

VOLUNTEER-FRIENDLY VOCABULARY

Volunteering, because it isn't contractual or paid, is dependent on good relationships and any language used should reflect that. Documents should use the language of mutual agreement rather than of employment, contract and obligation.

This is important not only because it helps contribute to a foundation of mutually respectful relationships but also because if you imply that volunteers are in an employment relationship then there is a potential danger that employment legislation could be said to apply (e.g. minimum wage, unfair dismissal etc.)

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

TERMS TO AVOID	TERMS YOU MIGHT USE
Contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Volunteer agreement ■ Covenant
Job / employment / job description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Role ■ Ministry description ■ Role description ■ Role profile
Vacancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Volunteering opportunity ■ Opportunity to serve
Person specification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Personal qualities ■ Useful skills
Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Informal chat ■ Informal interview
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