

Volunteering policy



Sample Policy

First draft: October 2009



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Volunteer Centre
Newcastle

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Volunteer *Centre*

Newcastle

Volunteers

There is no legal definition of the term 'volunteer' but it is widely recognised in the voluntary and community sector that

'Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community, the environment, or individuals outside one's immediate family. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain'.

Our volunteers may be occasional, in that they will help a few times a year. Or they may be more regular volunteers perhaps helping weekly or monthly, on a long-term or short-term basis.

Volunteers are essential to us. The time and expertise you provide is fundamental to what we achieve. We strive to ensure that we do work in an environment where volunteers are valued, respected and full members of the team.

Volunteering policy

This policy sets out important principles, commitments and expectations. You will be given your own copy as part of your Welcome Pack. In addition all staff who work with, recruit, manage and support volunteers have a copy of this policy and are committed to it.

The aim of this document is to provide consistency over key policies and procedures. Further information will be available at induction and from colleagues (define).

This policy will help to ensure a consistent approach to our volunteering activities and in accordance with widely accepted best practice and external legislation.

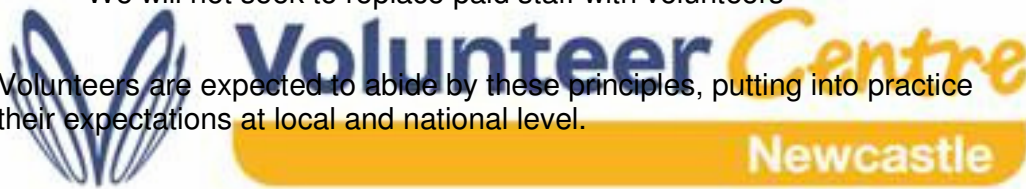
In order to ensure that this policy remains relevant and up to date, it will be reviewed annually, when your feedback and comments will be sought. This document is available on our intranet.

Our Trustees have all endorsed this document, and as volunteers themselves they adhere to the requirements.

Volunteering principles

- All volunteers will be provided with a clear, written role description, which will be agreed with your support (NAME) person
- All role descriptions will have an indication of the time commitment involved
- Volunteers will be offered induction, information and ongoing support appropriate to their role
- Volunteers will be offered learning and development opportunities
- Volunteer roles are not guaranteed, nor is any volunteer role contractual in nature
- Volunteers will operate within our rules, policies, procedures and in accordance with the law
- Volunteers will treat each other and staff with respect and courtesy
- We are committed to equality of opportunity and will aim to follow best practice in the recruitment, selection and involvement of volunteers
- We will not seek to replace paid staff with volunteers

Volunteers are expected to abide by these principles, putting into practice their expectations at local and national level.



What you can expect from us.

- To give you a written role description and to agree with you tasks and expectations
- To be flexible in relation to your personal circumstances
- To respect and value volunteers in all you do
- To offer you opportunities for personal development
- To provide you with support and guidance through named contacts and work with you and them to ensure these meet your needs
- To provide you with an open and fair process for raising any concerns in relation to your role
- To keep you informed about our activities.
- To register you as a member of our organisation.

- To provide opportunities for you to meet with other volunteers staff and interested parties to exchange views and gain / provide support
- To pay approved expenses in relation to your volunteer role
- To provide public and employer liability insurance where needed
- To inform you about health and safety matters and to make sure that you have a safe volunteering environment
- To negotiate additional tasks or responsibilities with you if appropriate
- To enable you to leave your volunteering role when you wish to leave
- To implement our equal opportunities policy

What our organisation expects from you

- To carry out your volunteering role to the best of your ability and to our standards and expectations
- To attend induction, information, training and support sessions as required
- To work within our aims and follow the organisation's rules
- To let your manager named contacts, and external contacts know as early as possible if you are unable to carry out your volunteering duties
- To refer concerns or issues to (*NAME*)
- To seek guidance if you feel there may be a conflict of interest between your volunteering role and any other commitments
- To undertake your role in line with our policies
- To act at all times in the best interest of our organisation and for the benefit of those we aim to support

Further information

Volunteer recruitment

We will provide a role description to volunteers. This will

- Identify what a volunteer is being asked to do
- Identify the purpose of the role and the tasks involved
- Identify and prioritise key tasks
- Indication of time commitment

We will also draw up a volunteer specification which will:

- Identify the qualities and/or skills that the volunteer will need
- Help match the volunteer to the role, taking into account the skills of the volunteer and the needs of the organisation

New volunteers will be required to complete all appropriate paperwork and will be subject to a probationary period of three months. Normal recruitment procedures will apply including the request for references, criminal record checks, driving licence and car details and other checks as necessary.

The probationary period can be extended by two further three month periods. However, no probationary period will last for more than 9 months. If a volunteer has not been able to demonstrate their competency, we will have no alternative but to decline the offer of their services.

Diversity

We are firmly committed to diversity in all areas of its work. We believe we have much to learn from diverse cultures and perspectives and that by investing in diversity we can become a more effective organisation. We are committed to developing and maintaining an organisation in which differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are fostered and valued, and where those with diverse backgrounds and experiences are able to participate in and contribute to the organisation.

Induction

All volunteers will receive induction to our organisation. This could happen in a variety of ways including an induction course, a one-to-one informal session, written information and or access to the organisation's website.

Training and development

Volunteers will be offered specific training to meet the needs of their role. Some training may be compulsory in order to meet internal or external service standards or to ensure best practice and comply with the law. Many volunteers join us with existing skills, knowledge and experience. We are committed to ensuring training is not delivered unnecessarily thus wasting valuable resources. We are committed to maintaining similar standards of delivery across England and our training will reflect this. Our organisation wishes to ensure quality of service whilst recognising the considerable experience of some volunteers.

Supervision and support

We are committed to supporting volunteers. The support offered will differ according to an individual's needs, their location and their role. It could be a regular face-to-face meeting, or a group workshop. Support can also be offered via telephone or email. What ever way our support is offered the main aim is to ensure volunteers are comfortable within their role.

Reimbursement of expenses

Volunteers will be encouraged to claim out-of-pocket expenses, on the production of receipts. This could cover travel and other reasonable expenses, as agreed in accordance with our expenses policy.

Confidentiality

Where volunteers have access to personal and/or sensitive material about children and young people using our services or access to information from other groups or people (for example colleagues, donors, members), they will be expected to keep this information confidential, in accordance with internal policy and external legislation. There are some rare exceptions to this. A key example is where a volunteer suspects mistreatment or abuse. Separate policies and guidance explain how such a situation should be dealt with

Insurance

OUR VOLUNTEERS ARE GENERALLY COVERED BY THE APPROPRIATE INSURANCE BE THAT PUBLIC LIABILITY OR EMPLOYERS INSURANCE.

Volunteer data

All volunteer data is kept confidentially, both on paper and electronically, in accordance with the current data protection laws. This data is confidential to us rather than a specific location. However, access is restricted to authorised personnel. It is not given to third parties, unless written consent is provided or as is allowed for in law.

Use of our computer equipment

All our IT facilities and information resources remain the property of our organisation and not of particular individuals, offices or teams. Care should be taken that computer facilities are used legally and securely. Access to qualified service engineers must be provided when required, and all equipment must be returned when requested.

Communicating with volunteers

ALL VOLUNTEERS WILL BECOME MEMBERS . IN ADDITION VOLUNTEERS MAY WISH TO JOIN THEIR LOCAL GROUP OR CONSIDER THEMSELVES FOR ELECTION TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES.

Recognition

WE VALUE THE CONTRIBUTION MADE BY ITS VOLUNTEERS ACROSS THE UK AND IS WORKING TOWARDS CREATING A STRUCTURE OF EVENTS AND AWARDS WHICH WILL RECOGNISE THEIR HARD WORK AND COMMITMENT.

Behaviour expectation and problem solving

When a volunteer visits a family in their own home, or visits a school, Local Authority or Decision Maker on our behalf, they are acting in an ambassadorial role for us and as such must reflect our policies and aims.

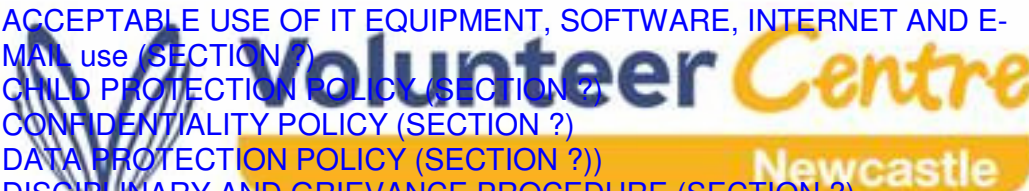
When representing us the minimum standards of behaviour are:

- ARRIVE ON TIME AND READY WITH THE RIGHT PAPERWORK
- DRESS IS SMART CASUAL / BUSINESS SUITS FOR MEN AND WOMEN.
- JEWELLERY TO BE KEPT TO A MINIMUM
- LANGUAGE MUST BE SIMPLE AND EASILY UNDERSTOOD
- NAME BADGES MUST BE WORN IN A PROMINENT POSITION SO PEOPLE CAN EASILY READ AND IDENTIFY VOLUNTEERS FROM BOGUS CALLERS.

Key documents

The documents listed below are contained in your Hand Book

ACCEPTABLE USE OF IT EQUIPMENT, SOFTWARE, INTERNET AND E-MAIL use (SECTION ?)
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY (SECTION ?)
CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY (SECTION ?)
DATA PROTECTION POLICY (SECTION ?)
DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE (SECTION ?)
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY (SECTION ?)
HEALTH AND SAFETY (SECTION ?)
INCIDENT/ACCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURES (SECTION ?)
INSURANCE (SECTION ?)
REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES (SECTION ? AND APPENDIX ?)
RISK ASSESSMENT AND INSURANCE (SECTION ?)

The image contains a large, semi-transparent watermark logo for 'Volunteer Centre Newcastle'. The logo features a stylized figure with arms raised, followed by the text 'Volunteer Centre' in a large, bold font, and 'Newcastle' in a smaller font below it, all set against a yellow and orange background.

If you have any questions which have not been answered in this document contact your line manager or our Central Office.

Appendix 1

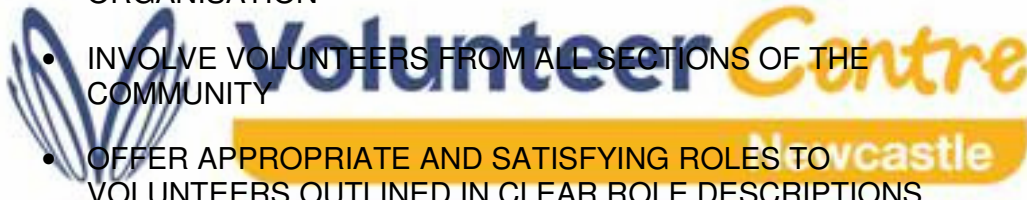
Volunteer standards

These standards are written to correspond exactly to the ten indicators from the *Investing in Volunteers* standards.

We wish to work towards the standards in these ten indicators. Our aim is to have outcomes where:

Volunteers are widely involved and valued within our organisation, are happy and well supported in their roles and have the opportunity to contribute their views as well as their time

- ENSURE VOLUNTEERS HAVE A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF OUR COMMITMENT TO THEM AND ITS EXPECTATIONS OF THEM AS DESCRIBED IN THE VOLUNTEERING POLICY AND ALL OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES
- ENSURE THAT SUFFICIENT RESOURCES OF TIME, PERSONNEL AND MONEY ARE ALLOCATED TO VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY AND THAT A NAMED MEMBER OF STAFF IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROMOTING GOOD VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT ACROSS THE ORGANISATION
- INVOLVE VOLUNTEERS FROM ALL SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY
- OFFER APPROPRIATE AND SATISFYING ROLES TO VOLUNTEERS OUTLINED IN CLEAR ROLE DESCRIPTIONS
- ENSURE THAT THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE OF VOLUNTEERS IS SAFEGUARDED AND THAT EXPENSES ARE REIMBURSED WHEN RECEIPTS ARE PRODUCED
- USE OUR RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES AND PAPERWORK AND FOLLOW GUIDELINES FOR RECORD KEEPING AND DATA COLLECTION
- TAKE UP REFERENCES FOR POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS IN A CONSISTENT WAY, AND MAKE SURE A CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK AND ALL OTHER RELEVANT CHECKS ARE UNDERTAKEN
- ENSURE VOLUNTEERS ARE PROVIDED WITH INDUCTION, INFORMATION AND TRAINING APPROPRIATE TO THEIR ROLE, THAT RISK ASSESSMENTS ARE COMPLETED AND THAT WHEN WORKING WITH STATUTORY SERVICES VOLUNTEERS ARE USED TO ADD VALUE
- RECOGNISE AND REWARD VOLUNTEERS IN ALL ROLES FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO OUR ORGANISATION



- ENSURE THAT VOLUNTEERS RECEIVE THE SUPPORT THEY NEED TO FULFIL THEIR ROLES AND THAT THEY ARE NOT EXPECTED TO MEET DEMANDS THEY CONSIDER UNREALISTIC, BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THEIR ROLE OR WHICH THEY DO NOT HAVE THE SKILLS TO CARRY OUT



Appendix 2

Policy for volunteers claiming expenses

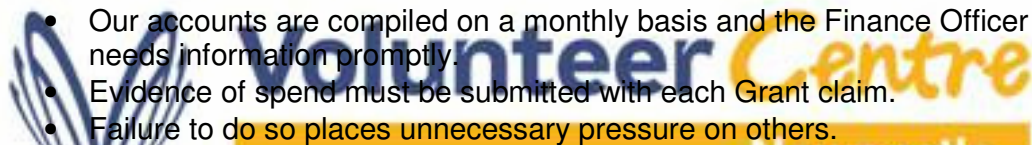
Our organisation has a duty to reimburse volunteers for reasonable expenses incurred whilst carrying out work on behalf us. These expenses include:

- Travel
- Subsistence
- Home business telephone calls and tele-working
- Other costs incurred in carrying out relevant duties

All expenses are paid subject to the submission of **original** receipts or, in exceptional circumstances, on the authorisation of the line manager.

An expenses form is attached. Please use this form and no other.

Please also ensure that expenses are submitted promptly. There are good reasons for requiring you to do so:

- 
- Our accounts are compiled on a monthly basis and the Finance Officer needs information promptly.
 - Evidence of spend must be submitted with each Grant claim.
 - Failure to do so places unnecessary pressure on others.

Expenses claims should be submitted to your (WHO AND NAME) by the end of the first week following the end of the month.

Completing your expenses claim

Standard rates of reimbursement:

DO WE WANT TO INSTURCT WE WILL PAY ONLY PUBLIC TRANSPORT UNLESS FOR EXAMPLE?

Travel: Reimbursement of second-class rail costs

- there is no public transport
- goods are being transported
- use of own vehicle is approved by line manager
- other means of transport approved by line manager

Essential users:

40p per mile

OR DO WE WANT TO SPLIT USAGE AND OFFER OTHER PAYMENTS: ie

	First 10,000 miles (business)	Over 10,000 miles (business)
CAR (ANY ENGINE SIZE)	40P	25P
MOTORBIKE	24P	24P
BICYCLE	20p	20p

Parking: Reasonable parking charges will be paid where use of own car has been approved. Parking fines will not be paid.

Subsistence: DO WE WANT TO OFFER – AGREE FIGURE. Payable against receipts.

Meals: Lunch/teas/coffees (when away from home over STATE NUMBER OF HOURS hours) £X.XX max. Payable against receipts.

Dinner (when away from home STATE NUMBER OF HOURS) £XX.XX max. Payable against receipts.

These rates will be subject to annual review.

Heat and lighting allowance: DO WE WANT TO OFFER A HOME-BASED ALLOWANCE?

Payment of expenses claims: The expenses claim form needs to be checked and authorised by the relevant line manager and then passed for payment. A check will be issued to you within XX days – OR DO WE WANT TO PAY DIRECTLY INTO THE BANK ACCOUNT OF THE VOLUNTEER.