

4. Volunteers

4.3 Model volunteering policy



If you involve volunteers in your organisation it is important for you to have in place a volunteering policy. Having this policy can provide your organisation with a framework for establishing a volunteering programme. The aim of a volunteering policy is to provide overall cohesion to all the various policies and procedures that affect volunteering, for example, recruitment, expenses, health and safety and so on. It will also help define the role of volunteers within the organisation, and how they can expect to be treated.

This sample volunteering policy should be amended to take into account your organisation's existing policies and procedures.

A model volunteering policy

Introduction

This policy aims to demonstrate the principles for involving volunteers in <Name of organisation>. This policy was ratified by <name of management committee> on <date> and will be reviewed <time scale> to ensure it reflects the work of the volunteers and <name of organisation>.

Commitment

<Name of organisation> recognises the right that people have to participate in

the life of their communities through volunteering. It also acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways, that their contribution is unique, and that it can benefit users of services, staff, local communities and the volunteers themselves. <Name of organisation> values the contribution made by volunteers, and is committed to working in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering.

Definition

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship and is an essential component of democracy. Volunteers are people who, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit people in the community.

Suggested statement of values and principles

<Name of organisation>:

- Recognises the important role played by volunteers both in the work of the <name of organisation>, and the important and valuable contribution made by volunteers to the fabric of the local community.
- Acknowledges the unique contribution made by volunteers to the life of communities, service users, paid staff and to the volunteers themselves.

- Attempts to use volunteers' skills, knowledge and experience in a way that will meet both the volunteer's and organisation's needs.
- Recognises that volunteers complement the role of paid staff.

Responsibilities

- All volunteers have a designated member of staff or volunteer to offer guidance and advice to help the volunteer carry out their tasks effectively. Volunteers will also be informed of who to contact to receive support and supervision.
- The appointed volunteer manager or designated person *<name>* is responsible for the development of voluntary activities within the organisation.

Recruitment and selection

- *<Name of organisation>* is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability, religion and political beliefs. Individuals applying to become volunteers will be appointed in accordance with the organisation's selection procedure.
- Volunteering opportunities will be advertised widely in places that are accessible to all members of the community.
- Volunteers will be selected on their suitability for the volunteering task, matching their skills, talents and interests with the organisation's needs.

- Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task will either be offered alternative voluntary work within the organisation or referred to their nearest volunteer centre.
- All volunteers will be asked to provide two references, and will be required to undertake a criminal records check if the position involves working with children or vulnerable people. They will also be invited to attend an informal interview.
- Volunteers will have a task description. These are prepared in conjunction with the person responsible for managing volunteers.

Training and personal development

- All new volunteers will be welcomed to the organisation and should have an induction.
- *<Name of organisation>* will be responsible for ensuring the volunteer is properly prepared for the work and that arrangements for support and training are in place.
- Volunteers, staff and service users will be consulted in order to develop additional volunteering opportunities.
- Training on 'managing volunteers' will be made available to those who are responsible for the work of volunteers.

Support, supervision and rewards

- Volunteers will have access to regular support and supervision. This will enable both the volunteer and supervisor to identify, monitor and evaluate the work, recognise achievements, and identify individual training needs. Volunteers will also be invited to attend team meetings where their views and opinions can be expressed.
- Volunteers will be reimbursed for all out-of-pocket expenses. The rate of reimbursement will be agreed by the management committee and reviewed annually.
- Events will be organised where the volunteers' contributions can be formally recognised.

Settling difference

- *<Name of organisation>* aims to treat all volunteers fairly. The *<person who manages volunteers>* is responsible for dealing with problems as they arise. The volunteer manager is responsible for handling difficulties relating to the volunteer's conduct or complaints.

Volunteers' rights and responsibilities

<Name of organisation> believes volunteers have the right to:

- know what is expected of them
- have clearly specified lines of support and supervision
- be shown appreciation
- have a safe work environment
- be insured
- know what their rights and responsibilities are
- be paid expenses
- be trained
- be free from discrimination
- be provided with opportunities for personal development

<Name of organisation> expects volunteers to:

- be reliable
- be honest
- respect confidentiality
- make the most of training and support opportunities
- carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims of the organisation

For further information contact

Interlink

6 Melin Corrwg, Cardiff Road, Upper Boat, Pontypridd, Rhondda Cynon Taff, CF37 5BE
Registered Charity 1069044

Tel: 01443 846200

info@interlinkrct.org.uk

Fax: 01443 486107

www.interlinkrct.org.uk

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Tel: 0800 2888 329
www.wcva.org.uk