

Policies and Procedures



Guidelines and good practice; involving and managing volunteers...

Having clear policies and procedures on volunteer involvement and management will ensure that everyone in the organisation is clear about the role of volunteers.

Good policies and procedures will help you to:

- Decide when involving volunteers is appropriate and when it isn't.
- Make decisions about who can volunteer with you and in what capacity.
- Establish how your organisation recruits, supports and manages volunteers.

Good policies and procedures will not only outline good practice guidelines, but also the values and principles that drive your organisation. They will help you to maintain a consistent approach to involving and managing volunteers and this, in turn, will help volunteers to feel secure - they will feel that your volunteer programme is organised and clear.

The policies and procedures that you develop will depend on the nature of your organisation and role of volunteers. It might be possible to include volunteers in existing policies and procedures, but more likely, you may need to create new ones as volunteers are not covered by employment law and the associated terms and conditions. The Volunteer Centre can help to provide guidance on this and suggest ideas or provide templates and sample documents. At the very least, there should be a document that describes the relationship between volunteers and the organisation, usually a *volunteer policy*.

Developing a Good Volunteer Policy

Your volunteer policy should include:

1. A definition of volunteering and a short statement on what your organisation does and why you involve volunteers. This helps volunteers to understand how their time and skills contribute to the work of your organisation.
2. A statement of intent - setting out how you will involve volunteers. E.g. you might mention that volunteers will not replace paid staff (job substitution).
3. Details of your recruitment and selection procedures.
4. Reference to wider policies and procedures e.g. health and safety, equalities and diversity policy, safeguarding, training and induction procedures.
5. Details of the type of out of pocket expenses that volunteers can claim and the procedure for claiming expenses.
6. A sentence about how volunteers are insured.
7. Details how volunteers will be supported and supervised in their role.

Problems and Grievance Procedures

Clear procedures need to be in place, different from those for paid staff, which cover:

- What happens if a complaint is made against a volunteer.
- What happens if a volunteer has a complaint about another volunteer, member of staff, or service user.

Don't forget that volunteers *don't* have a contract and aren't covered by employment law, so policies and procedures in place for paid staff e.g. disciplinary procedures, won't apply. You can develop a policy that mirrors the disciplinary procedure, but it needs to be *different* to reflect that it is for volunteers.