

**Ipswich and District Talking Newspaper
(Sound On)
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Volunteering With Sound On

(Note: This document should be available to all volunteers, who should be informed when a new version becomes available. The current version should also be placed in the studio.)

Sound On would like to thank all our volunteers for helping to make local news available in an easily accessible form to blind and partially sighted people in and around Ipswich, Woodbridge, Leiston, Saxmundham, Framlingham, Felixstowe, and Stowmarket.

This document gives a brief overview of some of the key pointers towards getting the best experience for our volunteers and listeners (the users of our service).

While Sound On does not directly employ anyone, i.e. all Sound On 'staff' are volunteers, we still have a duty of care both to our volunteers and to our service users. We therefore ask our volunteers to make sure they have read our short policy documents covering areas such as Equality and Diversity, and Safeguarding, and to make themselves familiar with the associated informational 'procedure' documents such as this one.

Informal training will be offered to new volunteers, mostly in the form of documents to read and keep, and we would be grateful if you can confirm that you have read them by sending an email message or conventional letter by post, to the Chair of Sound On's management committee confirming that you have read and agree to the contents of the policy and procedure documents with which you have been issued.

Sound On also aims to provide occasional in-depth training sessions to make our volunteers aware of the less obvious issues encountered by people with a visual impairment (sight loss). These may be included as part of an event where volunteers are likely to be present such as Sound On's AGM or other social get-togethers, but we realise that it may not be possible for all volunteers to attend these so we will attempt to ensure that other options are offered.

The most technical roles in the production of our weekly and twice-yearly publications are described in detail elsewhere, as are procedures such as the operation of the key safe at the Bath Street studio.

Sound On supports equality of opportunity for all its volunteers, and the details of this support are included in the Equality and Diversity policy which you will be asked to read as part of your recruitment training.

Volunteers should also read our Safeguarding policy which details our responsibilities towards service users and other volunteers. Safeguarding is key to any organisation, especially those which come into regular contact with people who are vulnerable. As a natural result of the fact that most people who lose their sight, do not do so until they are towards the upper age range, many of them fall into this category. Volunteers who come into contact with them are therefore asked to look out for signs that all might not be well, either because they might find it a struggle to carry out day-to-day tasks, or in the very rare cases where they are being taken advantage of by a family member, acquaintance or someone else including fraudsters or scammers.

Sound On also asks that volunteers watch out for each other, and in the exceptionally rare cases where they are worried about the wellbeing of another volunteer, that they report their concerns to the committee.

Volunteers who are asked to visit the homes of our listeners will also require current DBS certification. Most of our volunteers will not be asked to visit the houses of our listeners, but for those that do need to do so, it is important that they make initial contact with the listener, probably by phone, to tell them why and when the visit will occur, and to suggest that the listener should have a friend or family member present. This is useful especially in the case where the volunteer is delivering new technical equipment such as one of our MP3 players, as it is usually easier for two people to remember how something works than for a single listener to be presented with these new technical details.

If this is not possible, then it is a good idea for an extra volunteer to help with the visit.

If you do have any concerns about the welfare of a listener, or indeed about another volunteer, it is important to discuss this with one of the committee. The Chairperson of the management committee is usually the first port of call for such concerns, but can delegate the Safeguarding role to another committee member.

Volunteers will be asked to confirm that they have familiarised themselves with the contents of this document, the Equality and Diversity, and Safeguarding policies, and members of the Management Committee with appropriate roles, will also be asked to familiarise themselves with the procedure covering the recruitment of new volunteers.

All volunteers will be notified when these documents are updated, and when new procedure/policy documents are launched.

Other Documents

The following documentation is available from the management committee, and current copies are also placed in the studio.

- Recording Manual (Note: This document will be updated with changes to operating practice. Recording engineers should check when working in the studio to ensure that they are aware of the latest procedures to be followed.)
- Key Safe Operation
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Volunteer Induction Procedure