



Volunteer Policy

Mission Statement

The Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) is the Catholic Church's outreach to international seafarers. Over one million seafarers visit British ports every year, bringing us 95% of the goods we use and consume. However, many are lonely, depressed and even exploited as they spend up to 12 months away from home in challenging and often dangerous conditions.

We deploy port chaplains and ship visitors to welcome seafarers to our shores and provide them with pastoral and practical assistance - regardless of creed or nationality.

The Role of the Volunteer

There are several roles for volunteers within AOS. We often need help with administration and mailings in our London office. We also look for volunteers who would like to represent AOS at a parish level by becoming a parish contact. Lastly volunteers who live near a port may be able to help by becoming a ship visitor, assisting in a Seafarers Centre or driving seafarers around the port and local area.

As a volunteer, your gift of time, skills and experience will extend AOS's capacity to serve seafarers. It is AOS's aim that volunteers gain satisfaction from this partnership and that the relationship is one of mutual benefit.

1. Recruitment

Volunteers from all walks of life are welcome to come and join the AOS team.

A prospective volunteer will be asked to fill in an application form and provide a reference. They will then have the opportunity to meet with a full time member of staff to see what area of our work they would be most interested in helping with.

2. Equal Opportunities and Diversity

AOS is firmly committed to diversity in all of its work. We believe that we have much to learn and profit from diverse cultures and perspectives, and that diversity will make our organisation more effective in meeting the needs of seafarers.

We are committed to developing and maintaining an organisation in which differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are fostered and valued, and where those with diverse backgrounds and experiences are able to participate and contribute. However Volunteers will be expected to share an understanding and empathy for the Catholic ethos of the AOS.

3. Induction and Training

Volunteers are made to feel welcome and will be provided with a volunteer manual, job-specific guidelines and resources. Training is geared towards specific roles. Progress is monitored and when necessary additional training will be given to ensure volunteers have the skills and information they need to enjoy and carry out their tasks. Ship Visiting volunteers will be given a trial period of three months to ensure that they feel comfortable in the role. They will also be required to attend a two day Merchant Navy Welfare, Ship Visiting training course.

4. Support and Supervision

There is always a member of staff available to offer support and advice and regular supervision sessions are available to monitor progress.

5. Expenses

It is AOS's policy to reimburse reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred whilst undertaking voluntary tasks, subject to the production of receipts. These may include:

- A. Travelling expenses
- B. Miscellaneous expenses e.g. phone calls, postage, refreshments

6. Insurance

All volunteers will be covered by AOS's public liability insurance and personal accident insurance.

7. Health and Safety

All Volunteers will be provided with the correct safety equipment to carry out their role. Ship visiting volunteers will be advised about suitable clothing (for example free flowing clothing can become entangled in ship's equipment) and will be given a hard hat and a reflective jacket, which must be worn at all times within the port area, protective toe capped boots must also be worn.

AOS has a full Health and Safety Policy, which is available for volunteers to read if they wish.

8. Other

Where deemed necessary, the role and placement of the volunteer may be terminated by the Director at one weeks notice, or immediately, where behaviour equivalent to gross misconduct has occurred. In all cases the volunteer will be entitled to an explanation of the decision and action taken.

9. Volunteer Responsibilities

Volunteers have the responsibility to:

- a. Agree to the AOS's policy on volunteering
- b. Respect confidentiality
- c. Be reliable, honest and mindful of AOS's good name
- d. Adhere to health and safety regulations
- e. Not commit themselves to an unmanageable workload and to only work to the specified job description
- f. Report back and keep in contact with AOS staff
- g. Treat everyone they meet when representing AOS with courtesy and respect.
- h. To do everything they can to prevent injury to themselves, other volunteers and those who may be affected by their actions or omissions while volunteering.

You are free to stop volunteering at any time.