

Valuing Your Volunteers

A Toolkit for Volunteer Support and Development



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Support and Development



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SECTION 1 - Introduction

East Belfast Community Development Agency (EBCDA) exists to provide community groups with support, resources, and capacity building programmes, based on partnership, equal opportunities and sustainable outcomes.

EBCDA's role is to add value to the activity undertaken by groups in local areas, by working with key organisations to ensure the continued development of a community sector that is recognised, valued and effective. We seek to support successful community development, encourage reflective practice and promote cooperation and locally based solutions. An important part of this work is to support community groups with their volunteer development.

'Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society and the community, the environment, or individuals outside (or in addition to) one's immediate family. It is unpaid and undertaken freely and by choice'. (Volunteering Strategy for Northern Ireland- Department for Social Development, 2012).

Volunteering is a vital part of community development and volunteers are integral to how a community lives, breathes, and grows. With this in mind, the aim of this toolkit is to lay out a framework for volunteer development, that focuses on the main elements of volunteer management.



SECTION 1 - Introduction

Why Involve Volunteers?

The unique contribution that volunteers make to an organisation is the reason why they are involved. Their role may be different to that of paid staff, but their involvement greatly complements and enhances the work of the organisation. Volunteers bring a significant commitment to their work, at their own cost, providing a variety of skills that will broaden the talent base of any organisation. Different people bring different personalities, contacts, and culture, creating a diverse and interesting place to be involved with.

One of the key values of volunteer management is the understanding that a two-way relationship exists between the organisation and its volunteers. Both parties need to offer something to the relationship to receive mutual benefits. If a volunteer offers commitment, time, skills and diversity, then the organisation needs to give something back, for example, regular feedback, provision of training, support and accessibility, as well as ensuring that a fun environment is provided for them to fulfil their role.

People choose to volunteer for a variety of reasons. For some, it offers the chance to give something back to the community or make a difference to the people around them. For others, it provides an opportunity to develop new skills or build on existing experience and knowledge.

It is important to have a clear understanding of why volunteers are valuable to an organisation. An organisation's committee or board should be able to articulate the reasons why they involve volunteers. Careful planning is the key to successfully involving volunteers. It may be helpful to consider the following:

- Is everyone in the organisation aware of plans to involve volunteers?
- Does the organisation have the human resources and budget to adequately support volunteers?
- Is the organisation able to provide roles that are rewarding for volunteers and meet the organisation's needs?
- Volunteers bring fresh ideas, enthusiasm, and experience – is the organisation ready for this?
- Does the organisation need any new policies and/or procedures such as a Volunteer Policy?

Given that volunteers are essential to the effective running of most community groups it may be worth considering appointing a volunteer coordinator (this can be a voluntary role). This type of role can make a big difference to the recruitment and retention of volunteers as it ensures that the area of volunteer development is given a strong lead from within the organisation.

SECTION 2

Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers



SECTION 2 - Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers



Do you think your organisation could use volunteers?

Carefully consider these questions first:

1. Why does your organisation want to involve volunteers?
2. What does your organisation want volunteers to do?
3. What qualities and skills does your organisation want the volunteers to have?
4. How will your organisation find volunteers?
5. How will your organisation select which volunteers they want?
6. How will your organisation manage the volunteers after selection?

A useful perspective towards volunteering is, 'We need volunteers to thrive,' rather than, 'We need volunteers to survive.' Think through these questions carefully – your organisation will be much more effective in their volunteer management with some strategic thinking. It's good practice to put a recruitment and selection process in place before looking for volunteers, but still worth thinking about even if you already involve volunteers.

More information about the recruitment and selection of volunteers can be found in section 3 at this link www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/As-Good-As-They-Give-Workbook-2-Attracting-and-Selecting-Volunteers.pdf

Role Description

A volunteer role description, or profile, is a document which details the specific activities that a particular volunteer is involved in. A volunteer role description forms an important part of an organisation's recruitment process because it gives the volunteer an accurate idea of the work they will be doing and ensures that the volunteer is attracted by the actual tasks as well as the organisation's wider aims. It also helps a volunteer manager to focus on what kind of volunteer they need, which will help them avoid mismatching people and tasks.

Areas to Consider:

- Purpose of role
- Availability and location
- Main activities/tasks
- Qualities/experience/skills sought (where relevant)
- Training provision
- Main point of contact/support

A detailed volunteer role description is particularly useful if you are recruiting volunteers through EBCDA or another third party. It saves time and disappointment on both sides if a potential volunteer knows as much as possible about the role before contacting the organisation.

More information about role descriptions can be found in section 2 at this link www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/As-Good-As-They-Give-Workbook-2-Attracting-and-Selecting-Volunteers.pdf

SECTION 2 - Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers

Code of Conduct

A useful tool to go alongside a volunteer role description is a code of conduct or code of practice. It provides direction and guidance to a volunteer by setting out expected standards of behaviour in the organisation and clarifying the consequences of contravening these standards.

A simple search online will help you find several examples of codes of conduct or codes of practice. A good start may be to have a look at the The Code of Good Governance at the link below www.nicva.org/sites/default/files/d7content/attachments-articles/revised_code_of_good_governance.pdf

Advertising/Marketing Volunteering Opportunities

Think about the type of volunteer you want to reach and the types of roles you have available, and advertise accordingly. It is important to advertise your roles regularly and persevere when fostering relationships with other organisations. Good places to advertise volunteering opportunities include your organisation's website, Facebook, Twitter, other social media, EBCDA, Community NI, Volunteer Now, local newspapers or leaflet drops to homes and businesses.

The application process that you have for volunteers will very much depend on your organisation and the work that volunteers undertake within it.

Whatever an organisation's recruitment approach, it is important to develop a system that suits their needs but also does not discourage potential volunteers or place unnecessary obstacles in their way.

An information pack is a good resource to have available to send to people interested in volunteering and can include a covering letter, an organisation leaflet, a role description, volunteer registration form and contact details of the appropriate person to contact.

Guidelines on advertising and marketing volunteering opportunity can be found here www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2021/07/Writing-Volunteering-Opportunities.pdf

Initial Chat

Part of the selection process is to carry out an initial chat with the potential volunteer. You've had the opportunity to read though their completed volunteer registration form and they've had a think about why your organisation might be right for them. The chat provides an opportunity for both parties to find out about each other and assess whether the pairing will be a good match.

Some guidelines to consider are:

- When arranging the location think about accessibility, atmosphere and privacy
- This is not a job interview! Keep it casual
- Be an active listener. Pay close attention to what the volunteer is saying (or perhaps not saying) during

SECTION 2 - Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers

the meeting

- Don't promise anything if you are unsure. It may not be your decision if your organisation involves the volunteer, make sure the volunteer is aware of this
- The volunteer may also be more suitable for another role in your organisation rather than the one they have shown interest in. Be open to change

What to bring

- Completed volunteer registration form
- Current list of volunteering opportunities in your organisation and role descriptions
- Details of organisation and their work
- Initial chat pro forma
- Volunteer pack (if you have one)

How to chat

- Make sure the potential volunteer feels welcome – introductions, offer a cuppa
- Thank them for their interest and for coming to meeting
- Explain what the meeting involves
- Give a brief description of your organisation and volunteer roles
- Go through any blanks on volunteer registration form
- Go through initial chat pro forma – these questions review questions from the volunteer registration form as well as obtaining more detail
- Discuss possible volunteer roles
- Thank volunteer for co-operation in answering questions
- Explain what will happen next

- Check volunteer contact details

Volunteer Agreement

Volunteer agreements can be used to set out both an organisation's commitment to its volunteers, and also, what it hopes to achieve from its volunteers. A volunteer agreement can act as a reference point for the volunteers and a reminder to the organisation that it should meet the standards of good practice that have been set. You may decide, however, to include the information in other places, such as your volunteer policy or handbook, in which case a volunteer agreement may not be necessary for your organisation. Care must be taken to set out what the organisation expects from its volunteers and how they are treated, to avoid the creation of mutual obligations that might be regarded as a contract.

Typically in an agreement an organisation might commit to:

- Provide volunteers with a written role description
- Provide a full induction and any training necessary for the role
- Provide a named supervisor or person that the volunteer can go to for support
- Reimburse out of pocket expenses where possible
- Provide a safe working environment
- Treat volunteers in line with its equal opportunities policy
- Implement good health and safety practice
- Provide insurance for volunteers
- Ask for a reference for the volunteer

SECTION 2 - Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers

Volunteers might be expected to:

- Carry out their tasks in a way which corresponds to the aims and values of the organisation
- Work within the policies and procedures of the organisation including health and safety, equal opportunities and confidentiality
- Let the organisation know if they are unable to volunteer for any reason

It is suggested to use the following wording at the end of a volunteer agreement:

'This agreement is not intended to be a legally binding contract between us and may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. Neither of us intend any employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future.'

It is advised against asking volunteers to sign volunteer agreements, as this can appear contractual.

Induction/Settling in Period

The purpose of volunteer inductions are to ensure that volunteers feel comfortable, can carry out their volunteering role as effectively as possible and gain a full understanding of your organisation and its policies and procedures. Inductions (group or individual) coupled with a volunteer handbook are often very effective. It can also be helpful to use an induction checklist as a record of topics covered for the organisation and the volunteer.

A format of an induction checklist can be accessed here. www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2019/10/Volunteer-Induction-Checklist.pdf

This should be adapted to suit your organisation.

Having an agreed period as a settling in period is also very effective. It gives the organisation and the individual a, 'Way out,' should the fit not work. It's also a time to collect references and any other useful information.



SECTION 2 - Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers

Why ask for References?

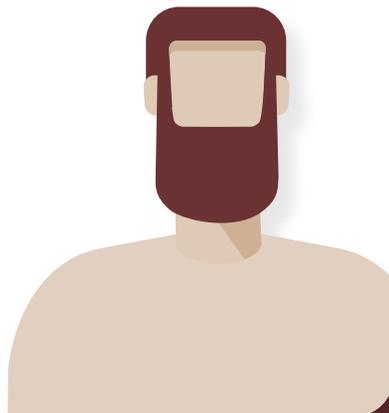
References are comments from people who know the potential volunteer in either a work or social context. Whether or not you ask for references depends on the type of work that the volunteer will be involved in. There is no legal requirement to take up references, but reasons might include:

- To check that the person is who they say they are
- To check suitability for a particular role
- To add information not disclosed at the initial chat
- To demonstrate to volunteers, staff and service users that volunteers are an integral part of the service and therefore need to be checked formally
- To satisfy everyone that reasonable precautions have been taken to ensure the organisation has exercised its, 'Duty of Care,' towards its service users
- You may also need to undertake Access NI checks at this stage, depending on the volunteer role.

More info about Access NI checks can be found here www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2021/06/AccessNI-What-you-need-to-know.pdf

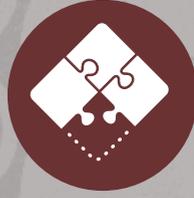
Remember to make it clear who you will accept references from e.g. responsible person (not a relative). They could be a previous employer (paid or unpaid), the leader of a club or faith group, support worker or tutor for example.

You will find some helpful guidance at the link below for volunteer agreement, induction and references, particularly sections 4 and 5. www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/As-Good-As-They-Give-Workbook-2-Attracting-and-Selecting-Volunteers.pdf



SECTION 3

Managing volunteers



SECTION 3 - Managing Volunteers

Volunteer Policy

A volunteer policy contains information that will be helpful for the volunteer as part of their day-to-day work for the organisation. Think of the policy as a reference guide for the volunteer, a back-up of the information they will receive during their induction. Policy might offer practical advice on health and safety, information on the role of the volunteer co-ordinator, how volunteers will be supervised and even where the tea-making facilities are. So while a volunteer policy might state that all volunteers are entitled to be reimbursed for their out-of-pocket expenses, the policy would inform the volunteer how to make a claim, which forms to fill out, which finance person they must see and so on.

What should be in the policy really depends on your organisation. Some details regarding your organisation's culture may seem perfectly obvious to you but could be mystifying to an outsider. Volunteer policies are a useful resource to complement your induction process.

Areas covered could include:

1. Background information on your organisation
2. What your organisation does and why
3. Day-to-day life in the organisation
4. Expenses
5. Practical health and safety information
6. Policies and Procedures

The following link provides a step-by-step guide to the areas you should consider in your Volunteer Policy.

www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2020/11/Volunteer-Policy-Framework.pdf

More information about developing a volunteer policy for your organisation can be found in section 4 and 5 at this link www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/As-Good-As-They-Give-Workbook-1-Planning-Volunteer-Involvement.pdf

Support and Supervision of Volunteers

Support and supervision are important parts of volunteer management. Supervision deals with the work the volunteer is doing and support deals with the volunteer themselves.

A volunteer coordinator/manager has a responsibility to support and supervise volunteers to achieve the best possible outcome. A key part of their role is to ensure that volunteers are happy and feel safe and respected. Volunteers also have responsibilities to their volunteer coordinator which should be clearly defined in the volunteer's role description. It is a two-way street.

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Volunteers should be supported as soon as they step in the door, they need to be welcomed into the organisation and treated well by everyone. Volunteers also need to receive formal support to give them direction, guidance and purpose. They are giving up their personal time to help your organisation grow and develop, and want to know that what they are doing is effective and not a waste of their time.

When delegating work to volunteers, it is important to consider what support and supervision they might require to complete and enjoy the role they undertake. Effective support and supervision encourages a partnership approach, where volunteers feel they are an integral part of the organisation, rather than simply resources to be used.

Volunteers can be the lifeblood of an organisation, quietly pushing the cause forward with their dedication and humility. They are also, however, human beings, who won't just keep working and working on something if they feel invisible.

Here are three golden rules for looking after your volunteers, the simplest, easiest and seemingly obvious things, that can sometimes be forgotten in the madness of running an organisation.

1. Remember names and use them.
2. Return phone calls, emails, expenses the same day.
3. Have a real conversation with every single volunteer.

Different Ideas to Support and Supervise Volunteers

- Initial briefing meeting as part of induction
- Peer to peer support
- Incorporate volunteers into your organisation: volunteers should be included in your organisational chart and given a copy so they can identify where their role fits into the bigger picture
- Buddying systems
- Complete an annual review process where volunteers fill in questionnaires about their roles
- Briefing meetings before and after volunteer shifts and activities
- Give volunteers access to services: volunteers should be treated like paid staff and given the opportunity to access all the services available to paid employees
- Volunteer team meetings
- Send out volunteer newsletters by email that highlight the great work of your volunteers
- Informal support: saying thank you to a volunteer
- Set up a Facebook volunteer group
- One to One support: organise regular catch-ups with the volunteer coordinator or manager
- Formal supervision: clear direction on who to report to and who their supervisor reports to
- Reviews and formal supervision meetings: these should have set agendas and frameworks

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- Provide name badges and uniforms (if appropriate) to build team spirit and help volunteers feel part of the organisation
- Give constructive feedback
- Have an open-door policy

Volunteer Training

The purpose of training is to ensure that volunteers can carry out their volunteering role as effectively as possible. Training must be well planned and appropriate to the needs of the organisation and to the needs of the individual volunteer and their specific role. It may be best to train your volunteers as a team, or you may be able to offer individual training. Ongoing or refresher training may be required to keep volunteers' skills fresh, or to enable them to develop within the organisation and to take on further tasks.

Styles of Training:

1. Volunteer inductions
2. On-the-job training
3. Practical demonstrations
4. In house training
5. Work shadowing
6. Buddying/mentoring systems
7. Visiting other organisations/inviting outside organisations in
8. Attending conferences, workshops, lectures, seminars, etc.
9. Problem-solving exercises, group discussions etc.
10. External training courses

More information about developing volunteer training, for your organisation, can be found in all sections in this link www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/As-Good-As-They-Give-Workbook-4-Managing-Volunteer-Training.pdf

Volunteer Recognition and Retention

While volunteers give up their time with no expectation of reward, it is important that volunteer involving organisations thank volunteers for the contribution they have made. Saying thank you and recognising particularly committed or innovative volunteer contributions also helps maintain morale and ensures that volunteers feel supported. Volunteers who feel appreciated and supported are more likely to stay with your organisation and continue to contribute. Being aware of a volunteer's motivations is a useful tool to have, as it can help to steer the volunteer's journey during their time with your organisation.

Some volunteer recognition ideas include:

1. Don't forget to say thank you
2. Ensure they have a way of taking part in the decision-making processes
3. Ask them to make presentations at meetings
4. Organise something during National Volunteers' Week 1 – 7 June each year
5. Offer training and progression
6. Mention volunteers' input at meetings, in the Annual Report on your website etc.

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7. If equipment is required to carry out their role, make sure it works and it is as up to date as you can afford
8. Send Christmas and birthday cards
9. Organise a social event, outing or party to say thank you
10. Produce a newsletter for volunteers or include them in an existing newsletter

Exit Interviews

If you haven't managed to retain your volunteers, then one obvious way to find out why they are leaving is to ask them. Exit interviews, questionnaires or informal chats might reveal issues in your organisation that need addressing.

Some questions you might ask are:

1. Do people know what is involved when they volunteer for you?
2. Does the information that enquirers receive provide a clear picture of what will be expected of them when they volunteer?
3. Do volunteers receive role descriptions?
4. Are volunteers taken seriously within the organisation?
5. Are problems and issues raised by volunteers dealt with efficiently and effectively?
6. Are you clear about reimbursing expenses to volunteers?
7. Are there clear lines of communication within the organisation?
8. Do the volunteers have a designated person to talk to about any concerns or problems they may have?
9. Is the Volunteer Co-ordinator/ Manager easily accessible?
10. Are volunteers clear about the contribution they're making to your organisation, its service users and the wider community?

Even if you don't think there is a problem, exit interviews are a useful tool for monitoring how you engage volunteers within the organisation. Remember that people leaving the organisation are likely to be more candid than they would otherwise be.

However, it's obviously better if the exit interview isn't being conducted by a volunteer's immediate supervisor.

A template to help you conduct exit interviews can be found at this link www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2021/05/Volunteer-Exit-Questionnaire-Template-1.pdf. You should adapt this template to suit the needs of your organisation.



SECTION 3 - Managing Volunteers

Problem Solving

Volunteers are an invaluable resource, but the management of any resource can at times be problematic. Even though you have gone through a fair and detailed recruitment and selection process, with role description, registration form, references and initial chat, and believe that the volunteer you have chosen is right for the task – problems can still occur. There will be minor irritations, which, although not requiring immediate attention, may need to be monitored. At the other end of the scale are the potential or actual crises that require clear thinking and decisive action straight away. Having procedures in place can make it easier to deal with these problems.

There may be times when problems arise with a volunteer which, if they were a member of staff, would be addressed through a grievance or disciplinary procedure. These policies for paid staff are not appropriate when dealing with complaints from or about a volunteer, and instead, there should be a separate problem-solving procedure specifically for volunteers, written in clear, non-jargon, plain English.

Volunteers have the same legal rights as the public (for example, health and safety and data protection), but they are not covered by employment legislation. Having a problem-solving procedure specifically for volunteers, helps to ensure that volunteers are treated fairly, are not discriminated against, understand how to complain, and what their rights are if a complaint is made against them. It also creates consistency

and demonstrates the organisation's commitment to volunteer management best practice. You can minimise problems occurring in the first place by ensuring that you have planned well for volunteer involvement. All complaints should be resolved openly, fairly and quickly.

More information about volunteer recognition, exit interviews and problem solving, for your organisation, can be found in all sections at this link www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/As-Good-As-They-Give-Workbook-3-Managing-and-Motivating-Volunteers.pdf

You may wish to access the information at the link below which takes you through volunteers and the law. www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2020/11/Volunteers-The-Law-Information-Sheet-2020.pdf



SECTION 4

Volunteer policies and procedures



SECTION 4 - Volunteer Policies and Procedures

Access NI

EBCDA is registered as an umbrella body with AccessNI, the criminal history disclosure service in Northern Ireland. By law, some employers must check criminal history before they recruit. When asked by these employers, AccessNI supplies criminal history information about job applicants, volunteers and employees. A criminal history check is also known as a disclosure. AccessNI searches the details against UK criminal records and police information and these searches may disclose any criminal history to certain employers and organisations. AccessNI produces a disclosure certificate for every check.

An AccessNI check provides three different levels of information about an individual:

1. A basic check contains details of all convictions considered to be unspent, or states that no convictions were found
2. A standard check contains details of all spent and unspent convictions and relevant cautions
3. An enhanced check contains the same information as a standard check as well as a check of police records held locally, and for positions working with children and vulnerable adults, may include information held by the Disclosure and Barring Service. Enhanced checks are normally required when the applicant will work or volunteer in a role providing services to, or having close and regular supervision of children and / or vulnerable adults.

An umbrella body is an Access NI-registered body which submits standard and enhanced criminal record checks for employers and organisations.

Access NI authorises umbrella bodies to provide these services to organisations. EBCDA can currently submit standard and enhanced checks for volunteers within community organisations based in East Belfast only. There is no charge for this service.

1. Access NI PIN and ID validation form: This form should first be given to the volunteer as it sets out the step-by-step process of registering with Access NI and applying online. This form should then be returned to the organisation along with the relevant ID documents so it can be signed by a nominated contact to verify the identity of the applicant.
2. Application for Disclosure Cover Sheet: This form asks for more details about the volunteer and the volunteer position. It should be completed by a nominated contact within the organisation. This information is needed by EBCDA to complete the process.

SECTION 4 - Volunteer Policies and Procedures

The volunteer's disclosure certificate is valid during the recruitment process for a specific role. Information about the criminal record history is accurate on the day the certificate was issued. A disclosure certificate should not be transferred from one role to another.

More information about developing an Equal Opportunities and Diversity Statement for your organisation can be found at: www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2021/06/AccessNI-What-you-need-to-know.pdf

Volunteers and the Law

Normally, volunteers have very few legal rights, unlike paid staff who have a wealth of protection under employment legislation. Some organisations unknowingly create contracts of employment (written or unwritten) in the way they engage with volunteers, which may make it possible for volunteers to pursue legal action against the organisation. However, it is important to note that most volunteer/organisational relationships end amicably, and it does not mean that all your policies and procedures need to be rewritten. The emphasis is on your working practices and these should be reviewed to make sure they fall outside a contractual relationship.

Practical ways to minimise the risk of a contract situation:

1. Do what you can to make sure that volunteers are treated fairly and have access to good procedures for settling disputes
2. Make it clear that the roles of volunteers are voluntary, i.e. unpaid
3. Reduce the formality of your documents and review the language you use. Avoid using legal or employment jargon like, 'work', 'contract' or 'job descriptions'
4. Recognise that you can't require volunteers to provide a service in return for training
5. Don't pay flat rate expenses or anything more than out-of-pocket expenses – the occasional thank you such as a party or social outing is fine

More information about volunteers and the law for your organisation can be found at this link www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2020/11/Volunteers-The-Law-Information-Sheet-2020.pdf

Volunteering and Benefits

A good rule of thumb is that volunteering will not affect a person's entitlement to benefits if they are only receiving the reimbursement of genuine out-of-pocket expenses. There is also no limit to the number of hours a person can volunteer when they are receiving benefits, if they are still deemed to be available for interviews or work should Social Security or the Jobs and Benefits Office wish to contact them.

SECTION 4 - Volunteer Policies and Procedures

Volunteers who receive benefits should talk to their local Social Security Office before they begin volunteering to find out exactly what impact volunteering will have on their benefits, as each individual case will be different. Organisations working with volunteers have no duty to inform their local Social Security Office about who is volunteering for them.

However, organisations should help to ensure that volunteers have the necessary information and that they have written documentation about their volunteering.

Further information about living with benefits can be gained from www.ebiac.org

Volunteer Expenses

Although people give their time freely, they should not be out of pocket through their volunteering. However, no more than out-of-pocket expenses should be paid. It is good practice to reimburse volunteers for the expenses they incur as a result of volunteering for your organisation.

Tips for volunteer expenses:

1. All volunteers should be reimbursed genuine out-of-pocket expenses i.e. the exact amount volunteers have spent during their volunteering
2. A simple and brief claim form should be drawn up detailing the expenses. Where possible, get volunteers to attach receipts to their claim form

3. It may be helpful to keep expenses claims sensible by establishing upper limits on things like lunch. For example if the upper limit for lunch is £5 this means that volunteers should be reimbursed the exact amount, they have spent on lunch, but it should be no more than £5
4. It is important that volunteers know the process of how to claim expenses and that they are reimbursed quickly

If you can't afford volunteer expenses now, cost them into future funding applications, or consider applying for a small grant specifically to cover expenses. You may not have enough money to cover travel, but are you able to reimburse volunteers for phone calls, stationery etc., or are you able to supply snacks or lunch during volunteer shifts? Alternatively, look at the, 'Volunteer Recognition' section for ideas on giving back to your volunteers even if you are working on a shoestring.

You should always be careful about payments to volunteers who are receiving Social Security benefits.

You can access further information about volunteer expenses at this link www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2021/06/Volunteers-Expenses-Information-Sheet-.pdf

SECTION 4 - Volunteer Policies and Procedures

Equal Opportunities and Diversity

An organisation's volunteer policy will include their values on involving volunteers so will naturally also include having a diverse volunteer team. Although volunteers themselves are not covered by equal opportunities employment legislation, it is in your organisation's interest to take equal opportunities and diversity seriously.

Equality is about making sure that people are given equal access to opportunities and resources. Equality is not about treating everyone in the same way; it is about treating everyone fairly, with respect and recognising that people from different backgrounds may have needs that are met in different ways.

Diversity is about valuing individual difference. Diversity challenges us to recognise and value all sorts of differences that exist when people work together, in order to build stronger communities and harmonious environments for the benefit of all.

People come from a wide variety of backgrounds and we can be different from one another in many ways. These can include differences that are highlighted in current equality legislation such as race, religion and sex but also include things like our personality, personal interests and lifestyle choices, such as being a vegetarian or a smoker.

It is good practice to produce an Equal Opportunities and Diversity Statement which is displayed clearly in your organisation and on recruitment materials where appropriate. Promoting equality and diversity should become second nature to your organisation, and although the monitoring of equality and diversity is not law, it will help your organisation if you are able to provide your funders with a snapshot of your volunteer team's diversity.

More information about developing an Equal Opportunities and Diversity Statement for your organisation can be found at both links below

www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2021/05/Diversity-in-Volunteering-Information-Sheet-1.pdf

www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/As-Good-As-They-Give-Workbook-5-Volunteers-and-the-Wider-Organisation.pdf



SECTION 4 - Volunteer Policies and Procedures

Monitoring, Evaluation and Measuring Impact

It is good practice to be aware of how involving volunteers in your organisation is working. It's useful to demonstrate the impact that volunteers have on your organisation, both in terms of their contribution and their economic value and to identify areas in your volunteer programme that may need improvement. Your funders may require evidence of monitoring and evaluation in your volunteer programme.

A four step guide to monitoring and evaluation:

1. Planning – what to evaluate, how to measure it, what information is required and how to collect it
2. Monitoring – collecting and recording the information
3. Evaluating – analysing data, interpreting results
4. Making improvements – identifying and prioritising improvements, planning and implementing action, monitoring and evaluating work

The following tools can also be accessed for further guidance:

1. Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit (VIAT). This toolkit can be used by anyone who involves volunteers in their organisation or coordinates their activities and helps organisations assess the difference that volunteering makes. As well as the printed handbook with step-by-step guidance on how to assess the impact of volunteering, you will also have access to a range of tools and templates in a free downloadable resource pack.

Volunteer Now offer full training on the use of the toolkit, though there is a cost associated with this. You can access information at this link. www.volunteernow.co.uk/organisations/involving-volunteers/impact-assessments

2. Investing in Volunteers (IiV). This is the UK quality standard for good practice in volunteer management. If you would like to benchmark the quality of your volunteer management and involvement, improve the effectiveness of your work with volunteers and enhance your organisation's reputation, Investing in Volunteers is the ideal quality standard for you. Your organisation can apply for the Investing in Volunteers accreditation by accessing the link below and following the process, there is a cost associated with this. This is managed by Volunteer Now here in Northern Ireland investinginvolunteers.co.uk
3. National Occupational Standards (NOS) for the Management of Volunteers. A comprehensive definition of the whole spectrum of activities required to achieve the development and implementation of the volunteering strategy within an organisation effectively. They have been designed primarily for those working in the voluntary and community sector. www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/National-Occupational-Standards-for-Volunteer-Managers.pdf

APPENDIX

Links to Helpful Documents



APPENDIX – Links to Helpful Documents

You will find more detailed documents and information in relation to having volunteers work within your organisation at the link below:

www.volunteernow.co.uk/publication/1

The documents referred to in this publication can be accessed directly at the links below.

1. AccessNI – What you need to know

www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2021/06/AccessNI-What-you-need-to-know.pdf

2. Adult Safeguarding Champion FAQs

www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/Adult-Safeguarding-Champion-Frequently-Asked-Questions.pdf

3. Adverse Childhood Experiences Factsheet

www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/Adult-Safeguarding-Champion-Frequently-Asked-Questions.pdf

4. As Good as They Give Workbook 1 – Planning Volunteer Involvement

www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/As-Good-As-They-Give-Workbook-1-Planning-Volunteer-Involvement.pdf

5. As Good As They Give Workbook 2 – Attracting and Selecting Volunteers

www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/As-Good-As-They-Give-Workbook-2-Attracting-and-Selecting-Volunteers.pdf

6. As Good As They Give Workbook 3 – Managing and Motivating Volunteers

www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/As-Good-As-They-Give-Workbook-3-Managing-and-Motivating-Volunteers.pdf

7. As Good As They Give Workbook 4 – Managing Volunteer Training

www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/As-Good-As-They-Give-Workbook-4-Managing-Volunteer-Training.pdf

8. As Good As They Give Workbook 5 – Volunteers and the Wider Organisation

www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/As-Good-As-They-Give-Workbook-5-Volunteers-and-the-Wider-Organisation.pdf

9. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Factsheet

www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2021/05/CSE-Handout.pdf

10. Code of Good Governance

www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/Code-of-Good-Governance.pdf

APPENDIX – Links to Helpful Documents

11. Diversity in Volunteering

www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2021/05/Diversity-in-Volunteering-Information-Sheet-1.pdf

12. East Belfast Independent Advice Centre

www.ebiac.org

13. Impact Assessments

www.volunteernow.co.uk/organisations/involving-volunteers/impact-assessments

14. Investing in Volunteers

investinginvolunteers.co.uk

15. National Occupational Standards for Volunteer Managers

www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/National-Occupational-Standards-for-Volunteer-Managers.pdf

16. Volunteer Exit Interviews

www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2021/05/Volunteer-Exit-Questionnaire-Template-1.pdf

17. Volunteer Induction Checklist

www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2019/10/Volunteer-Induction-Checklist.pdf

18. Volunteer Expenses

www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2021/06/Volunteers-Expenses-Information-Sheet-.pdf

19. Volunteer Policy Framework

www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2020/11/Volunteer-Policy-Framework.pdf

20. Volunteers & The Law

www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2020/11/Volunteers-The-Law-Information-Sheet-2020.pdf

21. Writing Volunteer Opportunities

www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2021/07/Writing-Volunteering-Opportunities.pdf



Valuing Your Volunteers

A Toolkit for Volunteer
Support and Development

For further information please contact:

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