

1 THE MISSION TO SEAFARERS EUROPEAN REGION VOLUNTEER POLICY

- 1.1 The policy sets out the minimum requirements for the recruitment, support, and management of volunteers in the European Region of The Mission to Seafarers; this policy is written from the context of UK law and requirements. Where local law is more stringent or different, it takes precedence, and any resulting differences must be recorded and approved by the Regional Director.
- 1.2 The Board of Trustees remains ultimately responsible for making sure that volunteering is managed safely and effectively, covering such areas as safeguarding, risk management and the protection of MtS's people, beneficiaries, assets and reputation; although it may delegate its operational responsibilities, the Board must still receive adequate assurance that this policy is understood, observed and reviewed. Trustees are responsible for ensuring appropriate systems, controls and oversight arrangements exist for the safe and effective management of volunteers.
- 1.3 The main requirements that volunteers have to follow are set out in this policy; the MtS Managers and supervisors are responsible for carrying out the supporting procedures, and if there is an extra requirement that applies to a particular role, MtS must give it an explanation during the induction or training, provide relevant contacts and offer the opportunity to ask questions.

2. PURPOSE, SCOPE AND DEFINITION

- 2.1 The volunteers of MtS carry out their charitable activities for seafarers and their families through approved initiatives, including ship visits, support in seafarers' centres, transport, communications, pastoral care and emergency assistance, fundraising and administration.
- 2.2 A volunteer gives their time, skills or experience on a free basis without entering into a contract of employment. This policy applies to all types of volunteer positions in the European Region, including regular, occasional, event, remote, digital, ship-visiting, centre-based, driving, chaplaincy, fundraising, committee, and specialist roles.
- 2.3 A role description or volunteer agreement sets out the mutual expectations and is not to be regarded as an employment contract; it should not commit to offering paid work, nor should it establish fixed hours or provide payment beyond approved expenses.
- 2.4 Before appointing a volunteer from outside the UK, the supervisor should note any additional local requirements relating to status, age, insurance, checks, expenses, safety or data protection. Approval of any variation must be obtained from the Regional Director before the relevant activity starts.

3 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

- 3.1 The Mission to Seafarers is committed to creating an inclusive volunteering environment where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect. We will not unlawfully discriminate on grounds protected by applicable legislation and will make reasonable adjustments where appropriate to enable participation.

- 3.2 Recruitment should be fair and inclusive, and it should take into account the risks associated with the role. All applicants, whatever their background, faith or none, are welcome, provided that they share MtS's values, satisfy the requirements for the post and can work safely. Decisions must be legal and based on suitability. MtS will agree to and examine any reasonable adjustments at all stages of recruitment and volunteering, provided that safety and operational requirements are met.
- 3.3 Before any involvement with someone under the age of 18, MtS must evaluate the risks and adapt the recruitment process, the way consent is obtained, supervision, activities, and safeguarding measures to take into account the volunteer's age, level of maturity, role, and local laws. Relevant information should be given to a parent or guardian and, where necessary, their consent should be secured.
- 3.4 The recruitment information has to be appropriate and may include an Assemble application, contact and emergency details, preferences, any relevant experience, references, and any information required for safety or reasonable support. Assemble is the official platform for keeping European volunteer records.
- 3.5 Normally, MtS will receive two confidential references regarding character, reliability, and suitability for the role, which will be considered alongside the discussion and clause 4 checks below
- 3.6 MtS will confirm the appointment and send relevant welcome and introduction information once the checks have been found satisfactory. A volunteer must not start any unsupervised, regulated, or restricted activity before the necessary checks and training have been completed.

4 SUITABILITY, CRIMINAL RECORD AND SAFEGUARDING CHECKS

- 4.1 MtS carries out lawful, necessary, and proportionate checks according to role and jurisdiction; these can include identity verification, relevant conviction checks, safeguarding checks, and criminal record or police checks. In the UK, such checks may involve Basic DBS checks or, in cases where the duty in question is legally eligible, Enhanced DBS checks; in other countries, MtS will use the appropriate local or approved international checks, including those for recent residence abroad.
- 4.2 The information subject to vetting must be secure, confidential and used only for authorised recruitment or safeguarding. Disclosure of a criminal does not automatically rule an applicant out; instead, MtS will record a proportionate evaluation of the relevance, the circumstances, the time that has elapsed, any evidence of change and the level of risk associated with the role.
- 4.3 Each year, the Church & Volunteer Engagement Manager, together with other appropriate MtS staff must review the minimum requirements for identity, references, safeguarding, criminal records, and training for each role.

5 INDUCTION, TRAINING AND SUPPORT

- 5.1 Every volunteer will have a named supervisor who is in charge of their induction, training, guidance, feedback, communication, and providing reasonable support related to their wellbeing. The induction programme must include information on the role, supervision, attendance, safety, safeguarding, confidentiality, data protection, Assemble, equipment, expenses, conduct, concerns and the process of leaving.
- 5.2 Before carrying out any unsupervised activity, participants must complete the safeguarding and health and safety training. The supervisor should identify and

explain any specific requirements related to the role, such as data protection, confidentiality, ship visiting, chaplaincy, driving, cash handling, or MtS systems, and provide the volunteer with any instructions, forms, or accessible summaries they need.

- 5.3 Volunteers should report their absence immediately so that MtS can make arrangements for cover. Individuals who are taking a break, changing roles, or leaving should, whenever possible, provide reasonable notice and agree on any handover arrangements.
- 5.4 If a distressing or serious incident has occurred, the supervisor should check on the volunteer's well-being, explain the support available, and decide whether to suspend or modify the volunteer's duties. This support can consist of debriefing, pastoral or specialist help and subsequent follow-up.

6 CODES OF CONDUCT AND PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

- 6.1 Volunteers are required to act in a respectful, inclusive, safe, and professional manner; to be reliable; to communicate and work cooperatively; to dress appropriately; to respect cultural and religious differences; and to keep boundaries clearly defined. They must not attempt to proselytise, enter someone's private space, or record anyone unless they have first obtained informed consent.
- 6.2 Volunteers are not to share their personal contact information, enter into personal financial arrangements, establish inappropriate relationships, or give or accept gifts, except for approved low-value tokens. Any private contact via social media, meetings outside work hours, or invitations to someone's home must have prior approval from their supervisor for operational or safeguarding reasons.
- 6.3 Volunteers are not to offer or accept bribes, improper payments, substantial gifts or hospitality, misuse their position, or hide any conflicts of interest. If there are any concerns, they should report them to their supervisor.
- 6.4 Without authorisation, volunteers must not speak for MtS, publish confidential information, present personal views as MtS's, or use its branding or accounts.
- 6.5 Harassment, discrimination, the misuse of substances, violence, abuse, illegal or unethical behaviour, unsafe practice, inappropriate relationships and breaches of confidentiality are forbidden, and in the case of serious or repeated breaches, the person's position will be terminated.

7 HEALTH, SAFETY, WELFARE AND INSURANCE

- 7.1 Volunteers must report safeguarding concerns to their supervisor as soon as possible and normally within 24 hours. If someone is in immediate danger, they must first contact the local emergency services, then notify their supervisor. If the concern involves the supervisor or cannot safely be raised with them, the volunteer must contact the Church & Volunteer Engagement Manager or alternative senior contact directly. Volunteers must record facts, share information only as needed, and must not investigate or promise secrecy. The supervisor must pass the concern promptly to the Church & Volunteer Engagement Manager, who will record the decision and make any required referral.

- 7.2 MtS will evaluate all volunteer activities, keep a record of any significant risks, and make available the appropriate information, supervision, training, equipment and insurance. Before any activity starts, the supervisor has to explain the control measures, the reporting procedure, and the details of the insurance arrangement. Volunteers are required to comply with these requirements, local regulations, and instructions regarding the use of personal protective equipment and to immediately report any hazards, accidents, injuries, near misses, or other safety issues.
- 7.3 Before starting, volunteers must complete the necessary induction and become familiar with the local fire safety rules, first-aid procedures, emergency measures, and how to report incidents. They are required to use the equipment only as authorised, to report any defects, to keep the escape routes clear, to comply with the rules regarding smoking, alcohol, and drugs, and to cease working if the task seems unsafe or goes beyond the scope of their training.
- 7.4 Lone work, whether it involves visits to a ship or centre, the use of transport, activities outside normal hours, or going to unfamiliar places, requires role-specific controls. Such controls can include requiring check-ins, providing communication equipment, planning the journey, imposing limits on solo activity, and establishing clear procedures to follow if contact is lost or if a volunteer considers themselves in an unsafe situation.
- 7.5 Before driving for MtS, volunteers must hold a valid licence, provide required evidence through Assemble, confirm that the vehicle is roadworthy and suitably insured, and obtain supervisory approval. Any driving accident, damage, penalty, licence restriction, or insurance issue must be reported promptly to the supervisor, who must record it and arrange any necessary safety, insurance, safeguarding, or regulatory notifications.
- 7.6 Volunteers who use their own vehicles must inform their insurance company, keep their insurance in place for the purpose of volunteering, and provide updates on any changes to their licence, insurance, or fitness to drive. Unless MtS gives written confirmation to the contrary, its insurance does not apply to any loss or damage to the vehicle or to any liabilities resulting from the use of the vehicle. Volunteers are still liable for any fines. MtS may request up-to-date evidence and impose additional conditions for charity vehicles, minibuses, or cases involving higher-risk driving.
- 7.7 MtS maintains appropriate insurance arrangements, which may include public liability, employer's liability where legally applicable to volunteers, and other relevant cover. Volunteers should seek clarification regarding any limitations of cover before undertaking activities.

8 EXPENSES

- 8.1 MtS will reimburse reasonable, necessary costs of authorised volunteering, which may include travel, approved mileage, parking, modest meals, pre-approved accommodation and essential administration. Expenses are reimbursements, not pay, allowances or rewards; unlisted or unusually high costs require prior supervisory approval.

- 8.2 Claims must state the date, purpose, and amount; include receipts where available; and confirm that the cost was solely for authorised volunteering. The supervisor must verify eligibility, reasonableness and evidence before local finance pays it.

9 DATA PROTECTION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- 9.1 MtS will use only necessary and lawful volunteer data for recruitment, deployment, support, safeguarding, expenses, training, safety, security and administration. This may include contact, emergency, recruitment, reference, training, attendance, expense, system use, driving, health, accessibility, and permitted criminal-record information.
- 9.2 MtS will establish the legal basis for its actions, ensure that sensitive information is safeguarded, maintain the accuracy and limitation of the data, and protect it against unauthorised access, loss, alteration or disclosure. The records will comply with the relevant retention schedules as well as with legal, insurance, regulatory and safeguarding requirements. In the case of retaining safeguarding or conduct records for a longer period, a justification must be given, and the allegation category, the outcome and the reasons for the retention must be recorded.
- 9.3 Access to volunteer data is permitted only by authorised individuals who need to know; lawful instances of sharing may involve referees, vetting organisations, insurers, regulators, emergency services or law enforcement. Volunteers can make a written or verbal request for access to their personal data to the Data Protection Officer, and MTS will usually respond within one month, provided the relevant qualifications apply. Other rights regarding the data will vary depending on the specific circumstances and applicable law.
- 9.4 Volunteers are required to keep information confidential, use approved systems, avoid making unnecessary copies, and prevent any unauthorised recording or disclosure. If there is a suspected loss, misuse or disclosure, it must be reported straight away to the supervisor and the Data Protection Officer. Confidential information can only be shared without consent in order to prevent serious harm, to meet a legal duty or to support authorised safeguarding.

10 RAISING CONCERNS, MANAGING ISSUES AND ENDING VOLUNTEERING

- 10.1 A volunteer can raise a concern either verbally or in writing with their supervisor or the Church & Volunteer Engagement Manager by using the contact information given at induction. If the concern is unresolved, is serious, involves the volunteer themselves, or cannot be safely raised with those people, the volunteer can contact the Regional Director, the Head of Human Resources, the designated safeguarding lead, or another senior contact directly.
- 10.2 When dealing with formal concerns, it is necessary to state what happened, when it happened, who was involved, and the desired outcome. MtS will promptly acknowledge such concerns, identify the person conducting the review, and provide an expected response date. An impartial review should involve collecting all relevant information, allowing for fair responses, and informing the reporter of the outcome and any further steps in the review process. MtS will explain any delays and give a new date. Reporters acting in good faith must not be subjected to retaliation.

- 10.3 Suspected crime, fraud, bribery, abuse, a serious failure in safeguarding, a breach of the law, a danger to safety, environmental harm, or concealment must be reported to the Chief Operating Officer. However, if that person is involved, you should report to the Secretary General. MtS will respond sensitively, protect confidentiality as far as possible, and ensure that people who have raised legitimate concerns in good faith are not subjected to adverse treatment.
- 10.4 The Chief Operating Officer must promptly assess any serious safeguarding, financial, data, safety, or reputational issues and notify the trustees. The trustees will then decide, based on useful advice, whether it should be reported to the Charity Commission, another regulator, an insurer, the police, or another statutory authority.
- 10.5 Conduct, capability, or reliability problems should usually be handled informally by setting clear expectations, providing support, or offering training between the supervisor and volunteer. In the case of serious, repeated or unresolved issues, a written requirement for improvement, restriction of duties or termination of the role may result. MtS will record the issue, the evidence, the decision, the reasons and any risk actions.
- 10.6 MtS may suspend duties if there are serious issues involving safeguarding, conduct, safety, data, insurance, legal matters, or reputation. Suspension is a neutral and temporary action, not a conclusion. The organisation will assign a point of contact, continue to review the situation, and inform the volunteer of any changes.
- 10.7 Volunteers may change roles, pause or leave at any time. MtS may end a role that is no longer needed or suitable, or cannot continue because of conduct, capability, safeguarding or safety. Where practicable, MtS will explain the decision and arrange any handover.
- 10.8 When duties change or volunteering ends, the volunteer must return MtS property, identification, keys, records and confidential information, and delete authorised local copies when instructed. MtS must promptly remove access and retain required records.

11 MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 11.1 This policy will be reviewed annually and after significant incidents or material legal, operational, safety, data, insurance or governance changes. The Church & Volunteer Engagement Manager will coordinate relevant specialists and review key evidence across recruitment, training, safeguarding, incidents, conduct, expenses, insurance, departures and local law. Material findings and recommendations must reach the Regional Director Europe. The Regional Director Europe will report all Safeguarding and Health and Safety incidents to the Chief Operating Officer in line with the UK Health and Safety Policy and the Global Safeguarding Standards. Approved updates to this policy must be recorded, communicated and reflected in induction and guidance.