

Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Supporting charities, volunteers and communities

4. Volunteers

4.3 Creating a volunteering policy



Introduction

For those considering involving volunteers for the first time, see WCVA/CVC Information Sheet 4.2 [Developing a volunteer strategy](#). This information sheet is for organisations that have already identified a role for volunteers and are ready to develop their volunteer policies.

If you involve volunteers in your organisation it is helpful to have in place a volunteering policy. Having this policy can provide your organisation with a framework for establishing a volunteering programme.

What is the policy for?

A policy provides a set of guiding principles to help with decision making, it can help to provide a consistent approach and to define the roles and relationships between various stakeholders of the organisation.

What should it contain?

A statement on why the organisation involves volunteers – setting out the principles behind your decision to involve volunteers, how it will benefit the organisation and the wider community, as well as the volunteers themselves. A positive statement can be a good way of showing that yours is a caring organisation which puts great value on its volunteers.

Definition of volunteering - The definition commonly accepted across the UK and used by the Welsh Government is:

'Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship and an essential component of democracy. It is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community and can take many forms. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain.'

Scope of volunteering – should include a broad statement on the range of activities and where volunteering fits into the organisation and perhaps, more importantly, where the boundaries lie between volunteering and paid responsibilities. If your organisation also supports internships, work placements or other unpaid schemes it should be acknowledged whether, and to what extent, individuals on these schemes are covered by the volunteering policy, or whether there are other relevant policies in place.

Commitment to diversity – stating how volunteers from a range of backgrounds will be encouraged, welcomed and supported

Responsibilities of the organisation towards volunteers – general statements in relation to induction, training, support and supervision, etc. ensure that there is a common understanding, common standards of practice across the organisation and that volunteers are effectively included as active participants in your organisation.

Responsibilities of volunteers – indicating the level of professionalism you require from volunteers, for example in relation to behaviour, dress code, time-keeping, reporting requirements, honesty, confidentiality etc.

Recruitment and Screening - state what steps are involved in the recruitment and selection process, including whether references or police checks are required. Say what will happen if volunteers are considered unsuitable for a particular role.

Other relevant information – name the organisation's policies which also include volunteers, such as equal opportunities, health and safety, confidentiality, data protection, policy/ procedures for reclaiming out of pocket expenses, and details of insurance cover (including any limitations or conditions on the cover provided)

Settling differences - procedures for what happens when there are disputes or differences, showing that the organisation has a commitment to listening and settling disputes quickly and amicably.

Further information

A **Model Volunteering Policy** can be [downloaded here](#)

The [Investing in Volunteers](#) Standard (Indicator 1.1) requires organisations to have a written policy on volunteer involvement.

WCVA

www.wcva.org.uk/volunteering

Volunteering Wales [Code of Practice for organisations involving volunteers](#)

Local Volunteer Centre

www.volunteering-wales.net

Disclaimer

The information provided in this sheet is intended for guidance only. It is not a substitute for professional advice and we cannot accept any responsibility for loss occasioned as a result of any person acting or refraining from acting upon it.

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