



Volunteer Policy DRAFT

East Dorset Beekeeping Association

1. Purpose

East Dorset Beekeeping Association (EDBKA) is a volunteer-led membership association. Volunteers make an essential contribution to the Association's governance, teaching apiaries, training, community engagement, events and day-to-day administration.

This policy explains how EDBKA involves, supports and manages volunteers. It is intended to protect volunteers, members, visitors, the public, the bees in EDBKA's care, and the Association's reputation.

The policy also establishes clear arrangements for working with volunteers connected to partner organisations. It does not give any external volunteer independent authority to enter, manage or work within an EDBKA apiary.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- EDBKA members who volunteer regularly or occasionally;
- members of the Management Committee and other Association officers;
- apiary managers, deputy apiary managers and members of the apiary team;
- course tutors, demonstrators, mentors and event volunteers;
- people supporting administration, communications, honey shows, community events or practical work;
- non-member volunteers accepted by EDBKA for a defined role; and
- volunteers connected with a partner organisation, site owner or host organisation, when supporting an activity organised or authorised by EDBKA.

Contractors, paid workers and visitors are not volunteers merely because they assist with an activity. Their responsibilities will be governed by the relevant agreement, role or visitor arrangements.

3. Principles

EDBKA will seek to involve volunteers in a way that is safe, fair, welcoming and proportionate to the nature of the Association.

- Volunteering is undertaken freely and without an employment relationship.
- Volunteers are not employees or workers of EDBKA and are not entitled to wages or employee benefits.
- A volunteer may stop volunteering at any time, and EDBKA may bring a volunteer role or placement to an end where necessary.
- Any volunteer agreement or role description records expectations and good practice but is not intended to create a legally binding contract.
- Volunteers will be treated with dignity and respect and will be included without unlawful discrimination.
- Volunteer responsibilities, access and supervision will reflect the person's competence, experience, qualifications and the risks of the activity.
- No volunteer has an automatic right to undertake work involving bees, hive equipment, medicines, machinery, children, vulnerable adults or confidential information.

4. Types of EDBKA Volunteering

4.1 Committee and officer roles

Committee members and officers give substantial time to the governance and administration of EDBKA. Their responsibilities arise from the Association's constitution, committee decisions and any agreed role description. They are expected to act in the best interests of EDBKA, maintain confidentiality and comply with Association policies.

4.2 Apiary management and teaching roles

Apiary managers, deputies, tutors, demonstrators and apiary team members may hold beekeeping qualifications or have recognised practical experience. These roles may involve greater responsibility for colony welfare, teaching, record keeping, equipment, biosecurity and the supervision of others.

Appointment to an apiary or teaching role is made by, or with the authority of, the Management Committee. The scope of each person's authority will be determined by their competence and the needs of the apiary.

4.3 Occasional member volunteers

Members may volunteer from time to time for community events, stewarding, refreshments, fundraising, maintenance, honey shows, outreach or other agreed activities. They will receive the information and supervision appropriate to the task.

4.4 Non-member and partner volunteers

EDBKA may accept help from non-members or volunteers connected with a partner organisation. Such volunteers must be accepted for a defined purpose and must follow EDBKA instructions and policies while supporting an EDBKA activity.

Non-member or partner volunteers do not become EDBKA members, apiary team members or authorised beekeepers solely because they volunteer alongside EDBKA.

5. Recruitment, Selection and Suitability

EDBKA will use a proportionate approach to recruiting volunteers. Informal help at a one-off event will not require the same process as a regular apiary, teaching, safeguarding or confidential role.

Depending on the role, EDBKA may:

- discuss the volunteer's interests, availability, experience and any support needs;
- provide a written or verbal role description;
- ask for evidence of relevant beekeeping qualifications, training or practical competence;
- seek references where the role carries significant responsibility;
- require completion of an induction or trial period;
- assess whether a Disclosure and Barring Service check is legally eligible or required; and
- decline or restrict a role where the person is not suitable, competent or safely able to undertake it.

EDBKA is not obliged to accept every offer of voluntary help. Decisions will be based on the Association's needs, available supervision, safety, safeguarding, competence and the welfare of the bees.

6. Induction, Training and Supervision

Volunteers will receive an induction proportionate to their role. This may include:

- the purpose and structure of EDBKA;
- the person responsible for supervising or supporting the volunteer;
- the boundaries of the role and activities the volunteer must not undertake;
- health and safety, emergency arrangements and accident reporting;
- apiary safety, bee-sting risk, protective clothing and hygiene;
- biosecurity, notifiable pests and diseases, and movement of bees or equipment;

- safeguarding and conduct expectations;
- data protection and confidentiality; and
- site-specific rules and access arrangements agreed with the relevant site owner or host organisation.

Volunteers must ask for guidance where they are unsure. They must not undertake a task beyond their competence or authorisation.

7. Apiary Access and Beekeeping Activities

EDBKA apiaries are managed environments that contain livestock, specialist equipment, and foreseeable risks. Access and activity must therefore be controlled.

- No person may enter an EDBKA apiary without permission or outside the access arrangements agreed by EDBKA with the relevant site owner or host organisation.
- No external, non-member or inexperienced volunteer may enter or work in the apiary unless accompanied and supervised by an authorised EDBKA committee member, Apiary Manager or nominated member of the apiary team.
- No volunteer may open, inspect, feed, treat, move or otherwise manipulate a colony unless specifically authorised and assessed as competent for that task.
- No volunteer may administer veterinary medicines, move bees or hive equipment, take samples, unite or split colonies, mark or introduce queens, remove honey or make management decisions unless authorised by the Apiary Manager or their nominated deputy.
- Instructions from the Apiary Manager, nominated deputy or authorised session leader must be followed.
- Access may be refused or withdrawn where weather, colony temperament, disease risk, staffing, competence or any other safety concern makes participation unsuitable.
- Volunteers must use suitable protective clothing and comply with EDBKA's risk assessments and biosecurity procedures.

Nothing in this policy prevents an authorised representative of the site owner or host organization from exercising a right of access under the relevant site agreement or in an emergency. Wherever reasonably practicable, access to the apiary itself should be coordinated with EDBKA, and no person may manipulate colonies or equipment unless authorised by EDBKA.

8. Working with External and Host Organisation Volunteers

EDBKA welcomes constructive cooperation with volunteers connected with partner organisations, site owners and host organisations. However, all EDBKA apiaries, colonies, medicines, equipment and beekeeping activities remain under EDBKA's operational control unless a different arrangement has been formally approved by the EDBKA Management Committee and recorded in writing.

External or host organisation volunteers may only undertake activities that have been agreed in advance by EDBKA. They do not have independent authority to enter, manage or work within an EDBKA apiary.

Non-member volunteers may support agreed activities such as:

- helping with public engagement away from open colonies;
- stewarding or welcoming visitors;
- supporting educational displays, events or interpretation;
- assisting with site maintenance outside the apiary boundary where agreed;
- helping to prepare equipment or refreshments under supervision; and
- undertaking other low-risk tasks agreed in advance by EDBKA and, where appropriate, the relevant site owner or host organisation.

Non-member volunteers must not:

- enter the apiary independently or outside an organised EDBKA session;
- open or manipulate hives, handle bees or remove equipment without explicit authorisation and supervision;
- give beekeeping instruction on behalf of EDBKA unless appointed and approved to do so;
- administer treatments, feed colonies, move bees or make colony-management decisions;
- use EDBKA keys, codes, stores or equipment unless access has been specifically granted;
- bring personal bee equipment, bees, comb or hive products into the apiary without approval because of biosecurity risk; or
- represent themselves as an EDBKA member, authorised beekeeper or member of the apiary team solely because they volunteer for a partner or host organisation.

Where a non-member volunteer wishes to become more involved in practical beekeeping, EDBKA may invite them to join the Association, undertake appropriate training and progress through the same competence and authorisation arrangements as other volunteers. Membership or attendance at training will not by itself confer unsupervised apiary access.

9. Health, Safety and Welfare

Volunteers must take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions.

- Volunteers must follow EDBKA's Health and Safety Policy, risk assessments and reasonable instructions.
- Accidents, near misses, stings requiring assistance, unsafe conditions and damaged equipment must be reported promptly.
- Volunteers should tell the session leader privately about any relevant allergy, medical condition or support need that may affect safe participation.
- Volunteers must not participate while impaired by alcohol, illegal drugs, medication or illness in a way that creates a safety risk.
- Lone working in an apiary should be avoided unless specifically authorised and subject to an appropriate risk assessment.
- EDBKA may stop an activity or ask a volunteer to leave where safety, welfare or colony management requires it.

10. Safeguarding

Volunteers must comply with EDBKA's Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy.

- Children remain under the supervision of a parent, guardian, teacher, group leader or other responsible adult unless a separately approved arrangement applies.
- Volunteers must avoid unsupervised one-to-one situations with children wherever reasonably practicable.
- Safeguarding concerns must be reported promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Chair or Secretary.
- Where a role involves regular or regulated work with children or vulnerable adults, EDBKA will assess whether safeguarding checks, including a DBS check, are eligible or required.

11. Conduct, Equality and Confidentiality

Volunteers must comply with EDBKA's Anti-Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy and treat others with dignity and respect.

- Bullying, harassment, discrimination, intimidation and retaliation will not be tolerated.
- Volunteers must maintain appropriate boundaries and must not misuse an Association role or access.
- Confidential, personal, financial, membership or safeguarding information must be used only for the authorised purpose.
- Photographs, mailing lists, member details and information about children or vulnerable adults must be handled in accordance with EDBKA's Data Protection and Privacy Notice.
- Volunteers must not make public statements on behalf of EDBKA unless authorised.

12. Expenses and Property

Volunteering is unpaid. EDBKA may reimburse reasonable, necessary and pre-authorised out-of-pocket expenses where a budget and procedure have been agreed. Reimbursement is not automatic and receipts may be required.

Equipment, keys, protective clothing, documents and other property provided by EDBKA must be used responsibly, kept secure and returned when requested or when the volunteer role ends.

13. Insurance

Volunteers acting within an authorised EDBKA role and following Association instructions may be covered by the insurance arrangements applicable to EDBKA. Cover will depend on the activity, membership status, policy terms and any conditions imposed by the insurer.

Volunteers must not assume that unauthorised activity, independent apiary access, use of personal vehicles, professional advice or activity outside an agreed role is insured. Questions about the cover should be raised with the Secretary before the activity takes place.

14. Support, Concerns and Problem Solving

Volunteers are encouraged to raise questions, concerns or support needs with the person leading the activity, the Apiary Manager, Chair or Secretary.

EDBKA will seek to resolve minor concerns informally where appropriate. Serious concerns may be considered under safeguarding, anti-bullying, health and safety, data protection, constitution or other relevant procedure.

A person who raises genuine concern honestly and in good faith will not be treated unfairly for doing so.

15. Ending or Restricting a Volunteer Role

A volunteer may stop volunteering at any time and is encouraged to give reasonable notice where possible.

EDBKA may pause, restrict or end a volunteer role where:

- the role is no longer required;
- the necessary supervision or resources are not available;
- the volunteer acts outside the agreed role or authority;
- there are concerns about safety, safeguarding, conduct, confidentiality, competence or colony welfare;
- the volunteer does not follow reasonable instructions or Association policies;
- the relationship has broken down and cannot reasonably be restored; or
- the Management Committee considers this necessary to protect EDBKA, its members, the public, the site or the bees.

Where reasonably practicable, EDBKA will explain the concern and allow the volunteer an opportunity to respond. Immediate restriction may be necessary where there is a serious or urgent risk.

Ending a volunteer role does not automatically determine a person's EDBKA membership. Any separate membership action must follow the Association's constitution or applicable membership procedure.

16. Records and Data Protection

EDBKA will collect and retain only the volunteer information reasonably required to administer the role, maintain safety, provide evidence of training, or comply with legal and insurance requirements.

Volunteer information will be stored securely, accessed only by authorised people and handled in accordance with EDBKA's Data Protection and Privacy Notice.

17. Related Policies and Documents

- Constitution and Rules of EDBKA;
- Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy;
- Anti-Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy and relevant risk assessments;
- Data Protection and Privacy Notice;
- Apiary procedures, biosecurity arrangements and medicines records;
- School visit, training and event procedures where applicable; and
- any site agreement, licence, lease, occupancy agreement or operating protocol agreed with the relevant site owner or host organisation.

18. Review and Approval

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier where legislation, guidance, insurance requirements, EDBKA's activities, EDBKA's apiary partnerships and site arrangements or experience of volunteering indicates that changes are required.

Adopted by the Management Committee: _____ **Date:**

Review date: _____ **Version:** 1

Appendix 1 – Volunteer Role and Boundaries Record

This short record may be used for regular, higher-responsibility or non-member volunteer roles. It is not intended to create a contract of employment.

Volunteer name	
Role / activity	
Main tasks	
Tasks not authorised	
EDBKA supervisor / contact	
Training / induction completed	
Access arrangements	
Review date	

Volunteer acknowledgement: I understand the role, its boundaries and the EDBKA policies and instructions that apply. I understand that this is a voluntary arrangement and is not a contract of employment.

Volunteer signature / date	
EDBKA representative / date	
Partner, site owner or host organisation contact, where applicable	

Appendix 2 – Site owner or host organisation public Volunteer Quick Rules

- External and host organisation volunteers may only support activities agreed in advance with EDBKA.
- The apiary is not an open volunteering area.
- No volunteer may enter the apiary without an authorised EDBKA supervisor.
- No hive may be opened or manipulated without explicit EDBKA authorisation.
- EDBKA instructions, risk assessments, protective clothing and biosecurity rules must be followed.
- Keys, access codes, medicines, bees and equipment remain under EDBKA control.
- Public questions requiring beekeeping advice should be referred to an authorised EDBKA representative.
- Anyone seeking practical beekeeping involvement should speak to EDBKA about membership, training and progression.

Drafting Sources

This policy has been prepared with reference to current UK Government guidance on volunteering and volunteer status, Health and Safety Executive guidance, and NCVO good-practice guidance on volunteer policies, role descriptions, safeguarding and induction.

It is tailored to EDBKA's structure, its current apiary arrangements and potential future partnerships with site owners and host organisations.