



# Diverse UK Festival Volunteering Policy

## Sensory Calm Spaces – 2026 Season

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Diverse UK. Volunteering with us is a highly rewarding way to support accessibility at large events, and we are committed to making volunteering with us inclusive, supportive, and positive.

This policy outlines how our festival volunteering works, what we ask of you, and what you can expect from us.

## About Diverse UK

Diverse UK is an independent charity run *for and by* people who identify as Autistic and/or Neurodivergent. We work across Bristol, Bath, Somerset, and South Gloucestershire to provide activities and meaningful social connection for our members.

At festivals and events, we provide Sensory Calm Spaces (SCS): low-stimulus, supportive environments where neurodivergent and disabled attendees can regulate, rest, and feel safe without having to leave the event.

## About Sensory Calm Spaces

Sensory Calm Spaces are quiet, low-stimulation areas designed to support people who may feel overwhelmed in busy festival environments.

Our spaces typically include:

- Blacked-out tents with sound-muffling curtains
- Beanbags, chairs, weighted blankets
- Sensory-friendly lighting and fans
- Ear defenders and fidget toys

- Fully staffed and professionally trained Calm Space staff and volunteers

## **Volunteering Roles & Expectations**

As a Sensory Calm Space volunteer, you may be asked to:

- Welcome attendees and help them feel comfortable
- Keep the space calm, clean, and safe
- Support people who are distressed or overwhelmed
- Manage entry, queues, or capacity where needed
- Record attendance accurately for reporting
- Support set-up or pack-down if agreed
- Work alongside managers, welfare teams, and festival staff

You will always be briefed and supported on site. You are not expected to do anything you are uncomfortable with or haven't been trained for.

If you have shared Access Needs, we will always take these into account when working with you.

## **Shifts & Time Commitment**

- Camping festivals usually involve completing three 6–8-hour shifts across the event
- One-day or non-camping events usually involve one eight-hour shift
- Breaks are encouraged and rotas aim to accommodate access needs
- Rotas are normally shared at least one week before the event

Shift lengths and timings may change slightly depending on festival operations.

## **Camping, Travel & Expenses**

Many festivals require volunteers to camp on site for several days. You should be prepared for:

- Limited facilities
- Unpredictable weather
- Noise and crowds

You are expected to be self-sufficient with food (off shift), drink, clothing, and camping equipment.

Unfortunately, **we cannot reimburse travel, accommodation, or personal expenses.** If an event is cancelled or we are no longer providing a Sensory Calm Space, your bond will be refunded, but we cannot cover costs you may have already incurred.

## Event Status: Confirmed vs Provisional

Each year, some festivals are confirmed early, while others remain provisional until contracts are finalised.

- You may apply for both confirmed and provisional events
- Applying for a provisional event does not guarantee a place
- We will always communicate clearly when an event is confirmed

## The Refundable Security Bond

To ensure reliability and cover operational risk, we operate a Refundable Protective Bond system. This is standard practice within the events industry.

### Bond amounts:

- Camping / multi-day festivals: **£175**
- Day or non-camping events: **£50**
- Returning volunteers: **£10**

### Important:

- Bonds are requested at an early stage, even if an event hasn't been fully confirmed yet.
- Please get in touch with Gigi if financial barriers mean you need support with the Bond System.

### Refunds:

- Bonds are fully refundable once you have successfully completed all your agreed shifts, submitted post-event feedback, and that manager feedback contains no concerns about attendance or safeguarding
- Refunds are processed after your final event of the season, usually by 1 September, unless you are volunteering later

## Financial Accessibility

We never want money to be a barrier to volunteering.

If paying the bond would cause you financial difficulty, please contact us as early as possible.

We may be able to:

- Discuss alternative arrangements
- Allow payment to be split
- Consider waiving or reducing the bond on a case-by-case basis

## **Cancellations & Emergencies**

If you can no longer volunteer, you must inform us as soon as possible by emailing [gigi@diverseuk.org](mailto:gigi@diverseuk.org) and/or WhatsApp.

### **Cancellation timelines:**

- More than 14 days before the event: Bond unaffected
- Within 14 days: Bond may be retained unless there is a valid emergency

### **Acceptable emergency reasons (evidence may be requested where appropriate):**

- Personal illness or injury
- Medical emergency involving an immediate family
- Bereavement (immediate family)
- Jury duty or a court summons received after the deadline
- Military deployment
- Exam re-sits scheduled during or immediately around the event

We recognise that unexpected and sometimes difficult situations arise. Your health and wellbeing will always be prioritised, and we aim to make this process as straightforward and supportive as possible.

In most cases, we will not require formal evidence and will take your communication at face value. However, we reserve the right to request supporting information where there are inconsistencies or where further clarification is reasonably needed.

## **No-Shows & Shift Non-Completion**

- If you do not attend an event or shift without notice, your bond will be retained
- If you register on site but do not complete your allocated shifts, your bond will be retained
- Repeated no-shows will prevent future volunteering with Diverse UK

This is necessary to protect our work, our relationships with festivals, and the people who rely on our services.

## Code of Conduct

All volunteers are expected to:

- Treat everyone with dignity, respect, and kindness
- Uphold Diverse UK's values of inclusion, accessibility, and safety
- Avoid discriminatory, unsafe, or disruptive behaviour

Failure to meet these expectations may result in removal from a role.

## Transfers & Substitutions

Volunteering places cannot be transferred to another person. If you can no longer attend, please cancel so we can offer the place to someone on our waiting list.

## Event Cancellations by Diverse UK

In rare circumstances, we may need to cancel volunteering placements due to:

- Festival cancellations
- Changes to contracts or partnerships
- Operational or capacity issues

If this happens, your bond will be refunded in full. We cannot accept liability for personal costs you may have incurred.

## Support & Contact

If you have questions, concerns, or need support at any stage, please contact:

**Gigi – Events Volunteering Manager**

Email: [gigi@diverseuk.org](mailto:gigi@diverseuk.org)

WhatsApp: 07465 661188

We are always happy to help and want your experience volunteering with us to be wonderful!

**Thank you for supporting Diverse UK and helping us make festivals more accessible for everyone.**