

NORTH OF TYNE VOLUNTEERING AREA OF EXCELLENCE

DEVELOPING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR VOLUNTEER-INVOLVING ORGANISATIONS

All VCSE organisations should have in place relevant policies and procedures to ensure they meet the legal and good practice requirements for involving volunteers. Your policies are a reflection of the thought and commitment your organisation makes to value and welcome volunteers.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE HEALTH CHECK FOR VOLUNTEER-INVOLVING ORGANISATIONS

The Health Check for Volunteer-Involving Organisations considers whether you have policies and procedures in place to support your volunteers and clearly communicate those policies to volunteers.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The following policies and procedures should be in place to support volunteering with your organisation:

Volunteer Policy	<p>A volunteer policy is the foundation on which your organisation’s involvement of volunteers should be based, it should reflect that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Care and thought have gone into the volunteer programme. ● Fairness and consistency they can expect. ● Volunteers understand what is expected from their involvement. Staff fully understand volunteers' roles within the organisation <p>The volunteer policy should include:</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">Your definition of volunteers within your organisation Your values, aims and organisational mission An overview of all the policies related to volunteering A statement on DBS and convictions (if relevant) A clear outline of expenses paid A clear outline of your recruitment process A clear statement on support A clear statement on training A clear statement on how any issues will be resolved. A named contact</p>
EDI (Equity Diversity Inclusion) Policy	<p>You should have a clear statement of your organisation's commitment to the equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) values.</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">The policy should clearly state what you mean by EDI It should state your definitions of discrimination both direct and indirect It should outline how breaches of EDI should be dealt with and by whom It should be a living document that is updated in response to current legal and good practice duty of care to volunteers It should outline all expectations of volunteers regarding their behaviour whilst volunteering in your name</p>

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<p>Health and Safety Policy</p>	<p>The Health and Safety Act imposes legal responsibilities on volunteer involving organisation to ensure the safety of all volunteers.</p> <p>The policy should reflect the 4 important aspects of the act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Health – problems can be caused by faulty equipment, working with hazardous substances, working in surroundings that are unsafe, poor training and not being aware of risk. ● Personal safety – caused by dangerous situations and not being prepared, aware or trained. ● Emotional distress – caused by dealings with aggressive clients, difficult situations (working with elderly or vulnerable youngsters, terminally ill) and not having adequate training/support. <p>Personal integrity – working in situations that could expose the volunteers to misunderstandings or accusations. Not having adequate training to raise their awareness of this possibility or dealing with it effectively .</p> <p>Your health and safety policy should reflect why you carry out risk assessments of all activities and where relevant volunteers.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">It should outline your legal commitment to minimising risk in all forms wherever possible</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">It will define what you mean by risk in all its forms</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">It should define the organisation’s expectations that volunteers will abide by the risk management strategies and the consequences if they do not.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">It should state how to report any “incidents” or “near misses” that may reflect the need to update your risk assessment documents</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">It should outline how volunteers are included in training and management of risk</p>
<p>Safeguarding Policy</p>	<p>Your policy must outline your organisation's commitments to protecting your staff, volunteers and anyone who accesses your service from harm.</p> <p>A safeguarding policy should contain a statement of intent on how you will meet you legal safeguarding obligations by ensuring your staff, volunteers and members know how to recognise, report, and handle any safeguarding concerns.</p> <p>It should clearly define:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What you mean by abuse How you will respond and report safeguarding disclosures Who will be the named person responsible for safeguarding disclosures Your expectation for all staff and volunteers to complete the appropriate safeguarding training The consequence of committing a safeguarding offence whilst working or volunteering for the organisation An overview of the process once a safeguarding report has been made and the potential actions that may be the consequence – including police involvement



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<p>GDPR and confidentiality Policy</p>	<p>General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) are laws on data protection that state how and where you will use, collect and store an individual’s data and what type of data you will collect.</p> <p>Your policy should define who is responsible for data both electronically or on paper where a person can be identified from information collected.</p> <p>Your Policy should state your GDPR principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have to be fair, lawful and transparent when you process personal data. Only collect and use personal data for specific, explicit and legitimate purposes. Data must be adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary. Keep data accurate and up to date. Only keep data for as long as is necessary. Keep data secure. Ensure paper-based personal data is locked away. Electronic data should be password-protected, encrypted and/or restricted to only those people who need to use it. <p>All staff and volunteers who deal with data collection MUST have adequate training.</p> <p>Your policy and practice should be explicit regarding the rights of the individual.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The right to be informed The right of access The right to rectification The right to erasure The right to restrict processing The right to data portability The right to object Rights in relation to automated decision making and profiling. <p>You should include a concise, clear privacy notice that is displayed on all forms of data collection sites.</p> <p>You should state your practice to minimise the risk of a data breach – where without permission a person’s data is compromised either by sharing without consent, from being hacked, to being made available to a 3rd party for purposes not intended when collected.</p> <p>A clear statement of how you will deal with a data breach. This should include how you will inform the individual and consult with trustees on the necessary level of reporting to Report a breach ICO</p>
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<p>Problem-Solving Policy</p>	<p>A volunteer problem-solving policy typically outlines procedures for addressing issues related to volunteer conduct and performance. While specific policies may vary between organizations, here are some common elements that such a policy might contain:</p> <p>Purpose and Scope: Clearly define the purpose of the policy: to address problems related to volunteer behavior, conflicts, or performance. Specify the scope: when the policy applies (e.g., internal issues, external complaints).</p> <p>Policy Statement: Express the organisation’s commitment to resolving problems promptly. Emphasize support for both volunteers and managers during difficult situations. Highlight opportunities for positive change and improvement.</p> <p>Principles</p> <p>Fairness and Equality: Ensure that all problems are addressed fairly, adhering to the Volunteer Code of Conduct and Inclusion and Equality Policy.</p> <p>Confidentiality: Handle issues discreetly, involving only necessary parties. Encourage volunteers to maintain confidentiality during problem resolution.</p> <p>Disrespectful Behaviour: Zero tolerance for disrespectful behaviour. Volunteers should feel free to raise valid concerns without fear of victimization.</p> <p>Local Management Resolution: Encourage initial resolution at the local management level but escalate when necessary</p>
<p>Volunteer Expenses Policy</p>	<p>A volunteer expenses policy should cover the following key points:</p> <p>Reimbursement of Reasonable Expenses: Clearly state that you will reimburse any reasonable expenses incurred by volunteers in their role. These expenses can include travel (to and from the place of volunteering), meals if purchased as part of their role, PPE or equipment to carry out the role Expenses must be relevant to the role</p> <p>Expense Limits: Set limits for specific expenses (e.g., meals and travel)</p> <p>Receipts and Records: Require volunteers to provide receipts for any expenses they incur. Keep records of the payments</p> <p>Clarify that you cannot pay volunteers fixed sums and all claims must be submitted in agreed process or they cannot be reimbursed.</p>



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	<p>Asylum Seekers</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Do not have bank accounts therefore you should make every effort to accommodate paying expenses in cash</p> <p>Remember, transparency and clear communication are essential in your volunteer expenses policy</p>
<p>Volunteer Code of Conduct Policy</p>	<p>A volunteer code of conduct policy outlines expectations for how volunteers should conduct themselves while representing an organization. It should define:</p> <p>Volunteer Relationships: Define appropriate behaviour when interacting with other volunteers, staff, and the public. Address respectful communication, teamwork, and collaboration.</p> <p>Behaviours: Specify expected conduct, including honesty, integrity, and reflecting organisational values. Prohibit fraudulent or dishonest actions. Address confidentiality and privacy.</p> <p>Communications: Encourage open and respectful communication. Set guidelines for in-person, phone, written, and digital interactions.</p> <p>Organisational Policies: Remind volunteers to comply with all applicable laws and organizational policies. Highlight any specific rules related to volunteer engagement</p>
<p>Volunteer Agreements</p>	<p>A volunteer agreement should outline what the organization offers to volunteers and what it expects from them.</p> <p>What the Organization Offers: Adequate induction and training for the volunteer role. Regular support provided to the volunteer. A named person to assist and support the volunteer. Treatment of volunteers in line with equal opportunities policies. Reimbursement of volunteer expenses. Insurance cover for volunteers. Adherence to good health and safety practices.</p> <p>Expectations from Volunteers: Following relevant policies and procedures (e.g., health and safety, confidentiality). Meeting agreed-upon expectations for the role (e.g., time commitment).</p> <p>Remember, volunteer agreements should avoid sounding like employment contracts to maintain the volunteer status and avoid granting full employment rights</p>



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Volunteer Inclusion Plan	<p>Creating a Volunteer Inclusion Plan (ViP) involves several steps to ensure it aligns with your organization’s values and goals around EDI and the vision for volunteering around inclusion when a volunteer identifies as needing support due to a health, long term condition or disability.</p> <p>The ViP is a non-clinical approach to starting a conversation based on the declarations made in the volunteer application.</p> <p>It is an additional step in volunteer recruitment to ensure you are showing due diligence to removing barriers and reducing discrimination</p> <p>Inclusion is a fundamental principle in recruiting and supporting volunteers because it ensures that everyone, regardless of their background, abilities, or circumstances, has the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the community.</p> <p>These conversations allow you as an organisation to discuss reasonable adjustments relevant to the role, the organisation's capacity and resources.</p> <p>The ViP is not static and should be used during support sessions to ensure that the organisation is complying with agreements and allows the volunteer to say if it is working within their role or if further adjustments need to be made.</p>
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