

Factsheet

Volunteer Policy

A volunteer policy is a framework for organisations to follow when involving volunteers. It enables the organisation to look at benefits and challenges of involving volunteers. It also clarifies the volunteer's role and how they can be expected to be treated. Finally it brings together various policies that affect volunteers e.g. recruitment, expenses etc.

Why have one?

- Commitment; it shows care and thought has gone into the programme
- Consistency; within a diverse group, it allows decisions to be consistent and all volunteers are treated equally and fairly.
- Clarity; it offers security and makes it clear where volunteers stand when things go wrong. It outlines how they will be treated.
- Unity; it helps staff, trustees and management understand why volunteers are involved and explains their role.
- If it's the first time using volunteers, it's a good starting point.

How to write a volunteer policy?

- Although one person will be responsible for writing it is important to consult widely. This way it will be relevant to more people and therefore more people will take ownership of it.
- Having a steering group draw it up would be a good idea and they could review it annually. It needs to reflect the needs of the organisations otherwise it will be ignored

Top Tip: Keep it short; just refer to other policies (don't put each whole policy in e.g. Health and Safety), it is more a statement of intent.

What should it cover?

- Introduction and statement of principles: what does the organisation do and why does it involve volunteers.
- Recruitment; a brief outline of the recruitment process (instead of writing out the full policy you could refer to the policy in the Volunteer Handbook). It should briefly cover how you advertise the role and the process your organisation goes through e.g. interviews, references and DBS checks and what happens if applicants aren't right for the role.



- Volunteer roles outline; just a statement that says all roles have a description and refer them to the role description in the volunteer handbook.
- Induction and training; outline what the volunteer can expect e.g what the induction will include (refer to induction checklist if appropriate) and the training they will undergo
- Expenses; state what you will reimburse for (this also shows that you value your volunteers).
- Supervision and support; state who is the volunteers' supervisor and what support will they get (this reassures staff and volunteers).
- Insurance; statement on the cover for volunteers.
- Equality and Diversity; volunteers are not generally covered by equal opportunities legislation; however, it is good practice to have an equality and diversity policy.
- Health and Safety; a reminder of the main policy and h&s should be included in induction.
- Problem solving; an outline what to do about complaints by and about volunteers. Your organisation should have separate policies here from staff due to different legislation
- Confidentiality; volunteers should be bound by the same guidelines as staff.