



Policy Name	Reference Request Policy
Version	0.2
Name of originator	Volunteering & Culture Manager
Review due	February 2028

Policy Statement

The Trust is committed to being fair to all current and previous employees. This policy is to ensure that any references given on behalf of the Trust are within the current recommended guidelines as set out by ACAS.

Principles

If an employer gives a reference it must be accurate and fair. The employer giving the reference can decide how much they include.

In all cases, any references provided on behalf of the Trust should in the first instance be referred to HR who will work with the line manager to complete them.

If you are providing a personal reference, it must be made clear that this is not provided on behalf of the Trust.

References for volunteers

Earth Trust can provide references for volunteers who have actively volunteered within the past two years. All reference requests must be sent to the Volunteering Manager, who will consult the relevant staff lead, prepare the reference, and forward it to the appropriate person.



What the reference contains

A detailed reference (or character reference) can include:

- answers to questions from the person/company requesting the reference
- details about their skills, ability and experience
- details about character, strengths and weaknesses relating to suitability for the new role
- how often they absent from work
- disciplinary details
- the reason they left the job

What a reference cannot say

References must not:

- be misleading
- include irrelevant personal information

All details about the person, their role or performance must be fair and accurate. If opinions are provided, there should be evidence to support the opinion.

For example, if someone's performance record shows they need to improve in a few areas, the reference should not say they excelled at the job.

References and discrimination

It's usually against the law for information on any of the following – known as 'protected characteristics' – to be used, whether providing, requesting or checking references:

- age



- disability
- race
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

For example, if an employer decides to withdraw a job offer because the candidate has a disability that was mentioned in their reference it would be considered to be discrimination.

The only exception is when a protected characteristic is crucial to do a job. In law this is called an 'occupational requirement'. For example, if a Catholic church wants to employ a priest and it is necessary for them to be Catholic.