

Volunteer-friendly vocabulary

Volunteering, because it isn't contractual or paid, is dependent on positive relationships and language used should reflect that.

This contributes to mutually respectful relationships.

Documents should use the language of mutual agreement rather than of employment, contract and obligation.

If you imply that volunteers are in an employment relationship then there is a potential danger that employment legislation could be said to apply.

There are words that can be used to help clarify expectations for everyone, but without implying contractual obligations on either side. Additionally, church settings may choose to use language that recognises volunteering as an act of service or discipleship but you may still find the suggestions below are useful supplements.

| Terms to avoid | Terms you might use | Terms you might use in a church setting |
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| Contract | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Volunteer agreement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Covenant |
| Job/employment/ job description | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Role description ■ Role profile | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ministry description |
| Vacancy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Volunteering opportunity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Opportunity to serve |
| Person specification | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Personal qualities ■ Useful skills | |
| Interview | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Informal interview ■ Informal chat | |
| Payment/pay | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reimburse expenses ■ Cover expenses | |
| Work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Activity ■ Task | |
| Duties | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Key elements of the role ■ Key tasks | |
| Disciplinary or grievance procedure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Problem solving procedures ■ Strategies for tackling difficulties | |
| Voluntary worker/employee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Volunteer | |
| Terms & conditions/ obligations/rights/ entitlements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Hopes ■ Expectations | |