

# A framework for your Volunteer Policy

It is recognised that the guidelines in the framework will be considered in the light of individual organisation's needs and / or situation. The sample statements are provided only as an illustration of the relevant guidelines and are not intended as a standard or model for use by any other organisation. There may be other issues that you may want to address through your volunteer policy due to the nature of your organisation and particular volunteer roles. Remember the difference between policy and procedure. Policy outlines what you intend to do and procedures then outlines how you will do this.

## 1. Values

Your volunteer policy will need to be based on a clear set of values around the involvement of volunteers. It is a good idea to begin the policy development process by agreeing a Value Statement, based perhaps on your organisation's historical perspective, its wider values and ethos and your reasons for involving volunteers.

The policy should value the distinctive contribution that volunteers can make.

The policy should recognise the status of volunteers as a legitimate and complementary resource to that of paid staff.

The policy should acknowledge that volunteering is a beneficial experience for both volunteers and service users.

You should also include a statement in this section on the organisation's beliefs about quality, equal opportunities, diversity, etc. and how they apply to volunteer involvement.

## 2. Preparation and planning

The next areas that the policy should address are those actions and systems that need to be put in place before the organisation is ready to actually involve volunteers. Even if volunteers are already active in your organisation, it is important to discuss the reasons for involving volunteers with staff, existing volunteers, service users or beneficiaries, corporate volunteers etc. and agree on the nature and purpose of the volunteer involvement.

<p>The policy should identify the ways in which the work of the organisation can be extended by the involvement of volunteers and ensure that these opportunities complement rather than substitute the work of paid staff (if applicable).</p>	
<p>Furthermore, the policy should make clear the position of volunteers in any staff dispute or action.</p>	
<p>The policy should specify how volunteer roles would be defined, including the purpose of each role and tasks involved.</p>	
<p>The policy should clarify what protection volunteers can expect from the organisation in terms of insurance.</p>	

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<p>The policy should state the organisation's position on the reimbursement of expenses to volunteers including what expenses can be claimed, and how to make a claim.</p>	
<p>It is essential that the policy commits the organisation to providing volunteers with adequate resources to do the work for which they were recruited.</p>	
<p>The policy should make clear where the responsibility for day-to-day management of volunteers lies, specifying a member, or members, of staff as appropriate and making a clear commitment to providing such staff with appropriate training.</p>	

## 3. Recruitment and selection

While attracting and selecting volunteers is a different process from staff recruitment, you should still aim to provide a fair, effective and transparent process that is truly inclusive. Although you may wish to keep the procedures fairly informal in practice, it is still vital to lay down minimum requirements clearly in your policy to help ensure that they are consistently implemented.

<p>The policy needs to lay down the organisation's approach to volunteer recruitment, stating how volunteer opportunities will be made accessible to all sections of the community.</p>	
<p>The organisation should have an agreed recruitment and selection procedure for all volunteers which are appropriate to the role and which reflects best practice in relation to equal opportunities.</p>	

## 4. Management of volunteers

This section will specify how you intend to manage volunteers once they have become involved in your organisation. Goodwill alone is not enough to guarantee success and a pro-active approach is essential both to achieve the organisation's objectives and to ensure that volunteer' interests and motivations are met. Remember the voluntary nature of the relationship between volunteers and the organisation as you develop this section and try to ensure that the policy holds benefits for both parties.

<p>The policy should outline how the expectations of both parties are to be agreed and communicated.</p>	
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<p>Volunteers will need to be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken, and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform them with confidence.</p> <p>The policy should commit the organisation to an appropriate induction procedure.</p>	
<p>A settling in period is helpful in providing an opportunity to assess the suitability / progress of the placement, and allowing any problems to be resolved at an early stage. A policy statement should help ensure consistent implementation of the procedure and reassure new volunteers as to the reasons for such a measure.</p>	
<p>Access to regular support and supervision is key to maintaining effective and motivated volunteers. While the level of support and supervision needed will vary for different volunteers and different volunteer roles, the policy should commit the organisation to providing each volunteer with a named individual to provide this.</p>	

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<p>Training will enable volunteers to develop their capabilities and personal competence. The organisation must decide on what basis such training will be offered, and to whom. A clear policy statement will ensure fair and equal access to these opportunities.</p>	
<p>The organisation must make arrangements to deal with any difficulties with the volunteer or their work in a fair, open and effective way. Equally volunteers should have access to an equivalent process to address grievances about any aspect of their work or how it is managed. The aim of such a policy is to protect all concerned while maintaining good relationships and effective volunteers where possible.</p>	
<p>Volunteers should, as far as possible, be fully integrated into the organisation. You may want to include a commitment in your policy to specific communication systems to keep volunteers informed, special measures to recognise and publicise their contributions, opportunities to take part in decision-making etc.</p>	

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<p>Records should be kept of the work done by volunteers, to enable their involvement to be monitored effectively.</p>	
<p>If relevant, an organisation should make it explicitly clear that intellectual property rights of original work produced by volunteers has been transferred to the organisation i.e. flyers, photos, reports that volunteers have written in etc.</p>	
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## Is there anything else that you would add?