



PCRS Volunteer Policy

The aim of this policy is to define good volunteering practice for use throughout PCRS and provide guidelines for volunteers and for staff in relation to volunteering. For the purposes of this policy volunteers include: all members of committees, subcommittees, programme boards, steering groups, working groups, speakers, facilitators, chairs and any other individual that offer their time, expertise and insights free of charge to the Society, and in the interests of furthering the Society's charitable objectives. This includes clinical and professional members, Trustees as well as patient representatives.

As well as volunteers being a valuable resource to PCRS, we recognise the benefit of volunteering to the individual volunteer and where possible PCRS aims to respond to its volunteers needs by providing the opportunity to gain relevant skills, work experience and references as well as the opportunity to meet new people whilst volunteering.

Introduction

The Primary Care Respiratory Society (PCRS) supports all Health Care Professionals in primary, community, and integrated care settings. We develop an optimal, holistic, patient-centred approach to delivering quality care for all people with respiratory conditions. We are advocates for the improvement of care and outcomes for people with respiratory diseases, bringing together all professions, offering them a welcoming, supportive, inclusive, non-hierarchical community where everybody has a voice.

Whilst the Society makes payments to some clinical leads and where funding allows provides honoraria for certain services, the Society is predominantly a voluntary organisation governed by a Board of Trustees and led by an Executive Committee and Sub Committees whose members offer their clinical or patient experience and expertise to ensure the effective delivery of the Society's charitable activities and professional services.

PCRS is reliant on the commitment and contribution of its members and patient volunteers to:

- provide relevant skills, expertise, perspective, and experience in the field of respiratory medicine
- ensure our services and activities (e.g. guidance, resources, educational activities, and events) meet the needs of our professional members and the wider respiratory community we serve
- Ensure all of activities, outputs and materials meet the highest clinical standards, are accurate and compliant with relevant national regulations and best practice
- represent PCRS and PCRS opinion at relevant national, regional, and local stakeholder forums.
- Help to raise PCRS profile and reach into relevant medical and clinical professional audiences.
- Help to deliver high quality events, webinars, conferences, resources and materials through the provision of clinical or patient experience, insight and expertise.

Principles

This Volunteering Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- PCRS will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to PCRS's work.
- PCRS expects that personnel (i.e. Trustees, staff, contractors, clinical leads and committee members) at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work
- PCRS recognises that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training where possible for them to do their work effectively.
- PCRS does not aim to introduce volunteers to replace paid staff. PCRS employs an Executive Director and contracts Red Hot Irons, an agency to run the day-to-day operations of the organisation. Consultants are contracted to coordinate Policy and project work, and the PCRS Executive Chair, Vice Chair, and clinical leads for education, service development and conference are remunerated. Many committee members give their time voluntarily. However, committee members may claim for any loss of earnings incurred as a result of their time where they are required to participate in half/full day meetings on behalf

of the Society and may also be reimbursed where they undertake significant pieces of work for the charity by agreement in advance up to the agreed threshold.

Recruitment

All prospective volunteers (i.e. committee members) will be recruited and appointed in line with the All-Committees Terms of Reference.

PCRS will use appropriate means to advertise all volunteer opportunities to members through our regular InTouch newsletter and social media platforms where appropriate. We will also promote vacancies on our patient reference group through partner organisations such as AUK, or through volunteering portals. All recruitment will consider the principles of our [Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy](#). Shortlisting will take place where appropriate and shortlisted candidates invited to interview with members of the relevant Committee or Patient Reference Group. The interviews are also a chance for potential volunteers to ask any questions they have about the role.

Volunteer agreements and PCRS Policies

All Trustees, PCRS Committee members, and members of the patient rep group, are expected to adhere to Society's Policies and procedures.

Specifically, all volunteers/committee members are expected to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#). The Terms of Reference for All Committees applies to all volunteers.

Where members are invited to Represent PCRS on an external body, the [Policy on Representation](#) applies.

All Trustees are expected to fill in and sign Fit and Proper Persons Declaration.

All Trustees and Committee members are expected to complete the Declarations of Interest form.

None of these documents is a contract; PCRS has no intention of creating a contract with any volunteers. The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. Although there is no contractual obligation for the volunteer to attend or to undertake certain tasks, volunteers can expect:

- To have clear information about what is expected of them
- To volunteer in a safe environment
- To be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner
- To receive reimbursement for reasonable expenses if required
- To have opportunities for personal development
- To be recognised and appreciated
- To be able to say 'no' to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable
- To know what to do if something goes wrong

PCRS expects volunteers:

- To be reliable, open, and honest
- To uphold the organisation's values and comply with organisational policies.
- To make the most of opportunities given, e.g. for training
- To contribute positively to the aims of the organisation and avoid bringing the organisation into disrepute
- To carry out tasks within agreed guidelines

Expenses

It is in the intention of PCRS that no member that volunteers for the Society is out of pocket. All volunteers will have their travel and other expenses reimbursed if required – where this is for committee attendance, expenses will be reimbursed in line with the Expenses Policy outlined in the All-Committees Term of Reference, and where this is for Representation, expenses will be reimbursed in line with the Expenses and indemnity clauses of the Policy on Representation.

Induction and training

All new members of Committees, including patient representatives will be invited to speak with the Chair of the relevant Committee, who will introduce them to the work of the committee.

New Trustees will be invited to an induction with the Chair of the Board of Trustees, Executive Director and Executive Chair.

All Committee members and Trustees will be supported to undertake training on diversity and equality in line with the Society's policy on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. Where appropriate and relevant to the volunteer's role, training will also be provided on aspects such as data protection, media and communications, and governance.

Support, Wellbeing and Safeguarding

PCRS value all those that contribute to the Society and we take seriously our commitment to look after their mental and physical wellbeing. The PCRS policy on Wellbeing and Safeguarding applies to all volunteers of the Society and all volunteers are asked to familiarise themselves with the policy.

Where any individual has any concerns regarding wellbeing and/or safeguarding, they are encouraged to report these in line with the Wellbeing and Safeguarding policy.

The main point of contact for volunteers is as follows:

Volunteer role	Main point of contact
Trustee	Chair of the Board of Trustees or Executive Director
Executive Committee	Chair of the Executive Committee or Executive Director
Sub Committee	Chair of the relevant Committee
Patient Representative Group	Chair of the Patient Representative Group

All volunteers may contact the Executive Director via info@pcrs-uk.org

Feedback and Complaints

PCRS encourages our committee members, Trustees and patient representatives to feedback their views about matters concerning PCRS and its work. This can be done either by completing the Feedback form [here](#), or contacting the Executive Director, via info@pcrs-uk.org.

Where any volunteer wishes to raise a concern about any activity of the Society, they are encouraged to do so via the Feedback Form. All complaints will be handled in line with the Society's Complaints Policy.

Confidentiality

PCRS is bound by the Data Protection Act to ensure that we treat volunteer information with respect. Only staff who need to see information for purposes related to volunteer involvement will be able to access it. We will not pass information on without permission. The PCRS [privacy policy](#) provides details on how a Volunteer's personal information is stored and used.

Insurance

All volunteers (including Trustees, committee members or patient representatives) are covered by PCRS's insurance policy whilst they are engaged in any work on PCRS's behalf.

Reviewed and Approved by PCRS Executive: 24th June 2024

Reviewed and Approved by PCRS Trustees: 1st September 2024

Date of next review: September 2027