

Volunteer Handbook

British Red Cross

UK Office
44 Moorfields
London
EC2Y 9AL

Tel 0870 170 7000
Fax 020 7562 2000
www.redcross.org.uk

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“It’s an honour and a privilege to be part of one of the world’s greatest humanitarian organisations. If I can make a little bit of difference, I’d be proud.”

> Introduction

Hello and welcome to the British Red Cross.

This handbook has been produced to help ensure that your experience of volunteering for the British Red Cross will be an enjoyable and rewarding one.

The importance of volunteers to the British Red Cross cannot be overestimated. The valuable services that we deliver throughout the UK are only made possible through the efforts of the tens of thousands of volunteers who, like you, willingly give up their time to make a real difference to other people’s lives.

Working together, our volunteers and staff help thousands of people in need every year and raise the vital funds necessary to pay for our services.

Inside this handbook you will find important information about the history of the Red Cross and our Fundamental Principles. You will learn about the wide range of interesting activities that volunteers are involved in, and what you personally can expect as a volunteer. There’s also a glossary at the back of the book and useful information about policies that will affect you. But most

importantly, this handbook will help you to understand how the Red Cross works on both a local and global level.

The Red Cross emblem is recognised all over the globe as a sign of hope in crisis. By choosing to join the world’s biggest humanitarian organisation, you have joined a global network of caring individuals dedicated to helping people in need. Thank you for choosing the Red Cross and welcome aboard!

> Fundamental Principles

All the charitable work carried out by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is based on seven Fundamental Principles. Listed below is a shortened version of the Fundamental Principles. For further information, speak to your manager or attend an Ideals In Action course.

Humanity

If you could help, would you just walk on by?

We are the world's largest humanitarian organisation and, as part of the Movement, you should be prepared to help prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found.

Impartiality

Shouldn't everyone who needs help receive it?

As part of the Movement, you will be helping those who need it without discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, social class or political opinions.

Neutrality

How can we make sure that we are trusted by everyone?

In war zones, the Red Cross is entrusted with a unique role – visiting prisoners of war and crossing front lines to tend to the wounded, whichever side they

are on. To safeguard this vital work, it is essential that the organisation – and its staff and volunteers – maintain a neutral stance and don't engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence

What would happen if we were no longer autonomous?

We are not a government agency or controlled by any government or political body – we always maintain our autonomy so that volunteers can act in accordance with the Principles of the Movement.

Voluntary Service

What is our motivation for helping people?

You are now part of a voluntary relief movement, committed to helping people in need and not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity

Is anyone excluded from joining the Red Cross?

No, the Society is open to all who have accepted the Fundamental Principles and we all need to ensure that everyone is welcomed.

Universality

Is the Red Cross ready to help everywhere?

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all Societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is world-wide.

These principles can only work if they are understood and respected in practice.

“To me, the Red Cross is one big team, all pulling together to make this the largest humanitarian organisation in the world. Although involved with the home from hospital service, I still feel part of this team – and every single member worldwide should feel proud of the fact that they're also a part, and remember the phrase: 'It's my Red Cross!'”

> Who we are

The British Red Cross is part of the biggest humanitarian network in the world, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which has over 97 million volunteers spread across more than 180 countries. Wherever there is disaster or conflict, you'll usually find the Red Cross right at the heart of things, helping people.

To reach out to as many people as possible, there is a National Society just like the British Red Cross in more than 180 countries. To bring them all together, the Movement has two lead agencies: the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (International Federation) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Who leads where depends on the disaster. The ICRC co-ordinates all our efforts where there's a conflict, while the International Federation is the lead agency in natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes.

"The Red Cross is a pleasure to volunteer for and offers a fantastic humanitarian service. I am always happy to help whenever I can."

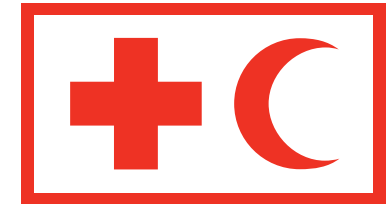
> The Red Cross and Red Crescent emblems

The Red Cross and Red Crescent emblems are the linchpins of our humanitarian activity in peacetime or in times of conflict. They have two purposes:

- > To protect the victims of armed conflict and those who assist them
- > To indicate that a person or an object is linked to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

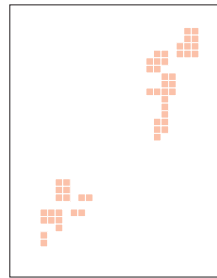
In both cases, they are symbols of neutral and impartial humanitarian assistance. They have no religious significance and they are protected by international and national law.

The protective value of the emblems has to be built up in peacetime, because it may well be too late once hostilities have begun. We can all play a role in protecting the use of the emblems by reporting their misuse. For more detail, please refer to the 1991 Emblem regulations.



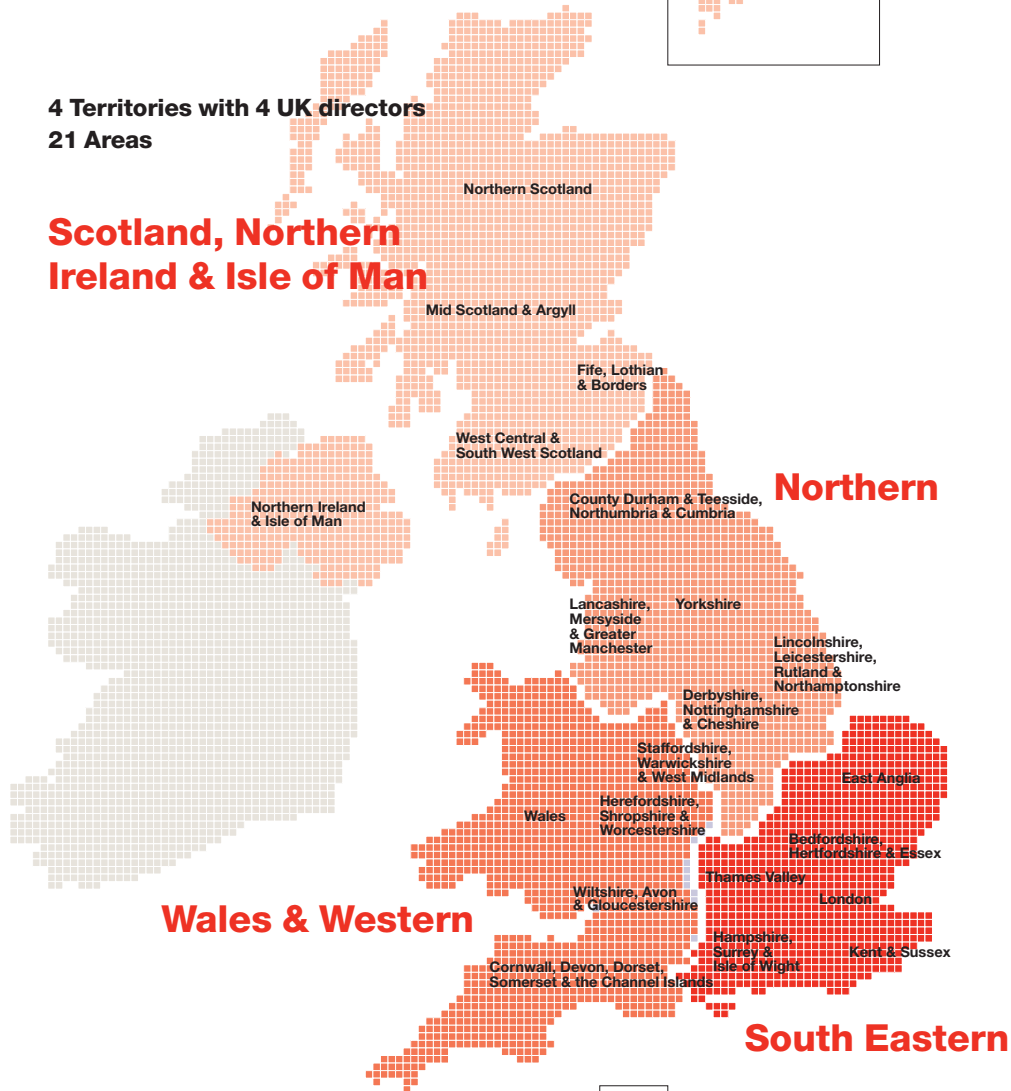
Part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

> Our structure



4 Territories with 4 UK directors
21 Areas

**Scotland, Northern
Ireland & Isle of Man**



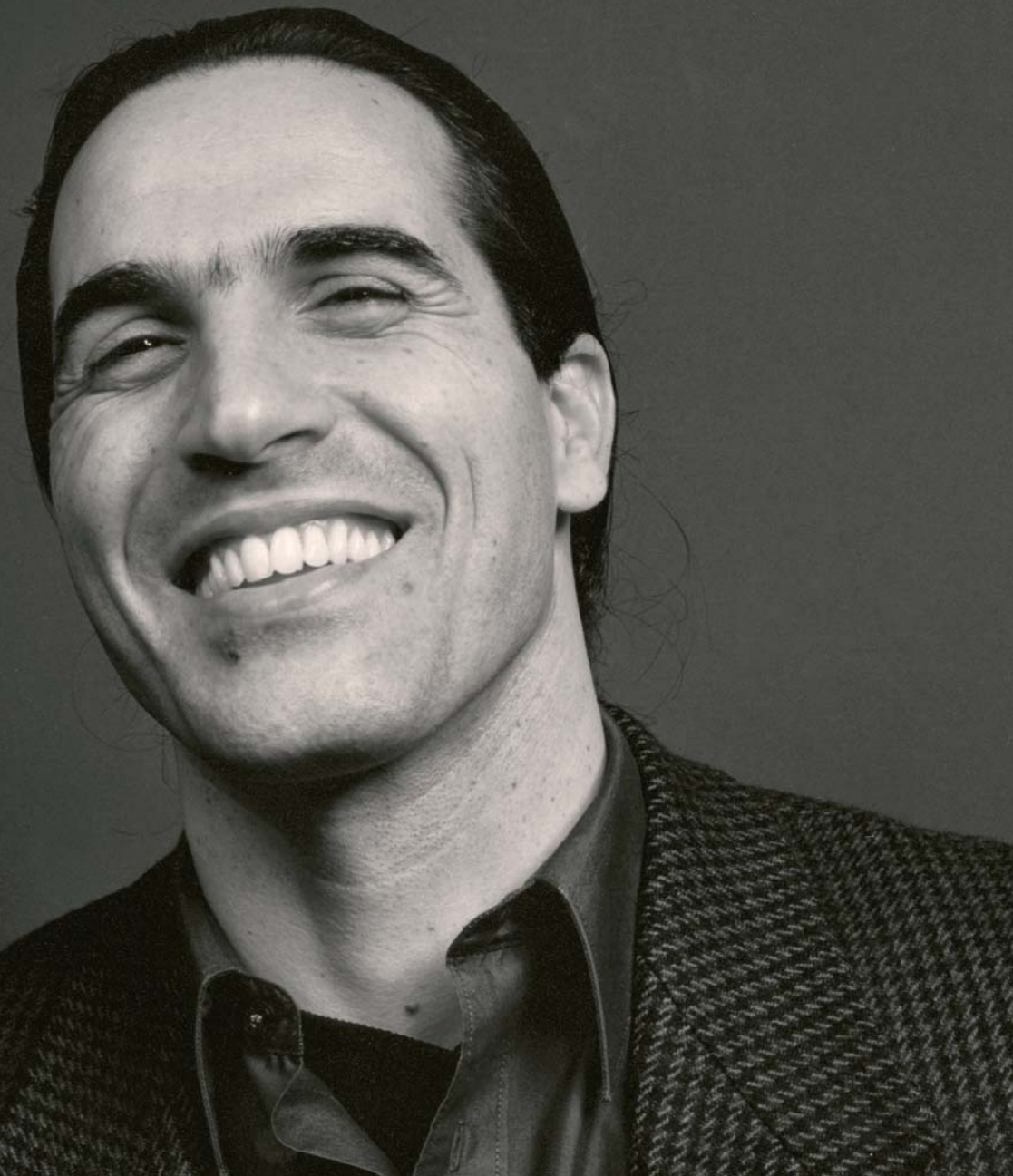
> What we do

The British Red Cross is a massive organisation providing a diverse range of services throughout the UK. Every day, thousands of people across the UK benefit from the hard work and co-ordinated efforts of willing volunteers who, like you, give their time to help others.

Each volunteer is like a vital cog in the machine, ensuring that the whole organisation runs smoothly. Every activity, from first aid to fundraising to home from hospital, is equally valuable. And for every front-line volunteer providing help, there is another volunteer co-ordinating and supporting services behind the scenes, making sure the Red Cross machine keeps operating.

Whichever activity you have chosen to get involved in, remember that we'll ensure you have the necessary skills to get the job done. And you needn't restrict yourself to just one activity – many of our volunteers find that there are a number of ways in which they can get involved.

“While everyone knows about the international Red Cross, I felt the good work the Red Cross does in Britain had become rather neglected. So I decided it was time to show my support for our local volunteers.”



“This sort of work is very demanding, and the hours can certainly be unsociable, but I wouldn’t change it for the world.”

> What we do

Emergency response

The Red Cross responds to hundreds of emergencies every year and has a special role to play in supporting the emergency services. The organisation is included in local authority emergency plans for every county in the UK.

Our fully trained volunteers are always on hand to give practical help and emotional support to those in need. They provide vital assistance following major incidents, floods, transport accidents and fires. Whatever the emergency, from staffing a rest centre following a mass evacuation to responding to a single injured person, our volunteers are ready to respond.

And because emergency response is the core service of the Red Cross, we encourage volunteers from all services to get emergency skills training in addition to their main volunteering activity. Whether it’s logging information, helping with supplies, providing transport assistance or offering friendly advice, every volunteer can make a real difference during an emergency situation. The Red Cross’ emergency response services include:

- > major incident response
- > emergency support to statutory services
- > fire victim support service
- > emergency response teams.

Emergency response in action

When a massive fire tore through a pub and block of flats in Glasgow, killing one person and injuring six others, a team of four volunteers quickly arrived to help set up a rest centre and offer first aid, practical help and emotional support to the shocked residents, many of whom were still in nightwear. They also provided a transport and escort service for those with relatives nearby, and even made up special vouchers, redeemable at Red Cross shops, to provide clothes and necessities for those who had lost everything.



“ You never know when first aid skills might be required – but thanks to my training, I am always prepared.”

> What we do

First aid

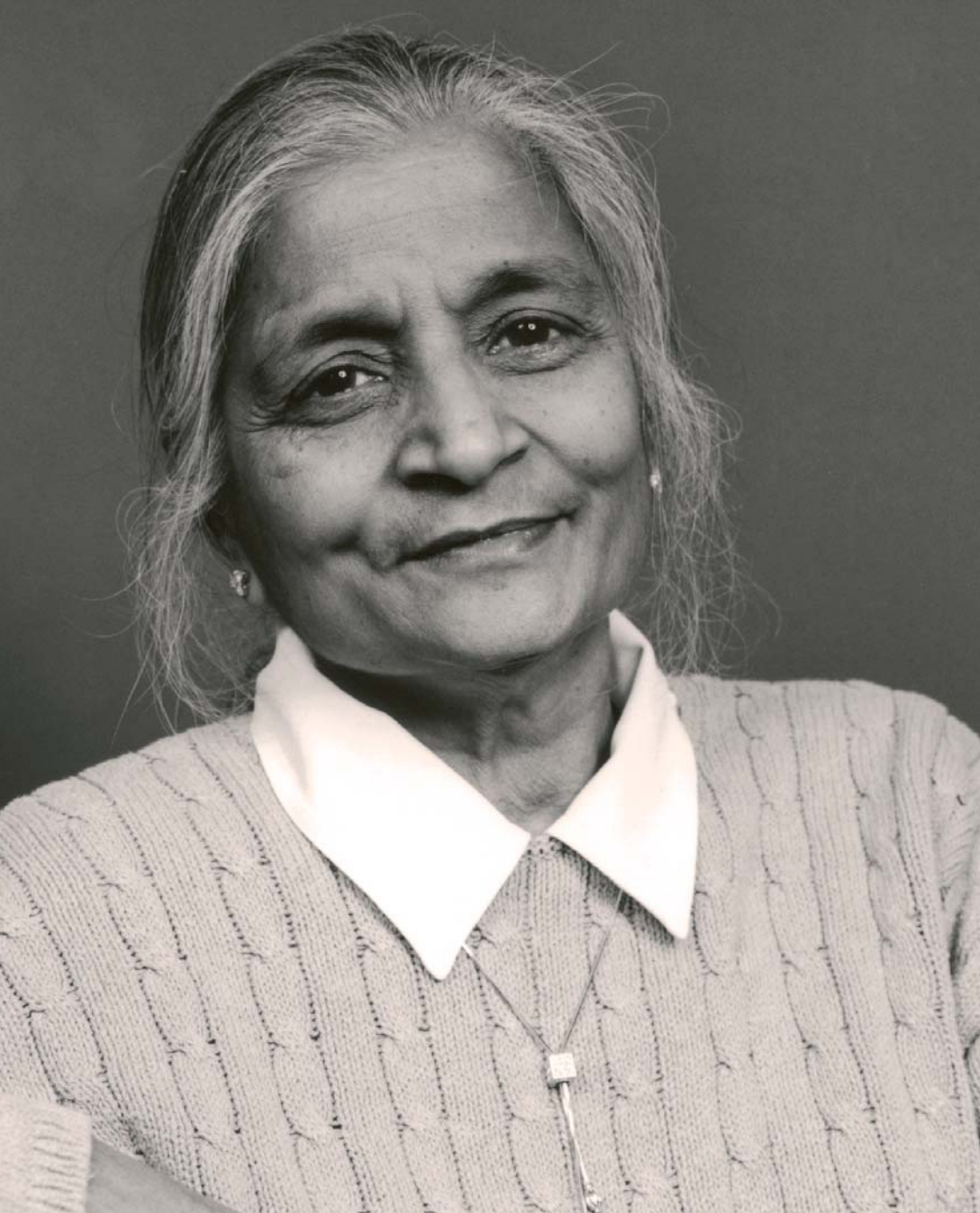
The Red Cross trains more than 150,000 first aiders every year, preparing them to cope with emergencies at work, in the home or in the event of a major incident. We also provide first aid teams for public events both large and small.

As a first aid volunteer, you'll be equipped with the skills to offer practical – even life-saving – help wherever it is needed. The Red Cross' first aid services provided by volunteers include:

- > public events cover
- > promoting first aid among vulnerable and excluded groups
- > first aid training for children and young people.

Putting training into practice

When Stuart happened upon the scene of a motorcycle accident and found a seriously injured man with one leg severed by the impact, his first aid training ensured he could act immediately. He laid the man down, raised his leg and put pressure on the artery. Without Stuart's rapid intervention the accident victim, a married father of two, would have died.



“I love volunteering for the Red Cross. The organisation makes me feel valued and useful, and I know I am making a difference.”

> What we do

Independent living

The Red Cross helps vulnerable people in the UK regain their independence following a personal crisis, such as a spell in hospital. We offer a wide range of services geared towards enabling people to help themselves and get their lives back to normal as quickly and easily as possible.

Volunteers can be rewarded with the satisfaction of seeing first-hand just how important their contribution can be to another person's life, or help out behind the scenes with vital administrative support to make sure that the services run smoothly. The Red Cross' independent living services include:

- > Care in the home – providing short term care and support in the home
- > Medical equipment – providing short term loans of equipment, such as wheelchairs
- > Transport service – helping people making essential journeys
- > Therapeutic massage – relief from stress and pain through the beneficial effects of massage
- > Skin camouflage – using specialist cover creams for people with disfiguring skin conditions.

A helping hand

When Sarah was discharged from hospital after breaking her arm in a fall, the Red Cross home from hospital service was ready to help. Sarah found it hard to get dressed with her arm in plaster, so her volunteer brought over some large cardigans from the local Red Cross shop. Sarah had also broken her dentures and glasses when she fell, so the volunteer took her to the dentist and opticians. The Red Cross helped Sarah recover her confidence and maintain her independence.



“I feel very lucky to be working in such a special environment, giving encouragement and hope to a vulnerable and frequently misunderstood section of our modern community.”

> What we do

Refugee services and international tracing and message service

The Red Cross provides practical and emotional assistance to vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. Working through our international network, we also restore family links of those separated by war or disaster, on average reuniting two families every day.

Our trained volunteers provide welcome and much needed support to thousands of refugees every year, helping them to access local services and adjust to life in a new country. Additionally, tracing and message volunteers help to successfully trace an average of 500 people every year, including many people separated during the Second World War. The Red Cross' services include:

- > providing practical help to vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers
- > offering orientation services to help refugees adapt to life in the UK
- > offering peer befriending support to young refugees
- > restoring family links of those separated by war or disaster.

A warm welcome

Having fled Liberia after his family were killed, 16-year-old Peter (not his real name) arrived in Swansea feeling lonely and isolated. When approached by the

Red Cross, he instantly recognised the emblem as a means of help. With the Red Cross' assistance, Peter has now found a secure home, a job working as a trainee mechanic and a network of close friends.

Giving something back

The majority of a group of 13 asylum seekers who passed a Red Cross first aid training course were qualified doctors from Iraq, Iran and other countries. Now they are deployed on active volunteer duty in the Glasgow area.



“I do it to help people. That’s the whole point. There are so many people who need help and I get lots of satisfaction and pleasure out of it.”

> What we do

Raising money

Fundraising activity

Thousands of volunteer fundraisers across the country raise millions of pounds every year to help ensure that the Red Cross can carry out its vital work. Volunteers can get involved in all kinds of activities, including:

- > organising or helping to run an event
- > Red Cross Week – our biggest fundraising event of the year
- > promotional work (e.g. giving talks, writing letters, applying for funding)
- > helping with office administration.

Fashion fundraising volunteers

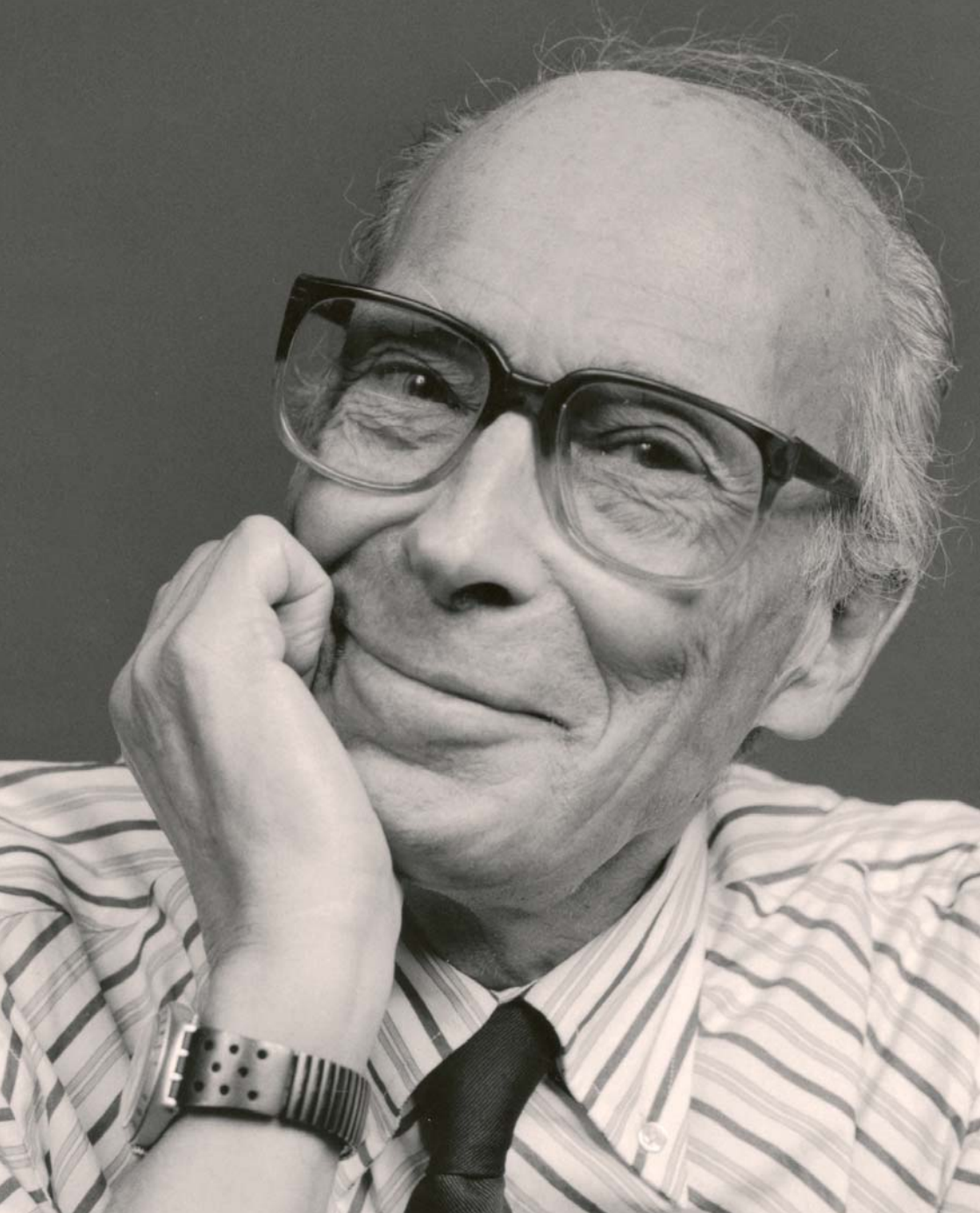
A first aid group organised a fashion show, with volunteers modelling clothes from their local Red Cross shop. The volunteers had great fun organising the event, their family, friends and colleagues had a good night out, and they raised £800.

A cut above the rest

When seven-year-old Milo heard about the war in Iraq, he was moved by the plight of Iraqi children. Wanting to help them in some way, he decided to raise money for the Red Cross by bravely offering to have his long hair cut in return for sponsorship. He asked friends, family and classmates to contribute, and raised more than £80 in total.

A marathon feat

Two months before Alan was due to run the Bath half-marathon to raise money for the Red Cross, he was involved in a car crash, shattering his leg. Despite his injury, Alan remained determined to take part and persuaded the organisers to allow him to be pushed around the course in a Red Cross wheelchair. Alan raised over £350 on his way round.



“Volunteering is my way of saying thanks. I feel very good about being part of the Red Cross.”

> What we do

Retail

Over 400 Red Cross shops across the UK also need volunteers to ensure they continue to help local people, raise funds and increase awareness of the organisation's work. Our committed shop volunteers provide a useful community resource and have raised an inspiring total net profit of £40m over the last ten years. By making a regular commitment to the shop, volunteers help with:

- > creating shop displays
- > welcoming and serving customers
- > stockroom maintenance
- > sizing and pricing donated goods.

Hitting the million mark

A Red Cross charity shop in Kirkwall, Inverness, which has been staffed by hard-working volunteers for over 18 years, hit the one million pound mark in November 2003. Volunteers are now busily working towards their second million!



“I was given responsibilities and have tried my best. I developed in the things I was doing, which was quite unusual for me. I did things I’m proud of and enjoyed.”

> What we do

Youth and schools

Almost ten per cent of British Red Cross volunteers are between the ages of 15-25 and the numbers are rising year on year. Young people are being encouraged to become involved with the Red Cross in a number of valuable ways. Activities include offering peer support to other young people, international volunteering opportunities, delivering humanitarian education in schools and youth groups, and training thousands of adults and young people in first aid skills every year.

Young people also play an important role throughout the broader range of Red Cross services, from working with refugees to retail. What’s more, young volunteers can also be motivated by the prospect of winning youth achievement awards, which recognise their efforts in developing new skills and benefiting their peers and the community.

Child protection policy

Every year, the Red Cross works happily and productively alongside hundreds of children, and cases of abuse are extremely rare. However, it’s best to be prepared.

What to do if you think a child is at risk

Volunteers should remain alert to the

potential signs of abuse. If you are concerned that a child is being abused, you should:

- > allow the child to speak freely and at his/her own pace
- > record all relevant factual details immediately
- > reassure the child that s/he was right to tell someone about the abuse
- > consider the welfare of other children – for example, siblings – who might be at risk.

What you should not do

- > Panic – this will silence the child
- > Ask for details of the abuse
- > Fail to report their concerns.

Taking action

Volunteers should report any concerns to their Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO) at the earliest opportunity – but in any event within the same working day. Contact details for DCPOs can be obtained at each Area office.

If the DCPO is unavailable, contact the head of schools and community education (020 7877 7238) or the director of HR and education services (020 7877 7233).



“The only thing I’ve really got to give is time and I wanted it to be used as best it could.”

> Other ways to help

As well as getting involved in our core activities, volunteers across the UK can help in many other ways. If you find that our mainstream services don’t suit your own circumstances or availability, you could join the other volunteers who contribute by other means. Some assist in new initiatives and pilot schemes, some work behind the scenes, and many help for fixed or short periods. However, all make an important contribution, as the following examples show:

- > Skilled interviewers remain on call and periodically offer volunteer assistance during big recruitment campaigns.
- > A university student developed case studies on young Red Cross volunteers to help promote volunteer activities and showcase services in Red Cross publications.
- > Skilled volunteers across the UK get involved in publishing Area newsletters.
- > Refugee volunteers representing local ethnic minority groups are visiting schools in Scotland to develop their understanding of refugee life.



“Throughout the world, thousands of people every year find they can depend on the Red Cross.”

> Around the world

Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies across the world are committed to supporting each other in times of crisis. Whenever there is a disaster or major incident, they come together to ensure the most appropriate aid is given to people in need. For example, following the Bam earthquake in Iran, which caused massive devastation, a large number of National Societies from across the globe teamed up.

During that disaster, the Iranian Red Crescent played a central role in the national response, but an international reaction was swiftly organised. A British Red Cross logistics team soon arrived at Bam airport to distribute relief items, and the Austrian and Swedish Red Cross Emergency Response Unit teams contributed water and sanitation supplies. The Japanese Red Cross supplied and installed a health clinic, and the Danish/Icelandic Red Cross team provided psychosocial support. Among those giving money were the Malaysian Red Crescent and British/Slovak Red Cross Societies.

The British Red Cross doesn't only respond to disasters – it also gives continual support to partner National Societies around the world. This includes

HIV/AIDS projects in Africa, as well as disaster preparedness and water and sanitation programmes in developing countries.

National Societies mainly help with international disasters or war by sending supplies or money. Generally, only the logistics team or delegates are actually sent abroad to assist in the response.

> Mutual expectations

The Red Cross' continuing commitment to its volunteers is confirmed in the Volunteer, Staff & Delegate Charter, the main points of which are shown below. You can obtain the full charter from your manager or see online on RedRoom (see glossary). We make every effort to ensure that you receive the appropriate support and feel valued, so that you can realise your full potential as a volunteer helping others.

What you can expect from us

- > To be valued and respected as a volunteer, whoever you are and whatever your background.
- > A clearly outlined explanation regarding your activities, as well as a role description and information on standards relating to the task.
- > A full Red Cross induction, including information on all aspects of the organisation (local, Area, Territory, national and international).
- > An identified line manager responsible for providing guidance, supervision and support, who will keep in regular contact.
- > To have personal information you give us treated with care and discretion.

Such information will be shared within the organisation only on a 'need to know' basis.

- > Recognition for voluntary activities through Red Cross and other accredited awards, forums, events and development opportunities.
- > Recognition of the relevant skills and experience you bring to the organisation.
- > Our support in developing the skills relevant to your activity.
- > Agreed out-of-pocket expenses paid in accordance with policy.
- > To have problems or complaints dealt with sensitively.
- > The right to decline or change your mind regarding a voluntary activity without feeling guilty.
- > The opportunity to change or take on additional roles. Those wishing to be re-assigned will undertake a further interview and go through standard screening procedures for their new role(s).

What we expect from you

- > To welcome and maintain good relations with everyone you come into contact with as a volunteer, whether they are other volunteers, staff, service users, partners, donors or the general public.
- > To reflect the Movement's Fundamental Principles in your day-to-day volunteering.
- > To support and act in accordance with our policies, practices, procedures and management decisions.
- > A willingness to learn about the organisation and the role you play within it, and a requirement that you meet specified standards in carrying out voluntary activity.
- > To let us know if you are unable to meet a commitment, with as much notice as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made.
- > To safeguard the image, reputation and Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross. As ambassadors for the organisation, volunteers should act and dress appropriately when involved in voluntary activity.
- > To follow health and safety guidelines – report defects in equipment, protective workwear or anything that could be detrimental to personal health or safety.
- > To respect the trust put in you as a volunteer and use any information you are given with discretion, sharing only on a 'need to know' basis.

- > To let your manager know if you have a complaint or problem so they can make every effort to achieve a positive and amicable solution.
- > To let us know if your circumstances change – such as your address or health condition.
- > To agree to a criminal record check should you be involved in direct contact with vulnerable adults and/or children. (Please note: having a conviction need not be a bar to volunteering and we do checks only to ensure we maintain a high standard of service and protect our service users.)
- > Volunteers should not bring the Red Cross into disrepute i.e. represent the organisation while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, be involved with the theft of property, nor misuse equipment or materials.

Conflict of interest

You should seek guidance if you think an activity you are involved with, or wish to undertake, may be classed as a conflict of interest. If in doubt, ask your manager. Volunteers should not have a high public profile in the political sphere, or in other fields that might reflect adversely on the Red Cross Fundamental Principles. Volunteers who are also Red Cross employees should be clear about the boundaries between the two roles.

> Volunteer representation and governance

Volunteer representation is all about giving volunteers a voice and an opportunity to influence local and national issues. This helps to develop the Red Cross locally as a vibrant and attractive organisation.

Volunteers from a diverse range of Red Cross services are represented on local Volunteers Councils. Each representative (Council member) is there to ensure that relevant issues are raised and communicated between the Council and the volunteers they represent.

You don't have to have been a volunteer for many years to be on the Volunteers Council. If you have only recently joined the Red Cross, or if you feel you have a unique contribution to make, then contact your manager. A successful Council should have a diverse range of volunteers, of all ages and types of expertise, who are willing to speak out on a broad range of issues.

Each Council has a chair, elected by other Council members, who acts as a key link between volunteers and staff, and a locally appointed president, who is an externally focused ambassador of the Red Cross, working in partnership with the Councils to promote the organisation at a local level.

Each Volunteers Council arranges two Forums each year, which enable volunteers to discuss local and national issues in an inclusive and welcoming environment.

Governance

The Red Cross is governed by a Board of Trustees, who have legal and strategic responsibility for the organisation. Nine of these Trustees are Red Cross volunteers themselves, elected to the Board by the Volunteers' Council chairs in their Territory. The other Trustees are chosen for their specialist skills and experience.

The organisation is managed by paid staff, who are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Red Cross and are ultimately accountable to the Board of Trustees.

“Volunteering for the Red Cross has made me a stronger, more confident person.”

> Communications

The Red Cross recognises the importance of clear and effective communication, both between volunteers and staff, and with the wider world. The organisation uses a wide range of internal and external communication tools to highlight the valuable work it does and get across its humanitarian message.

Red Cross Life, a bi-monthly magazine, is sent to volunteers throughout the UK and highlights the work of the Red Cross. It also gives volunteers and staff the opportunity to air their views, as well as reporting Branch news and latest volunteer successes. Across the UK, Area staff produce newsletters which look at the achievements of the Red Cross staff and volunteers on a more local level.

Volunteers can also access RedRoom, the British Red Cross' intranet site, packed not only with the latest news but with forms, policies, procedures – everything a volunteer might want to know. Volunteers can even take part in debates on the message board with fellow volunteers and staff.

RedRoom is just for British Red Cross volunteers and staff, so you will need your volunteer ID number to log in.

Every year, on a Saturday in March, the Red Cross holds a National Assembly, providing an opportunity to meet fellow volunteers, staff and Trustees from all across the UK, celebrate Red Cross successes at home and abroad, and hear about plans for the future. The National Assembly is always advertised in Red Cross Life.

There are also two Forums each year, where volunteers are invited to discuss issues of local and national importance.

Externally, the Red Cross works hard to promote its important work through both national and regional print, the broadcast media, a range of publications and its website www.redcross.org.uk.

By employing these varied approaches to communication, the Red Cross strives to keep volunteers, staff, and supporters well-informed while attracting more.

> Key policies and guidance

As a volunteer you need to be aware of and comply with our policies. Below we have summarised some of the main points but there will be others that affect you. For further information talk to your manager, who will be able to provide a full copy of the policies.

Communications with the media

Having a good relationship with the media is vitally important for the Red Cross, because maintaining a good public profile generally means more donations, greater understanding of what we do and more people helped. On the other hand, negative publicity can be very damaging. For this reason, the Red Cross employs territory communications managers (TCMs) who specialise in representing the organisation to the media.

If you'd like to highlight a new service or fundraising initiative, just ask your manager to put you in touch with your local TCM. Unless officially authorised to do so, no person volunteering for the organisation should approach or respond to a representative of the media in any way, in a Red Cross capacity, or write letters to editors on any matter to do with the Red Cross.

Complaints, issues and concerns

If you have a complaint, issue or concern, do speak to your manager. They are there to support you as a volunteer and it is important that such matters are resolved. This policy and guidance is available to help everyone through the process, which details the steps that can be taken and who should be involved.

Harassment

Harassment is 'unwanted behaviour that is both unwelcome and unpleasant' and it can take many forms. The organisation is committed to providing an environment that is free from embarrassment, intimidation, threats, discrimination or harassment. Harassment will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Volunteers and staff have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and everyone has the responsibility to ensure that this happens. Any complaints of harassment will be dealt with promptly, seriously and confidentially.

Health and safety

In order to provide care to people who are vulnerable and in crisis, volunteers and staff need to make sure that they stay safe and healthy themselves. The Red Cross is committed to providing

conditions of work for all volunteers and employees that prevent any danger to health. The organisation will also provide comprehensive information, instruction, training and supervision – with the object of ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of every volunteer and employee.

Workwear

This gives guidance on matters of Red Cross dress and what clothing should be worn when volunteering. Workwear ranges from polo shirts and trousers to ceremonial dress. The guidance explains the appropriate dress for different occasions because it is important that volunteers present the Red Cross in a consistent way.

Age

There are no upper age restrictions but a volunteer's ability to complete a task or role will be assessed on an individual basis. Managers will make the decision on such matters in discussion with the volunteer concerned. The British Red Cross aims to open volunteering opportunities to everyone over the age of 15 (supervised from 13 years) who is able to fulfil the role offered. Once a role has been identified, we will aim to seek consent from the parent or person with parental consent for young people under 18 years of age (16 in Scotland) before a young person participates in their volunteering activity.

Protection of children and vulnerable adults

The Red Cross should make certain that its volunteers and staff act in a way

that ensures protection and safety of all persons it assists. There are a variety of policies and procedures to guide volunteers on these matters, including our child protection (see page 23) policy and criminal record checks.

Criminal Record Checks

Volunteers involved in direct contact with vulnerable adults and/or children will be required to agree to a criminal record check (also known as a 'Disclosure'). Having a conviction need not necessarily be a bar to volunteering – each volunteer's circumstances will be considered on an individual basis – but the Red Cross performs such checks to ensure that high standards of service are maintained and our service users protected. The British Red Cross abides by the codes of conduct drawn up by the Criminal Records Bureau for England and Wales and Criminal Records Bureau Scotland – copies of these can be provided. Similar checks are also undertaken in Northern Ireland.

Expenses

We aim for volunteering to be open to everyone and believe that repaying volunteers for out-of-pocket expenses is an important part of this. Volunteers will be repaid all reasonable expenses (as outlined by your manager) incurred whilst volunteering in accordance with this policy, which details what can be claimed and how. Your manager can help you to complete the claim form.

The Red Cross emblem

Use of the Red Cross emblem and the name "British Red Cross" is restricted.

This policy details how and when they can be used, and gives the procedures for getting permission to use the emblem and Red Cross name.

Equal opportunities

The Red Cross works hard to ensure equality of opportunity and enable all its volunteers, staff and delegates to achieve their full potential in furtherance of our mission and objectives. The organisation will not tolerate any unlawful acts of discrimination, any form of harassment or any unjustifiable acts of discrimination on any grounds including: colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, disability, religious beliefs, social class or age.

Diversity statement

In line with our Movement's Principles of impartiality and unity, the British Red Cross seeks to ensure that our organisation and our services are accessible to all. We are committed to getting fresh perspectives and insights by involving and welcoming people from the widest possible variety of backgrounds, culture and experience.

Insurance

The Red Cross is insured so that, if the organisation is found to be negligent, volunteers, staff and members of the public can make a claim against it. The insurance covers the organisation rather than the individual and extends to include volunteers acting on behalf of the Red Cross. For example, should a member of the public be injured as the

result of a volunteer's proven negligence, our insurers would meet any amount of damages awarded by a court. The Red Cross does not provide personal accident insurance to those over the age of 85.

Details of other insurance policies held by the Red Cross can be found in the insurance manual on RedRoom. You can also speak to your manager for more information.

Useful Addresses

www.redcross.org.uk
British Red Cross website

<http://redroom.redcross.org.uk>
RedRoom, the volunteer and staff intranet

www.redcross.org.uk/education
for volunteers working with young people

www.icrc.org
International Committee of the Red Cross website

www.ifrc.org
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies website

> Glossary

Area	The British Red Cross has divided the UK into four Territories and 21 Areas.
Branch	A location or district that volunteers work within. Three or four Branches often work together to form an Area. There are 66 Branches in the UK.
Charter	The Volunteer, Staff & Delegate Charter sets out why the Red Cross involves these groups in its work, how they work in partnership and what our mutual expectations are.
Emblem	The Red Cross emblem is not a logo, but a symbol protected under the Geneva Convention which governs its use.
Emergency response	The term used to describe the Red Cross working with statutory services in emergencies.
Forum	An opportunity for volunteers to meet and share ideas. Usually a quite informal occasion that involves the giving and receiving of information. Volunteers should be given the opportunity to express their opinions, about a given subject, within the Forum.
Fundamental Principles	The principles that influence the work of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the world.
International delegate	Red Cross and Red Crescent personnel, with specialist skills, who go overseas on fixed term projects.
PeopleSoft	The database that records personal details of volunteers and staff.
Red Cross Week	The week in May when we raise funds and the profile of the British Red Cross. The particular week was chosen to commemorate Henry Dunant's birthday on 8 May.
RedRoom	The British Red Cross' own intranet site, containing news, forms, policies, procedures – everything a volunteer might want to know.
Territory	The British Red Cross has divided the UK into four Territories.
The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement	Made up of more than 180 National Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (the International Federation). The ICRC responds to conflict situations and the International Federation to natural disasters.
UK Office	The British Red Cross head office in London.
Volunteering	Volunteering is an expression of humanitarianism that enables individuals to give their time and skills freely to benefit the organisation, the community and themselves.
Your Red Cross	This induction video and CD-ROM covers the vision, mission and values of the Red Cross. It will give you a useful overview of the work, role and structure of the organisation. Courses such as Red Cross World and Ideals in Action may also be offered.

> Useful information

My main contact is

When I am unable to volunteer I call

My volunteer identity number is

My nearest Branch office is

My nearest Red Cross shop is

My local fundraiser is

My Volunteers Council representative is

I joined the Red Cross on

Useful phone numbers

Useful addresses

> Notes

> Notes

> Notes

> History timeline

- | | | | |
|-------------|---|-------------|---|
| 1859 | The battle of Solferino in Italy | 1932 | First Voluntary Medical Service medal awarded |
| 1863 | The first meeting of the 'committee of five', now the International Committee of the Red Cross | 1941 | One of the first British Red Cross shops opens to raise money for the war effort at 17 Old Bond Street, London |
| 1864 | First use of Red Cross emblem as a sign of protection of personnel and equipment in the war between Prussia and Denmark | 1949 | The signing of the four Geneva Conventions which are still in force today |
| 1870 | The founding of the British Red Cross as the 'British National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded in War' | 1965 | The first proclamation of the seven Fundamental Principles. (Although the Movement has always been a humanitarian, neutral and impartial organisation, the Fundamental Principles were not formally adopted until this year.) |
| 1876 | First use of the Red Crescent as a protective emblem | 1971 | British Red Cross holds its first ever UK-wide Red Cross Week in May |
| 1905 | British National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded in War is reconstituted as the British Red Cross Society | 1993 | October sees the launch of the first fire victim support service |
| 1918 | First medical loan service launched by British Red Cross | 1999 | The first British Red Cross refugee orientation project starts |
| 1919 | The founding of the League of Red Cross Societies, now the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies | 2003 | The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement expands to include three new National Societies, bringing the total to 181 |
| 1921 | London Branch of the British Red Cross organises the UK's first voluntary blood donation | | |