



Photography guidelines | Version 1.0
August 2022

WELCOME

WHEREVER POSSIBLE, THIS GUIDE SHOULD ALWAYS BE FOLLOWED TO ENSURE OUR PHOTOGRAPHY ASSETS REMAIN ON BRAND AND OF CONSISTENT QUALITY NEEDED ACROSS THE CHARITIES VARIOUS CHANNELS.



CONTENTS

The photography we use celebrates the reward of volunteering, it depicts volunteers displaying their talent – from playing guitar to having a chat with someone over a cup of tea.

They are portraits of our volunteers or scenes showing the volunteer at work. This should allow us to communicate our message effectively no matter who our audience may be.

As a forward looking, modern volunteering charity, images should be positive, energetic, bright and natural. We should reflect in all images the diversity of our organisation, for example ages and ethnic backgrounds.

Most images will need to incorporate headlines and copy when used in different materials, so there should always be clean areas or out of focus areas for those elements to sit and remain legible.

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CORE REQUIREMENT

In all our photography, our volunteers are the main focus of the image, but the main message is conveying the work they do supporting people. Our preferred style would use natural light, as that always looks best, but hard lighting such as flash etc. maybe the only solution. With realistic natural poses of the volunteer working, images should be both portrait and landscape.

As the charity changes and evolves, so does our imagery and we need a good mix of ethnicity, age and gender within our imagery. Particular focus should be considered when organising photo shoots to include ethnic diversity, younger volunteers and younger participants (Younger defined as 18 – 35).



WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE | NATURAL SETTINGS

Wherever possible, the subject(s) should be set in natural surroundings relating to the service or activity they are representing. Images or subjects shouldn't be posed or staged and simply look like real, authentic people have been captured in the environment they're in.

Always try to ensure that the backgrounds are tidy and uncluttered so the subject stands out. Using depth of field (aperture) so the background is blurred out will help with this and also highlight the subject within the image.



Although the background is still in focus slightly, it is enough of a contrast from the main subject, not distracting from the main messaging of the image.



Plain walls are always a preference but in this case, slightly blurring the background, allows the subject to be the main focus of the image.



Uncluttered or plain colour backgrounds behind the subject. Choosing areas with backgrounds like this will highlight the subject. If inside a house or a building, look for plain walls, areas like kitchens normally have lots of items like utensils and cookbooks in the background and should be avoided.



The first image, although showing the volunteer interacting with the client, has a lot going on within the image so it's hard to focus. The second and third image put the focus more on them and blurs the background, using plain backgrounds and puts them centrally in the frame.

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE | REAL PEOPLE

Real volunteers, real people not models... wherever possible, we much prefer that our volunteers and clients shown, are real people rather than models. We do also appreciate however, this may not always be possible, so occasionally models may be required.

Volunteers should all be wearing branded clothing, most likely polo shirts. When organising photo shoots it is important to make sure ahead of time this is available to be worn. Some replacements may be available to be sent to the location or with the photographer.



All volunteers should be wearing branded clothing, this will vary across the organisation due to their role. But if possible, the logo should be visible - even if just in part - in the shot.



Most volunteers will wear red polo shirts. Volunteers and staff from Retail Shops & Cafés will wear white.



Our NHS Volunteer Responders wear their own clothes but get provided with PPE, Hi-Vis vests and Ponchos. Again where these are worn, the logo should be prominent.

WHAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED

Over exposed images, over engineered images or colour treatments aren't required. Some treatment maybe required afterwards depending on the campaign, but the images themselves should be clean, well balanced and use natural lighting where possible. The volunteer should never have their back to us, obscuring the client, the image should look open, energetic and not look stressed or unhappy in the situation.



Over exposed or burnt out imagery.



Busy or visually complex imagery may make text illegible or may distract the viewer from the desired message.



Too generic and obvious that it is stock imagery. If using stock imagery, it needs to feel as close to our style as possible.

WHAT WE DO

Our images need to show volunteers supporting a diverse range of beneficiaries and showing the various services we provide. The photo shoot will relate to a specific service normally but we may be able to cover more than one service, e.g. a volunteer that visits someone in their house, if they are shown in their car on way or outside the house, that could also cover community & patient transport. If they also we're holding a stack of books, this could cover home library service. This should be pre-planned but is always worth considering.



From the same photo shoot (above) we could potentially utilise the images for 'Home from Hospital', 'Supporting Your Recovery', 'Community Transport' and 'Patient Transport'.

IMAGE USE

A lot of our imagery, whether in print or digital, will need to incorporate headlines and copy when used across different media. With this in mind, there should always be clean areas or out of focus areas for those elements to sit and remain legible.

Wide shots with clear space to either side of person in frame to allow for placement of text/banners etc. An approximate guide for this could be 2/3 space to the left or right of a subject, whilst allowing some space above and below. Images can be flipped but consideration must be taken if clothing worn or signage in background has text or elements that would make it obvious it has been flipped - in this circumstance, recomposing the image may work better and would be quicker at the time of the photo shoot.



Incorporating clean space into the image to allow for copy in print or digital.



For social media or web banners, it allows us to have messaging relevant to the image or campaign.



If the background is simple we can manipulate after but it is easier to allow for that space at the outset.

RETAIL ENVIRONMENTS

When shooting in a retail environment of either a shop or a café, they need to feel light, bright and inviting. Capturing happy and engaging staff or volunteers in the work environment or NHS staff helps show the differences across the charity and the work that we do. Show are some examples of locations and the possible shots that can be achieved, using perspective and wide angles to make the spaces feel bigger.



STOCK IMAGES

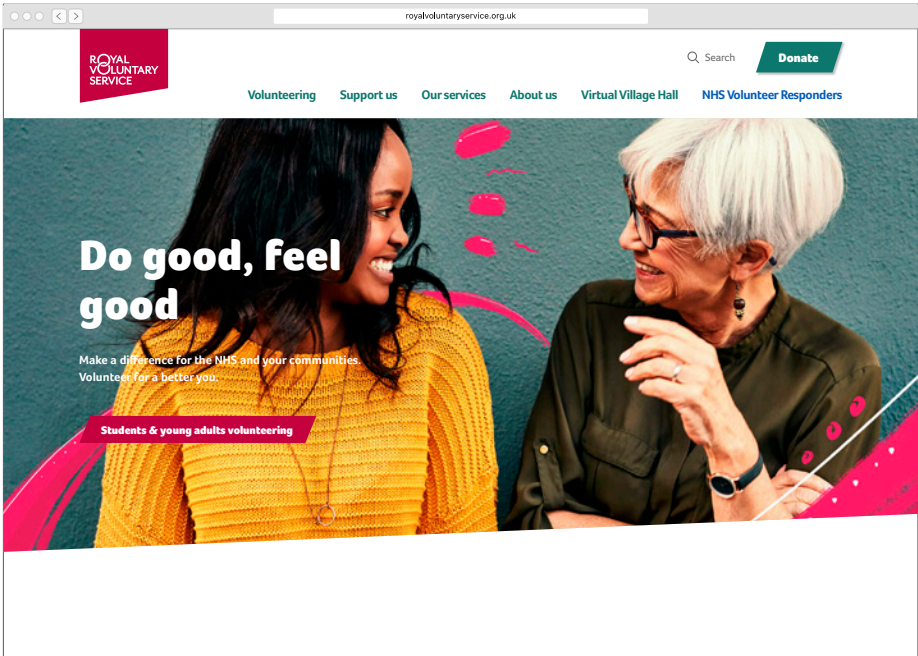
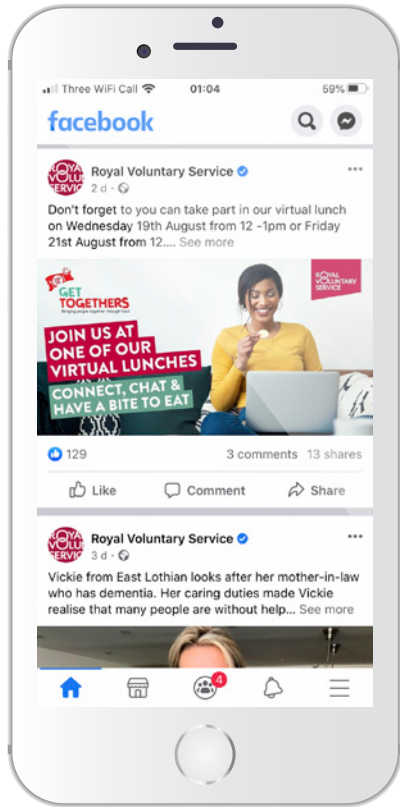
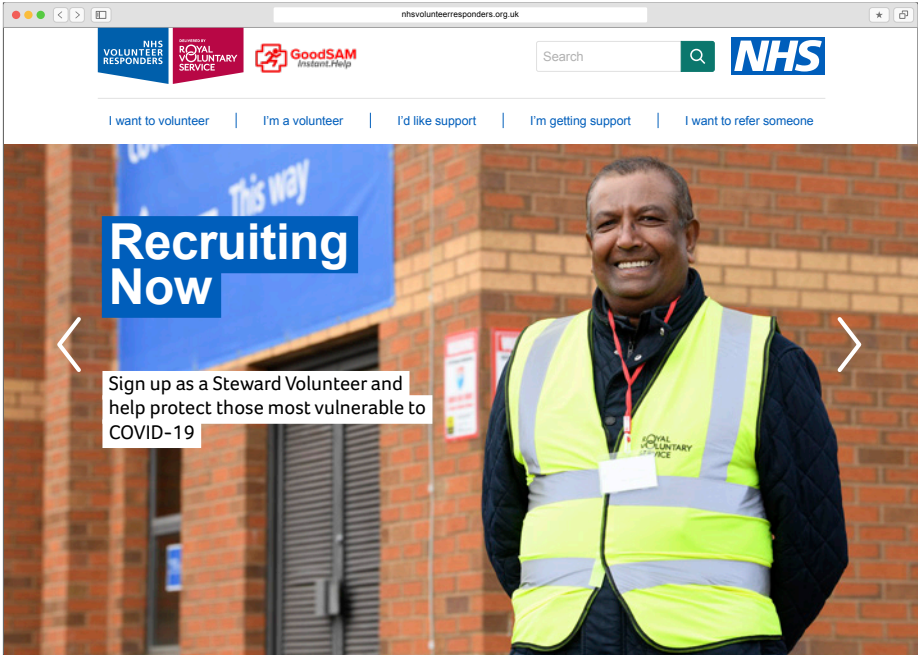
When using stock photography, take into consideration our core photography guidelines - images should be positive, bright and natural, captured moments.

Avoid staged, ‘model’ images and images that feel unnatural whether in terms of setting or models used. If possible try to show a younger volunteer where possible. When selecting images for use as a full bleed shot that will need to incorporate headlines and copy ensure there are clean areas for legibility.



EXAMPLES IN USE

Web banners, to 6 sheets, A4 posters to social assets. Our imagery needs to work across all mediums for a cohesive look and feel that represents the organisation.



FINAL CHECKLIST

We need permission from everyone appearing in shots including staff, volunteers and customers (See photography permission form). For areas in shops or cafés etc. that have high footfall of people, a longer exposure to blur faces can negate the need for permission forms. It is important the person is described on the permission from for later identification, or an alternative is to photograph the person with their form to identify them at a later date.

If name badges or ID badges are worn, these are flipped so personal details not visible.

All images from the shoot will be for exclusive use by Royal Voluntary Service for use in future marketing or other publications, and will therefore mean that intellectual property rights will be owned by Royal Voluntary Service. No further payment will be required for usage for use relating to a Royal Voluntary Service publication or its partners.



Photographing the subject with their form will help identify at a later date.



ID badge flipped over to avoid personal details being shown.



Clear space for messaging.

THANK YOU

For guidance, support and approval when using
our brand, please email

marketing@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk