

Health & Safety

Organisations have a duty of care to ensure staff/volunteers are kept safe. Ensure that your organisation has a health & safety policy in place and ensure that volunteers are aware of it and any risks which relate to their work.

Grievance & Disciplinary Procedures

There should be clear procedures in place to deal with problems and/or complaints from or about volunteers. Keep this separate from your staff policy and make it as user friendly as possible.

Confidentiality

Volunteers should be bound by the same requirements as paid staff and should be made aware of what they can and can not talk about outside of your organisation.

Introducing the Policy

Once agreed, you need to ensure that everyone reads and understands it, and sticks to it as part of everyday life. Try introducing it at a staff/volunteer meeting and explain its importance. Display copies on notice-boards and make it available to new volunteers so that everyone is aware of it and abides by it.

Revising the policy

Circumstances change quickly within voluntary organisations so make a note to review it annually to ensure that it continues to reflect your organisational needs.

More resources:

See examples of Volunteer Policies and further links on the Volunteering England Good Practice Bank: www.volunteering.org.uk

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Good practice guides for

Volunteer-involving

organisations

In partnership with:



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This information was taken from the 'Pass it on' guide, compiled by

Volunteering England.

How to...write a volunteer policy

01202 466130

Volunteer Policies

A volunteer policy outlines **the framework** of your volunteer programme. It enables people to look at the benefits and challenges of working with volunteers and clarifies their role/s within the organisation and how they can expect to be treated. It brings together the various policies and procedures that affect volunteers.

Why have one?

It demonstrates the organisation's commitment to the volunteer programme and its' volunteers and shows that thought and care has gone into the volunteer programme.

It shows consistency – and ensures that all volunteers are treated fairly.

It shows clarity—the policy shows volunteers where they stand, how they can expect to be treated and what to do if things go wrong.

Unity—it helps to ensure that all staff, management and trustees fully understand and support why volunteers are involved and what role they have within the organisation.

Involving volunteers for the first time—if your organisation has never involved volunteers before, creating the policy is the ideal place to start as it will enable you to consider exactly how you will involve them in your work—from recruitment to supervision.

Where do we start?

Think about why you want to or why you are involving volunteers and how they fit into daily life within the organisation.

Consult with existing staff, trustees, manage-

ment and volunteers when drawing up or revising your policy—the more input people have, the better ownership they will feel of the policy.

It may help to have a steering group to draw up the policy and regularly review it to ensure that it continues to meet the organisations needs.

What should the policy focus on?

Most importantly **your needs**—every organisation has differing needs so there is no 'blue-print' for volunteer policies but do keep it short—you can refer to other policies, for example, your health & safety policy within the document without reciting the whole document.

What should the policy cover?

Introduction

- An explanation of what the organisation does and why it involves volunteers in its' work.
- Why volunteers are being asked to donate their time and in what ways their efforts are helping the aims of the organisation.
- Also add a statement of intent—setting out the guiding principles of your involvement of volunteers—for example that you will not use volunteers to replace paid staff...

Recruitment

Outline how you will recruit volunteers:

- Advertising—how, where, and link to your equal opportunities/diversity policy.
- Use of application forms, the interview process
- Taking up references/will CRB checks be required?

- Dealing with volunteers who are not suitable - for example thanking them for their interest, explain why you can not use them in your organisation and refer them back to the Volunteer Centre in case another organisation can utilise their skills .

Volunteer role descriptions

Similar to job descriptions, these should list the tasks that volunteers are asked to undertake for you, state your intent in giving volunteers clear descriptions of each role-type so they know what is expected from them and you have a useful tool for supervision sessions.

Induction & Training

Clearly state how you will welcome volunteers into your organisation, and outline what training they may have access to which is relevant to their roles.

Expenses

Acknowledge that not all volunteers may be able to afford to volunteer with you unless you can reimburse out of pocket or travel expenses etc and outline the process for claiming them back from the organisation.

Supervision and Support

Outline when and with whom volunteers will get regular support and supervision from, and ensure that you have sufficient staff resources to support volunteers. Make sure that you stick to this when recruiting new volunteers!

Insurance

State which insurance/s your volunteers will be covered by and review this regularly to ensure that your volunteers are protected in the event of an accident or injury.