



RABI[®]

Volunteer Handbook



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Welcome to RABI

Dear volunteer,

Thank you for choosing to give your time to support the work of RABI.

By becoming a volunteer you're helping to make an important difference in the farming community RABI supports – whether that's by raising awareness of the charity's services, running events as part of our local committees or providing behind the scenes support.

The challenges faced by many in farming across England and Wales are ever changing and increasing, but together we can help strengthen the resilience of current and future farming communities and offer a beacon of hope.

However you plan to give your time or commitment in support of RABI, we hope you find the experience rewarding and enjoyable.

Thanks again for being part of the team, it's great to have you involved.

Best wishes,

Mark Crosby
Head of Volunteering at RABI



About RABI

RABI is the farmers charity. At the core of its mission is the commitment to address the individual needs of farming people across England, Wales and Northern Ireland through practical, financial and emotional support.

The charity's expert mental health support builds emotional resilience to help farming people feel better equipped to tackle the many uncertainties and challenges they face today, whilst its grants empower farming people to become financially resilient.

RABI's financial support includes targeted, emergency cost-of-living grant campaigns including its Return to School and Winter Fuel campaigns.

Over the past 25 years, RABI has provided around a £1/4 billion of direct financial support to the farming community



“RABI has a fantastic team spirit – all of us **wanting to make a difference** for the farming community.”

What we do

RABI offers practical, financial and emotional assistance, tailored to the individual circumstances of each farming person. Whether it's giving expert advice on the benefits potentially available to the farming community, or accessing mental health support, we offer a beacon of hope.

- Our **24/7 freephone helpline** ensures we are available to give farming people the right type of support.
- **Financial support** remains a crucial element of our offer. Supporting low-income farming people with their personal finances, as well as all eligible farming people during times of financial crisis, the charity awards around £3million of direct financial support each year.
- In addition, RABI runs **targeted campaigns** such as our Return to School and Winter Fuel Grant cost-of-living campaigns.
- Since launching at the beginning of 2022, take-up of our **mental health counselling** has exceeded forecasts by over 12 times. Working with BACP (British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy) registered counsellors, we ensure that our farming community can access support quickly and without barriers. Our support is free and can be accessed online or via the phone.
- **Click and chat counselling** is also available 24/7 via our online wellbeing platform, enabling farming people of all ages to seek immediate and anonymous help. The service offers emotional support and text-based counselling to the farming community. Two platforms are available: Kooth for young people aged 11 to 17, and Qwell for those aged 18+.
- To help everyone feel more comfortable to talk openly about our mental health, RABI offers a range of **accredited mental health training**. Tailored to farming people and those organisations and businesses that visit the farm, the training aims to encourage open conversations about wellbeing within the wider farming community.
- **RABI's practical support** is coordinated by one of our team of Regional Support Managers. Working with farming people, the range of support they can provide is huge, ranging from supporting with financial grants through to representing an individual with the Department for Work and Pensions. Working in collaboration with other voluntary, professional and statutory services, our teams form a robust network to support individuals with comprehensive wrap-around support.



Our people

As an RABI volunteer you'll be joining a team of staff and volunteers across England and Wales.

The charity is governed by a Council of up to 12 Trustees. Our day-to-day work is carried out by our team of full and part-time staff, led by our Chief Executive, supported by the wider Senior Leadership team.

The Volunteering department consists of a team of Regional Managers based across England and Wales with the remaining team members based in our Oxford office – responsible for operational support, guidance and setting the strategic direction of volunteering.

The Regional Managers act as the main point of contact in their regions, providing information and insights about what is happening in the agricultural sector in their local communities. They lead on the development of relationships and engagement across a region, working closely alongside our network of volunteers supporting with fundraising and awareness.



Working together

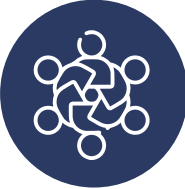
At RABI we believe that no member of the farming community should have to face adversity alone. We can only achieve this by working together in the spirit of our values.

We therefore ask that all our staff and volunteers agree to and adopt the charity's values below:



Caring

We are committed to treating everyone with empathy and compassion.



Fair

We strive to treat everyone equally and reasonably.



Trust

We won't let people down, working with honesty and openness to achieve what we have promised.



Respect

We value the contribution made by all and treat others as we would like to be treated, with sensitivity and without prejudice.



Stewardship

We take great care of the resources entrusted to us and act with integrity to maximise their use.



The role our volunteers play

As one of our volunteers you play an important role in helping RABI reach, connect and support more farming people across England and Wales.

Whether you're helping to raise the charity's profile at an agricultural show, bringing people together or raising money at one of our local events, you're helping RABI make a difference to the farming community.

Different ways to get involved

We are starting to expand our volunteer offer to incorporate more flexible volunteering options. This includes new roles supporting events and shows.

We aim to ensure that our volunteering programme is diverse, inclusive, accessible and attractive to potential and existing volunteers. We will ensure all volunteers are treated fairly and with respect, in an environment free from discrimination and harassment.

The latest volunteering opportunities can be found on the volunteering page of the main RABI website. If there isn't a role listed that ticks the right box, we'd still encourage people to get in touch and we can explore other opportunities.

If you are aware of anyone thinking about volunteering for RABI please put them in touch with our central volunteering team either by emailing volunteering@rabi.org.uk or phoning 01865 724931, option 3.

Our county committees

Most RABI volunteers are part of one of our local groups known as county committees.

The county committees primarily organise fundraising events such as dinners with a guest speaker, quiz nights, golf days, tractor runs, harvest suppers, carol concerts and lots more. Volunteers also attend county shows and agricultural auction marts, raising awareness of our work and meeting the local farming community.

Our committees are welcoming and sociable, with an interest in farming and a passion for their local community. They are proud to deliver events that bring farming people together. Whilst many volunteers give a few hours and help at events, our local committees meet regularly and have the support of key roles such as Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.

Getting started

Recruitment and support

RABI welcomes volunteer applications from people of all backgrounds and experience, valuing the breadth of experience, skills, dedication and goodwill that volunteers bring.

As part of the recruitment process all volunteers should have an opportunity to have an initial chat to ensure the role is right for both parties.

For some roles we may also require additional checks, eg. references.

We aim to ensure that all volunteers have an experienced volunteer or member of staff as their main contact. While some volunteers get support from their local group or committee, others will be supported by a staff member such as the Regional Manager or a member of the team at Oxford.

If you are unsure who is your main contact or have questions about recruitment please contact volunteering@rabi.org.uk.

Age of volunteers

All RABI volunteers need to be over the age of 18 years old to volunteer with us, however we do allow children to accompany volunteering adults at some events. Any child attending an event with a volunteer would do so at the risk of the volunteering parent or guardian. Please note that some volunteering activities may be inappropriate for children. If you would like advice on whether it is possible to bring a child with you when volunteering please contact volunteering@rabi.org.uk.

Criminal records

Having a criminal record will not necessarily be a barrier to volunteering with RABI. This will depend on the nature of the role and the circumstances and background of the offence(s). For a small number of roles, we may need to do a DBS check (criminal records check).



When you join us

As an RABI volunteer you will receive:

- A filmed orientation session with other new volunteers to find out more about RABI and the work we do.
- Access to online videos and training (such as first aid or food hygiene) relevant to your role.
- A branded name badge, lanyard and appropriate clothing (e.g. polo shirt) for your role.
- Our regular volunteer newsletter with the latest news and opportunities.

We encourage all volunteers to register for a basic Mental Health Training course, delivered by professionals in partnership with RABI. They are available online or face-to-face and help build a good understanding of mental health issues and the ability to recognise when support may be required.

Please contact volunteering@rabi.org.uk to book a place.



Volunteer promise

We promise to:

- Provide a variety of meaningful and rewarding volunteering opportunities.
- Connect you with a named RABI staff member who will support you in your role.
- Treat you with respect, consideration and appreciation.
- Provide clear guidance and information on your volunteering role so that you understand your responsibilities.
- Support you with regular meetings (in person or virtually) and/or a detailed briefing, depending on your role.
- Offer you fair, constructive, and timely feedback on your volunteering.
- Keep you updated on the work of RABI and the farming communities we support.

If you ever have questions or feedback for us, please don't hesitate to contact us at: volunteering@rabi.org.uk

As a volunteer you are a representative for RABI, so we ask that you comply with the following standards of behaviour during your time with us:

- Always treat staff, farming families, supporters, and fellow volunteers with kindness, respect and appreciation.
- Perform your role to the best of your ability in a safe, efficient and competent manner.
- Follow RABI's policies, procedures and branding and any instructions given to you by RABI staff.
- Always act in a professional and responsible way when representing RABI and do not speak externally on the charity's behalf without permission.
- Be inclusive and act in a way that does not exclude or discriminate against anyone.
- Give RABI staff or the event lead as much notice as possible if you are unable to fulfil your volunteering commitment.
- Follow any safety and safeguarding procedures and report any concerns to RABI staff.
- Speak to RABI staff if you don't understand any aspect of your volunteer responsibilities or have any concerns during your time volunteering with us.

Volunteering with RABI

Communications

Alongside our regular newsletter you can find out information about what is happening across RABI via our website and on our social channels:



We also have Regional Facebook pages – your local Regional Manager can provide details.

Volunteer Voice

The Volunteer Voice is a group of volunteers and staff who come together to discuss initiatives to support improvements to RABI volunteering. It is a great opportunity for volunteers to shape the RABI volunteering programme.

The group meets informally once a month online and if you would like to get involved do get in touch at volunteering@rabi.org.uk.

Volunteer awards and recognition

Each year we acknowledge the amazing achievements of our volunteers and the contributions of individuals who may have gone the extra mile in raising awareness and support for RABI. This includes special awards nominated by fellow volunteers.

Expenses

The volunteering relationship is based on trust and respect and does not involve any contract of employment or other obligations associated with employment.

No payment, other than the reimbursement of agreed expenses, is made by the organisation to people who give their time as volunteers.

We want to ensure that as many people as possible can volunteer and that no one is disadvantaged financially by volunteering. Volunteers can request reimbursement of reasonable out of pocket expenses such as travel costs and, where appropriate, meals or refreshments.

If you would like more information on how to claim your expenses, please contact volunteering@rabi.org.uk.

Insurance

We have insurance in place to cover our volunteers and any liabilities they may incur in their voluntary roles. Our latest public liability insurance document can be found on our website.

Using a vehicle for volunteering

We do not provide motor insurance for our volunteers. Volunteers should check with their insurer before using their vehicle for volunteering to ensure they have the appropriate cover.

Data Protection

We take great care to safeguard volunteers' information as part of our data protection responsibilities.

We expect volunteers to protect any personal or confidential information that they may come into contact with, in accordance with RABI's policies and procedures. It is important that personal and sensitive information required to carry out your role is not shared with unauthorised persons and is handled correctly, in line with the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation). Please remember to delete or securely destroy any notes you make or saved files containing personal information you no longer need.

Problem solving

We take volunteers' concerns seriously. If volunteers are faced with problems or have any concerns while volunteering with us, in the first instance they should talk to their Regional Manager or another member of the team by emailing volunteering@rabi.org.uk.

If you have a concerns regarding malpractice, illegal acts or omissions from RABI please report your concerns to a member of RABI staff or if that is not possible, with the Charity Commission whistleblowing@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk.

This process is known as whistleblowing and full details of the process can be found in our Whistleblowing Policy on our website.

Moving on

We want volunteering with us to feel rewarding and right for you. If your role isn't what you expected, or no longer suits you, please let your volunteer contact/Regional Manager know. We'll do everything possible to find another opportunity for you or, if it's really goodbye, we'll give you the opportunity to provide feedback on your time with us so that improvements can be made to the volunteer experience.

We understand that sometimes volunteering needs to take a pause – all that we ask is that you let your volunteer contact/Regional Manager know and indicate how you'd like to stay in touch in the meantime.



Keeping you safe

Our commitment to safeguarding

RABI believes everyone has the right to live free from abuse or neglect regardless of age, ability or disability, sex, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital or gender status.

Your safety and the safety of everyone we support is our top priority. By volunteering with us, you are agreeing to support a safe environment for everyone. RABI takes its duty of care seriously and recognises that volunteers play an active part in protecting vulnerable individuals from harm, actively promoting their welfare in all environments.

We ask you to be vigilant when you volunteer with us and report any concerns about something you have experienced or witnessed directly to a member of RABI staff.

Alternatively, you can also reach out to us confidentially and securely at safeguarding@rabi.org.uk.

Health and safety

We are committed to ensuring volunteers' wellbeing and safety whilst they are volunteering with us and in turn, we expect volunteers to contribute to maintaining a safe working environment (for example completing risk assessments to support a local event). Volunteers can contact their volunteer or staff contact if they have any questions or concerns about health and safety.

All accidents, first aid instances and near misses need to be recorded by completing our accident form and then sent to volunteering@rabi.org.uk.

Emergency contact details

To keep you safe we also ask for and hold details on emergency contacts in the event of an emergency or accident whilst volunteering.

This information will be requested when you start volunteering for us, and you should advise us of any changes. This information is held in confidence and will only be used when needed.



“Socialise, meet new people within your community and know that you’re helping to support farming people.”



Useful contacts

Volunteering

For all general enquiries about your volunteering role, events and county committees (Monday-Friday 8am to 4pm)

- ☎ 01865 724931 option 3
- ✉ volunteering@rabi.org.uk
- 📍 Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution, Shaw House, 27 West Way, Botley, Oxfordshire, OX2 0QH

You will also be given your local Regional Manager's contact details.

Finance

Enquiries about committee bank accounts and making donations

- ☎ 01865 724931 option 4 (Monday – Friday 9am to 5pm)
- ✉ branches@rabi.org.uk

Safeguarding

To raise and report safeguarding concerns

- ✉ safeguarding@rabi.org.uk

General Enquiries

General enquiries regarding RABI

- ☎ 01865 724931 option 5 (Monday – Friday 9am to 5pm)
- ✉ info@rabi.org.uk

Helpline

Our free, 24/7 confidential helpline for farming people to access our support services:

- ☎ 0800 188 4444
- ✉ help@rabi.org.uk





RABI

Shaw House
27 West Way
Oxford
OX2 0QH

01865 724 931

info@rabi.org.uk
rabi.org.uk

RABI (Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution) is a charity registered
in England and Wales (208858)

Company Number RCO00441



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