



Birdline UK  
Parrot Rescue

## Volunteer Policy

<b>Name of the organisation:</b>	Birdline UK Ltd.
<b>Governing Body:</b>	The Board of Directors of Birdline U.K. Ltd.
<b>Registered Charity Numbers:</b>	1125030 (England) & SC043288 (Scotland)
<b>Registered Company Number:</b>	05925887
<b>Registered Address:</b>	Birdline U.K. Ltd. International House, 12 Constance Street, London, E16 2DQ
<b>General Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:Enquiries2@birdline.org.uk">Enquiries2@birdline.org.uk</a>
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## 1.0 Mission Statement

Birdline's mission is to educate people in the best practices of bird care & husbandry, and to provide a refuge to every orphaned, unwanted, found or injured parrot which the charity has the means to care for.

## 2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Birdline Parrot Rescue operates across England, Scotland and Wales to rescue, rehabilitate and rehome parrots and to raise standards in parrot care. Birdline is a not for profit organisation with charitable status and is run entirely on a voluntary basis.
- 2.2 As such, volunteers are involved at all levels of the organisation and are essential to the running and development of the organisation's work.
- 2.3 Birdline aims to have a reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship with its volunteers; with their involvement informing and developing the organisation's work, and our work enabling individuals to learn skills and achieve personal development through their volunteering.
- 2.4 The involvement of volunteers will be guided by the following principles of good practice:
  - volunteers will have a clear idea of the organisation structure, and be aware who their first point of contact is;
  - volunteers will be provided with regular opportunities to share ideas/concerns with a named contact;
  - tasks to be performed by volunteers will be clearly defined, so that everyone is sure of their respective roles and responsibilities; and
  - the organisation will comply with the Data Protection Act and its own privacy policy in the use of data held on all volunteers.
  - Birdline accepts the services of volunteers on the understanding that any volunteer's relationship with the organisation may be terminated by either party at any time, for whatever reason.
- 2.5 Once accepted, we will expect volunteers to comply with all existing and future policies and procedures. All trustees and volunteers will be asked to sign a statement confirming that they understand this policy, and to give an undertaking to maintain Birdline's regulations and procedures as outlined in this and other published policies.
- 2.6 This policy applies to all Trustees / Directors and Volunteers and is linked closely to the privacy Policy, Ethical Policy, Health and Safety Policy and all other policies held by the organisation. All policies are published on Birdline's website.
- 2.7 It is the responsibility of every volunteer to ensure they are aware of the content of each policy and to regularly check for updates and additions.

### **3.0 The Purpose of this Policy**

- 3.1 This policy provides an overview of the recruitment procedures and activities carried out by volunteers and together with the associated application form, agreement, and other associated policies and guidance documents, it forms a framework for the involvement of volunteers within the organisation.
- 3.2 All trustees and volunteers will be asked to sign a statement confirming that they understand this policy, and to give an undertaking to maintain Birdline's regulations and procedures as outlined in this and other published policies.
- 3.3 The policy will enable Birdline to:
- provide a level of service that is consistent;
  - establish clear principles for the involvement of volunteers;
  - recognise the roles, rights and responsibilities of volunteers;
  - highlight and acknowledge the value made by volunteers;
  - ensure the ongoing quality of both the volunteering opportunities on offer and the work carried out by our volunteers;
  - ensure the security of all information and intellectual property of Birdline;
  - ensure the security of all physical property of Birdline;
  - ensure that the confidentiality rights of all individuals (donor's, members, volunteers and trustees) are retained, and provide clarification and guidance on the circumstances where confidentiality may need to be broken, along with the procedures for doing so;
  - hold Volunteers/Trustees accountable for any breaches to published procedures; and
  - ensure all existing and future policies will be checked as to how they affect volunteers.

### **4.0 Recruitment, Selection, and Support**

- 4.1 Birdline is committed to the following:
- continued recruitment and training (at all organisational levels);
  - adhering to all policies when recruiting and selecting volunteers;
  - highlighting any requirements for Disclosure Checks prior to recruitment;
  - providing training where necessary to carry out a specific role;
  - ensuring reasonable expenses are covered. Volunteers should discuss any planned expenditure prior to incurring these expenses, in order to ensure that it will be covered by the organisation.

## 5.0 Volunteer Roles and line management



## 6.0 Volunteer Code of Conduct

6.1 When becoming a volunteer or director, there are certain conditions that an individual must agree to. These conditions are in place to protect the reputation of the organisation as a whole and to protect its directors and volunteers from harm, verbal and or physical abuse, and from the risk of unfair allegations and to ensure that they do not find themselves in compromising positions.

6.2 Therefore all volunteers **will**:

- take every opportunity to read and understand Birdline's policies, guidelines and procedures and to put them into practice;
- conduct themselves in a professional manner and act within the law at all times;
- treat people with respect and act with honesty and integrity;
- conform to the standards set by the organisation for appropriate dress and customer care;
- refrain from using offensive language, making sexually suggestive comments or gestures, or making abusive or offensive comments or threats;
- remain sober and not partake in or be under the influence of alcohol and illegal substances whilst volunteering for Birdline;
- take sensible precautions to protect themselves and others including using available tools such as risk assessments and following Birdline's published guidance;
- be aware of appearances and avoid any situations that may appear compromising;
- be aware of the inherent risks involved with handling exotic birds, which include being bitten, attacked, or receiving infectious diseases and to take common sense actions to mitigate those risks, including learning bird body language, safely towelling the bird and exercising barrier / quarantine control;
- work co-operatively with others;
- be willing to learn and take constructive criticism and feedback;
- commit the time and the energy required to carry out agreed tasks;
- seek assistance from other volunteers or directors where appropriate;
- keep in contact with their line manager and tell them of any changes in their work plans or difficulties in carrying out their tasks;
- undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service check if required for the nature of the task. This will always be discussed in advance with the volunteer concerned;
- report any reckless or endangering behaviour, suspicion of abuse or inappropriate behaviour to an appropriate safeguarding guardian or authorities and to the board of directors;
- agree to hand back all Birdline property and resources when requested; including but not limited to, uniforms, ID badges, paperwork, equipment, merchandise; and
- sign Birdline's Volunteer Agreement.

### 6.3 Volunteers will **not**:

- act unprofessionally or in such a way that will bring the organisation into disrepute;
- take unnecessary risks to their health and safety or that of others;
- spend time unobserved, touch or in any way engage in inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact with a child or vulnerable adult;
- administer first aid to a child or vulnerable adult without the presence and consent of that person's supervising adult;
- physically restrain any child or vulnerable adult, other than to prevent danger to the child or others, damage to property, or to prevent a criminal offence or serious anti-social behaviour, and even then be careful to use only the minimum restraint necessary;
- administer first aid to a stakeholder if untrained to do so.

## 7.0 Responsibilities to Volunteers

### 7.1 Birdline's management team will:

- communicate effectively and positively with the volunteer and keep them up-to-date with organisational developments;
- keep abreast of rules and regulations and ensure Birdline, its trustees and volunteers maintain best practice in every area of the organisation and operate within the framework of UK rules, regulations and laws;
- implement the organisation's equal opportunities and other policy at all levels;
- encourage other volunteers to be open and welcoming to new volunteers;
- provide opportunities to contribute to the organisation and to learn and develop new skills in a happy and friendly environment;
- provide appropriate training including access to policies and guidance documents;
- provide a volunteer line manager who will provide support as appropriate;
- provide safe working conditions with the right supervision and tools for the tasks assigned;
- make volunteers aware of the risks involved with undertaking homechecks, dealing with the public, and handling exotic birds;
- provide tasks that match both the needs of the organisation with the skills, knowledge, experience, age and interests of the volunteer;
- recognise the contribution of volunteers;
- be open to accepting suggestions and constructive criticism;
- make sure volunteers are properly insured and follow current health and safety advice whilst working for the organisation;
- ensure volunteers are reimbursed for any reasonable costs incurred whilst volunteering (agreed in advance); and
- provide references if appropriate.

## 8.0 Intellectual Property, Copyright and Branding

8.1 Birdline, its legal and trading names, logo, domain names and other names and images associated with the organisation [henceforth referred to as Birdline's 'brand'] are for the sole use of it alone. Birdline respects the intellectual and artistic copyright of others and abides by copyright laws and regulations. This means we do not use without permission images or text where the copyright is assigned elsewhere.

8.2 Volunteers must agree to:

- never wittingly breach copyright ownership when undertaking or producing work for Birdline;
- never use the Birdline brand without permission, or to bring the organisation into disrepute through its associated uses;
- assign the copyright of any work produced in the course of volunteering for Birdline to the organisation;
- ensure that any contracts taken out on behalf of Birdline or using Birdline's brand are only done so with the permission of the Board of Directors / Trustees;
- ensure that any contracts taken out on behalf of Birdline are made in the name of Birdline or transferred to Birdline as soon as practically possible;
- only make or procure products using Birdline's brand with advance permission from the Board of Directors. These must be donated or transferred to the organisation and fair reimbursement will be made.

## 9.0 Confidentiality

9.1 The nature of Birdline's day-to-day business means that the trustees and volunteers are privy to sensitive personal data. The clauses in this and other related policies applies to both sensitive data which comes under GDPR legislation and confidential information relating to the general business of Birdline.

- When acting as a representative of Birdline, confidentiality is formed between an individual and Birdline, (unless it falls into a situation where it may be breached). It is never between an individual and an individual volunteer/trustee;
- volunteers and Trustees of Birdline must ensure that all information of a personal and private nature will be treated sensitively and remain confidential;
- under no circumstances should information be shared within Birdline with an individual whose role would not require them to have access to that information;
- volunteers and Trustees of Birdline will inform individuals who share personal information with us of our privacy policy and should at every possible opportunity assure members and donor's that the information they have given us is confidential, and will not be divulged to any person outside of Birdline, unless they give their consent, or the situation falls under safeguarding criteria;



- at all times where practicably possible, discussions about personal matters relating to individuals should take place in a private space. Where no private space is available, volunteers/trustees should ensure that discussions are held at a volume level which is not able to be overheard by others;
  - in line with Birdline’s privacy policy, files containing personal information should not be left open and unattended and should be stored electronically with secure passwords or under lock and key when not in use; and
  - Birdline will rigorously pursue and investigate any allegations of a volunteer or trustee breaking its policies, and treat such breaches appropriately with the tools and recourses provided by the organisation and the law.
- 9.2 There may be times when a member/volunteer/donor gives permission for us to disclose personal or identifying information to an appropriate third party – for instance if we ask a different rescue to undertake a home check due to geographical convenience. Permission will be given through having signed a mandate form. This is not considered to be a breach of confidentiality.

## 10.0 Breaching Confidentiality

10.1 Breaching confidentiality is an exceptionally serious matter and should only be undertaken in exceptional circumstances, such as those outlined below. Any welfare or other issues which may require a breach of confidentiality should be escalated to the Directors who, will if appropriate, seek legal advice prior to breaching confidentiality and reporting these concerns to other authorities.

### **i. Threat to the organisation or those providing the service**

Individuals volunteering for Birdline should be able to carry out their duties free from harm or abuse. Abusive or aggressive language and behaviour, verbal and / or physical threats will not be tolerated and may result in volunteer positions and / or membership being revoked and Birdline property (including birds) being removed from the aggressor’s care. Furthermore confidentiality may be breached to report incidences to the relevant authorities.

### **ii. Information relating to criminality**

Confidentiality may be breached to report issues of criminality to the relevant authorities, for example where a theft of a bird from Birdline is suspected, or theft of monies or equipment from the organisation.

The police may occasionally request access to Birdline’s records; for example in a case of investigating bird theft. Information must not be given to the police unless the trustees have been informed or the Police present a Witness / Search Order or Warrant.

### iii. Risk of harm to self or other people or animals

During the course of Birdline's business, volunteers may come across situations they consider worthy of alerting authorities to and identifying confidential information may be breached for safeguarding reasons if an individual or an animal in that persons care is deemed to be in a neglectful, harmful or life-threatening situation. It will usually only be relevant to breach confidentiality to contact the emergency services, other appropriate welfare organisations such as the RSPCA or a relevant health / veterinary professional.

Examples of harmful situations are:

- an individual or animal is now, or will be, experiencing physical harm or injury where medical treatment is necessary to prevent suffering. This can include situations of extreme neglect;
- the individual or another person is threatening to kill/injure themselves or another individual/s or animal(s), or cause harm to them. This includes the threat or act of terrorism;
- an individual discloses any information which raises concerns about the safety and welfare of any child in their care or that they have unsupervised access to.

## 11.0 Procedure for breaking confidentiality

11.0 If a trustee/volunteer is concerned that a situation may fall under one of the circumstances where confidentiality may be broken, they should:

- contact one of the Directors immediately and together they will make an assessment of the risk of harm or extent to which the situation meets one of the other clauses, and therefore whether confidentiality should be broken. In the unlikely event that none of the Directors can be reached, the volunteer should make a decision on whether or not to break confidentiality, however regular efforts should still be made to contact the Board of Directors.
- If confidentiality is broken, an Incident Reporting Form should be completed, and signed by the Volunteer and Manager. An electronic copy of the form should be password protected and kept securely on the network. The signed copy should be kept in a locked cabinet.

## 12.0 Birdline Organisational Information

12.1 Any organisational information obtained during the course of volunteering is confidential until such point it is published by Directors – for instance in the Annual Report and Financial Statements. This information may include but not be limited to:

- personal information of volunteers, donors or members;
- recruitment and human resource information; and

- strategic and project developments.
- 12.2 Organisational information should not be discussed outwith the organisation without the prior permission of the Directors. This includes divulging information to former Volunteers or Trustees.
- 12.3 Divulging confidential organisational information to other organisations or individuals without authorisation will be considered under Birdline’s disciplinary procedure and may be considered as gross misconduct. Trustees divulging confidential information without the permission of the Chair will be dismissed from the Board.
- 12.4 Any malicious information passed to any individual by any volunteer or Trustee of Birdline with the intention of bringing Birdline into disrepute will be considered a serious disciplinary breach and appropriate action will be taken which may include terminating membership, volunteer or trustee role, return of Birdline property (including birds) and legal recourse.

### **13.0 Problem Solving**

- 13.1 Where a concern is highlighted – either by a volunteer or about a volunteer, this will be dealt with swiftly and professionally, using the organisation’s complaints procedure.

### **14.0 Responsibility**

- 14.1 Overall responsibility for the implementations, monitoring and review of the policy and procedures lies with the Board of Directors. Implementation and adherence to this policy is the responsibility of all volunteers within the organisation.
- 14.2 The policy will be reviewed at least annually and any identified corrective measures will be adopted as part of the policy.

### **15.0 Contact details**

- 15.1 Any queries in relation to this Volunteer Policy may be directed to the Directors by email at [directors@birdline.org.uk](mailto:directors@birdline.org.uk) or by post to the registered address: Birdline U.K. Ltd., International House,12 Constance Street, London,E16 2DQ



# Birdline UK Parrot Rescue

## Volunteer Agreement - Member Copy

Note: This agreement does not constitute a contract of employment.

- I have read and understood all sections of the above Policy and agree to abide by it at all times.
- I am aware of the inherit risks of handling exotic birds and agree to take all due care and precautions whilst doing so at all times.
- I am aware that I can find copies of all Birdline's procedures, guidance documents and policies on the Birdline website. I acknowledge it is my responsibility to ensure I am aware of the content of said documents and I agree to abide by them at all times.

Signed:

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Print Name:

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Date:

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Birdline U.K. Ltd. International House, 12 Constance Street, London, E16 2DQ  
Reg. Charity No. 1125030 (England) & SC043288 (Scotland).



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Signed:

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Print Name:

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Date:

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