



Everything you need to attract, manage and retain volunteers

Our Volunteer Management Toolkit is free and available to any group or organisation working with volunteers.

You can find it at vcsutton.org.uk/organisations/volunteer-management-resources

Volunteer Management Toolkit: Policies and Procedures

Volunteer Policy Guidance

Updated 12.3.2021

The purpose of a volunteer policy is to provide an overall framework on which your organisations involvement of volunteers should be based. A volunteer policy should describe the relationship between your organisation and volunteers and how volunteers will be treated.

Why is a volunteer policy important?

- Ensures a positive volunteering experience for all those involved.
- Recognises and rewards the invaluable contribution that volunteers make to your organisation and the local community.
- Provides a framework in which volunteers can contribute to your organisation safely.
- Defines roles and clarifies the responsibilities and expectations of both volunteers and staff.
- Provides consistency and demonstrate best practice.
- Ensures the involvement of volunteers should complement and supplement the work of paid staff.
- Outlines how your organisation can support and help volunteers grow in their respective roles.

What to include in your volunteer policy?

Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a brief description of your organisation. • A statement on why your organisation involves volunteers, the benefits to your volunteers and local community, and what volunteers bring to the organisation. • Include a statement of intent, setting out the principles that will inform your organisation’s involvement of volunteers.
Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a brief statement on the definition of a volunteer.
Our vision for volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify what your organisation hopes to achieve through volunteer involvement.
Roles and Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an outline of the process for how volunteer roles will be defined, agreed and promoted. • Confirm who will support volunteers across your organisation. • If relevant, reference the different volunteer roles within your organisation.
Equality and Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe your organisation’s commitment to equality and diversity and outline how volunteers from the local community will be encouraged, welcomed and supported.

Recruitment and Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a general statement referring to a separate recruitment and selection policy and outline what volunteers can expect from your organisations recruitment and selection process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What is the registration process? – Do you offer a trial period, taster session or form filling support? – Will references be required? – Do you ask all volunteers to complete a DBS check? – Where do you promote volunteering opportunities? – Do you ensure that all relevant information is outlined in the role description? – Do you provide a role description for each new role? How often are role descriptions reviewed?
Induction and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm what volunteers can expect from your organisations induction and training process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Will volunteers be required to attend an induction meeting? – Are compulsory training sessions required? – Will induction and training sessions take place online or in-person? – Will the volunteer need to complete refresher training while volunteering? – Do you ask volunteers to complete a volunteer agreement and confidentiality and data protection policy? – How do volunteers develop in their roles? – Will you consult with your volunteers regarding their training needs?
Support and Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an overview of how volunteers will be supported and supervised during their time volunteering with your organisation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What ongoing support will be provided? – Name of the person as a point of contact – Will you meet with volunteers on a weekly or monthly basis? – How will volunteers feedback and contribute their ideas and suggestions? – What support is available for volunteers? – Do you have volunteer representation in your management committee or steering group? – Who will the volunteer contact if the volunteer supervisor is away?
Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how you tell volunteers that you will appreciate and value their contribution. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Do you host informal thank you events? – Do you share images and videos of volunteers fulfilling their role? – How do you share positive news stories and acknowledge achievements? – Will you circulate volunteer newsletters?
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how your volunteer programme will be monitored and evaluated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Will you send your service users and volunteers a feedback form? – How will improvements be made and discussed?

Leaving Your Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the process for when a volunteer decides to stop volunteering for your organisation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Will you invite volunteers to an exit interview? – Will your organisation provide references? – Can you send volunteers the total number of hours contributed to your organisation?
Volunteer Expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a general statement referring to a separate volunteer expenses policy and explain what expenses your organisation can cover and how the volunteer claims them. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Are volunteers required to complete a form? – Are volunteers able to claim out-of-pocket expenses for travel, hospitality and resources? – Will payment be made through cash, bank transfer or cheques? – Will a volunteer claims form need to be signed off by the volunteer supervisor?
Health & Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a general statement referring to a separate health & safety policy and outline the details of procedures relevant to volunteer. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How do volunteers report any concerns, incidents or accidents? – Will volunteers be provided with relevant training? – Do volunteers see a risk assessment before they volunteer? – Are volunteers regularly updated with health & safety policies? – What will happen if the volunteer breaks the health & safety procedures in place?
Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm your organisations insurance policy and how volunteers are covered, especially as to what activities are covered and for what age range.
Safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a general statement referring to a separate safeguarding children and safeguarding adults at risk policy and outline the details of procedures relevant to volunteer. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How do volunteers report any concerns, incidents or accidents? – Will volunteers be provided with relevant training? – Do volunteers see a risk assessment before they volunteer? – What will happen if the volunteer breaks safeguarding procedures?
Data protection and confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a general statement outlining the importance of confidentiality and refer to a separate confidentiality policy. • Include a statement making it clear that the volunteer’s personal information will not be shared with a third party without their consent. • Confirm the importance of volunteer's confidentiality, their responsibilities and how they protect others. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How do volunteers report any concerns or a data breach? – How do volunteers maintain the confidentiality of others? – How will volunteer records will be stored and accessed in a way that complies with data protection legislation? – What are the responsibilities? – What will happen if the volunteer breaks confidentiality procedures in place?
Problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a general statement outlining the procedure when there are disputes or differences against a volunteer, staff members or service users.

Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clarify expectations if volunteers use social media whilst volunteering or promote opportunities on your behalf.<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Will volunteers have access to a separate account?– Will social media training be provided?
Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include your volunteer policy number, revision dates, publication dates, approver's signature and department.

We hope that you have found this helpful. If you would like any further information on the guidance provided or would like to make a suggestion on a resource that could be added to our Volunteer Management Toolkit, we would love to hear from you.

To receive all the latest resources and updates, sign up to our organisations mailing list at vcsutton.org.uk/organisations/organisations-newsletter-sign/