford to refund it, apart from in occasional exceptional circumstances that have been agreed in advance

All claims should be made on the HFR expenses claim form available from the treasurer.

Each expense claim shall

- State the reason for the claim
- Be signed by the volunteer and approved by a member of the Executive Committee
- Have all receipts attached.

Expense claims should be made within a month of spending the money

Claims will be paid as soon as possible by cheque.

Insurance

All HFR volunteers are covered in the work they do by the organisation's insurance policies including medical malpractice, errors and omissions, employer's liability, public liability, trustees liability and vehicle insurance.

HFR is not insured for volunteers to carry passengers, while doing voluntary work, in their own car. Any volunteer who wants to do this, as part of their voluntary work, must first write to their own insurer to confirm that they are insured for this. (Most policies do cover this.) Some insurers may require an additional premium to be paid, which HFR will not pay. Volunteers must obtain a written response from their insurer, confirming that proper cover is in place, indemnifying HFR to third party claims, before using their vehicle for volunteering.

Volunteers are personally responsible for ensuring that the Executive Committee holds a current copy of any relevant certificates and documentation.

Capability

If a volunteer is having difficulty fulfilling their agreed role this should be identified in supervision. We will offer appropriate support and training. If the issue cannot be solved we will support the volunteer to accept this.

Policies

Every volunteer must read, sign to say they have read, understood and will comply with HFR's Core Policies, and other policies specific to the role they are volunteering in.

Volunteers should ensure that they are familiar with and follow all HFR policies and procedures. Volunteers may request paper or electronic copies of these documents and others from the Executive Committee.



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Operational Issues

Clothing

HFR will issue uniform clothing (polo shirt, sweat shirt, fleece, trousers) as required. This uniform is only to be worn only on HFR business e.g. providing first aid at events and training courses.

Each volunteer is responsible for keeping uniform clean and tidy and notifying the honorary secretary should replacement or additional items be required.

HFR will provide adequate items of shared personal protective equipment such as high visibility jackets and hard hats for each event. These must be returned to the vehicles/first aid post at the end of the event and must not be taken home. All volunteers shall:

- Be familiar with the range of PPE supplied, assess risks whilst at an event and use PPE appropriately as required.
- Use the PPE provided in accordance with the training they have received.
- Contact a member of the executive committee if they feel that there is a need for any additional PPE.
- Take reasonable care of any PPE provided for them and to ensure that their personal PPE is maintained in a clean and serviceable condition.
- Inform a member of the executive committee of any damage to PPE that they may find.

In the event of leaving the charity, volunteers are responsible for returning their uniform to the honorary secretary.

Confidentiality

There are confidential aspects of this role. Any matters of a confidential nature, including information relating to the diagnosis and treatment of patients, individual volunteer records and details of suggested donations and terms must, under no circumstances be divulged to any unauthorised person or persons. Breaches of confidence will result in disciplinary action, which may result in dismissal.

Volunteers should also be aware that regardless of any disciplinary action taken, they may also be liable to prosecution under Data Protection Act.

Driving

All volunteers driving an HFR ambulance must ensure that they provide the honorary secretary with copies of their driving licence.

Only those volunteers with the relevant categories on their licence and who are covered by the vehicle insurance may drive an HFR ambulance.

All potential drivers will need to undertake ambulance driver training and assessment before driving at events.



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Health and Safety

All volunteers are required to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and any other person who may be affected by any act or omission. They must also co-operate with the Executive Committee and other volunteers to ensure that all relevant statutory regulations, policies, codes of practice and safety procedures are adhered to.

Participate in appropriate training provided.

Volunteers are required to wear the appropriate protective clothing and safety equipment and use the appropriate safety devices where applicable.

Volunteers are required to report to the Officer in Charge or a member of the Executive Committee all faults, hazards, accidents, dangerous occurrences or damage, regardless of whether persons are injured. This should be reported on an incident report form and handed to the honorary secretary at the earliest opportunity.

Anyone who intentionally or recklessly interferes with or misuses anything provided in the interest of health and safety will be subject to disciplinary action including, in very serious cases, dismissal. In addition, they may be liable to prosecution under Health and Safety legislation.

Incident Reporting

Volunteers must be aware that adverse incident reporting is a part of their own accountability for governance; and report any adverse incident or near miss to the Exec. Com. by completing an adverse incident form.

Mobile Phones

It is expected that volunteers will take personal mobile phones to events and that these can then be used as a means of contact during the event by organisers and other HFR volunteers.

Personal calls and texts may also be received at an event, but these must not interfere with patient contact or treatment.

HFR volunteers must ensure they do not break patient's confidentiality or the Data Protection Act 1998 if they capture any images during an event.

HFR is not liable for the loss of any items of personal electronic equipment taken to an event.

HFR volunteers should not use mobile phones during training sessions unless absolutely necessary and should then out of common courtesy remove themselves to an area out of earshot.



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Patient Records

A patient healthcare record must be completed every time a patient is seen and examined, even if no treatment is given.

Equality

HFR is committed to equality of opportunity in education, training, casualty treatment and employment (of volunteers). This commitment applies to all, regardless of gender, age, racial origin, nationality, creed, sexual orientation, marital status, employment status, any disability, responsibilities for dependants, or offending background that does not create risk to children and vulnerable adults.

HFR operates an Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy. The aim of the policy is to ensure that no applicant or volunteer receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, marital status, disability, sexual preference, creed, colour, nationality, racial origins or social background, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be justified.

HFR seeks to ensure the following:

- The content, assessment and demands of its training schemes are non-discriminatory and are appropriate to the knowledge and skills specified.
- The style and language of its documentation are readily understood and do not reflect stereotyped or biased attitudes.
- Its promotional materials and activities reflect the diversity of the public.
- There is an effective appeals procedure of which casualties, students and volunteers are made aware.

Accessibility

If you would like a copy of this policy in a larger print, get in touch with us by phone on 01252 629132 or email (admin@hartfirstresponse.org.uk) and we'll be happy to send you one.

Further Information

www.hartfirstresponse.org.uk