

Compact Code of Practice Volunteering

A companion document to

The Kirklees Compact

**A `framework` for working relationships between the voluntary & community,
public and private sectors within Kirklees**

Background to the Compact and Codes of Practice

The Compact is the agreement between the local public sector bodies and the local community and voluntary sector organisations. It describes a way of working that will benefit all partners. It is similar to other Compacts that have been drawn up in other areas across England and the national one that central government will work to. This code of practice supports the Compact and gives more detail in regard to volunteering. It is one of two that have been adopted by the Local Strategic Partnership in Kirklees.

Aims of the Code of Practice on Volunteering

- To enable and support more people across Kirklees to get involved in voluntary activity, strengthening local communities and networks.
- To enable and support organisations which rely on volunteers to flourish and develop.
- To expand the public perception of volunteering by improving the profile, status and range of voluntary activity.
- To overcome the barriers which make it more difficult for some people to become involved in volunteering.
- To promote good practice in working with volunteers by setting standards for this area of work which all partners are to work to.
- To give a clear strong message to volunteers that they are valued and vital to the economic and social well being of our communities.

Promoting and Developing Volunteering in Kirklees

For the purpose of this Code a Volunteer is defined as 'a person who offers their time, on an unpaid basis, to someone not related to them or to an organisation, to benefit the community'.

This code does not apply to people who are elected to office, or undertake positions of governance.

All sectors will:-

- Support the Good Practice Guidelines on Working with Volunteers (Page 5).
- Ensure that all annual reports and other publications acknowledge the nature, extent and value of the contribution of volunteers.
- Take positive steps to recruit and enable people from all sections of society to volunteer. It is acknowledged that there may be barriers which make it more difficult for some people to become involved in volunteering (eg people on low incomes, people claiming benefits, or people with any specific support needs). This code, and the organisations supporting it, aim to reduce and overcome these barriers.
- Encourage and enable employees to volunteer, through recognition and support.
- Recognise that managing and co-ordinating volunteers is an important role and needs to be properly resourced and supported, including training on working with volunteers, a budget for volunteer involvement (including expenses, and CRB checks if necessary) and time for supervision and support.
- Support initiatives to provide accessible information about volunteering opportunities and how to join in, at national, local and international level, including the use of internet technology.
- Develop partnerships with organisations which promote volunteering or work with volunteers to encourage greater coverage of volunteering, community activity and special volunteering events.
- Actively participate in volunteering events such as Volunteers Week to secure greater media coverage and a higher profile for volunteering and community activity.
- Recognise the essential role played by volunteering infrastructure bodies including Volunteering Kirklees.
- Encourage and enable (but not compel) accreditation of skills acquired through volunteering for recognised qualifications.

Commitments for funders and service purchasers in all sectors

- Ensure that all public bodies' budgets allocate funds and other necessary resources to support volunteering projects in their own organisations.
- Ensure all public sector organisations recognise the need to support voluntary and community organisations that are using volunteers. A key part of this is to accept volunteers' expenses as a legitimate cost when organisations submit project budgets.
- Guidance notes, application forms and other information materials produced by funders and service purchasers should make clear that:
 - Volunteer work should have an identified role and task description
 - Resources to support and manage volunteer involvement should be budgeted for, including volunteer expenses
 - The funder/purchaser recognises good practice in volunteer management as an essential aspect of community involvement and partnership
 - Where match funding is required, auditable records of volunteer time donated should be accepted as equal in status to private money. In many communities, people's volunteer time may be the only form of Community investment that can be afforded.

Commitments for support organisations

To use public funding received to provide the following at local level:

- Promotion of the opportunities and practice of volunteering in the local community, to individuals, agencies and volunteer-involving organisations
- Brokerage – giving information and guidance on volunteering opportunities, and signposting potential volunteers to organisations
- Dissemination of information on all aspects of volunteering, including government initiatives, development of local projects, and examples of good practice
- Development of new opportunities and projects involving volunteers
- Support for volunteer-involving organisations through networks, forums, and guidance on good practice
- Training for organisations, and assistance in linking their volunteers with training accreditation and qualification bodies
- Strategies that enable participation in volunteering by all members of the community, and work to remove barriers facing certain groups
- Arrangements for liaison between organisations and agencies eg benefit and employment agencies, to encourage community involvement and

promote better treatment of volunteers and understanding of how regulations apply to them.

Good Practice Guidelines for Working with Volunteers

All organisations involving volunteers should have a written Volunteers Policy stating why volunteers are involved, the roles they play, and the relationship between volunteers and paid staff.

Recruitment and Selection

- The organisation's Equal Opportunities Policy/Statement should be reflected in its volunteer recruitment practices.
- The selection process should consider the needs of the organisation, the needs of the prospective volunteer and their suitability for the role in question. Interviews should normally be conducted to allow both parties to find out about each other.
- Other vetting procedures, including the request for character references, CRB checks etc will be determined by the type of volunteering activity and clients involved. Risk assessments should be carried out on all activities and CRB checks done on volunteers working with vulnerable adults or children and young people aged under 18. For details of the Criminal Records Bureau, and the definition of vulnerable adults, see Appendix 1.

Support to Volunteers

Where groups are made up entirely of volunteers or self-help groups some of the issues below may not be able to be applied in full. However, support can be sought from umbrella organisations such as Voluntary Action Kirklees.

- Volunteers should:
 - be given suitable induction training
 - have a named contact person
 - have regular supervision appropriate to the tasks they undertake and their needs
 - have their training needs assessed and arrangements made to meet these
 - be given opportunities to contribute to the decision making of the organisation in the same ways as paid staff, where appropriate
 - be regarded as vital members of an organisation and its work.

- Organisations should:
 - regularly show appreciation for their volunteers' work
 - ensure volunteers have all the appropriate and up-to-date information to do their work
 - ensure that volunteers have a good support network
 - maintain regular contact with their volunteers.

Management of Volunteers

- The organisation's expectations of the volunteer should be made clear (preferably in writing), e.g. regarding Equality, Health and Safety.
- The volunteer's role, including the role boundaries, should be made clear.
- Volunteers should have access to the organisation's complaints/grievance procedures.
- Where an organisation is asking volunteers to deal with sensitive information about clients, details of the organisation's procedures for maintaining client confidentiality should be available and given to the volunteers.
- Information about volunteers is also a matter of confidentiality; for example, names, addresses, results of any vetting etc must be stored securely and not divulged to others except on a need to know basis.
- All organisations have both a moral and legal obligation to ensure the health and safety of their volunteers. There are different health and safety responsibilities according to the different types of activity. Organisations must have an appropriate health and safety policy which is explained to the volunteers.
- Volunteers must have basic insurance cover for the work they are doing, i.e. public and employer's liability and any relevant cover if they are involved in providing special services/activities. All volunteers should be made aware of the cover provided.
- Volunteers should be made aware of the organisation's policy and procedures for the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and given appropriate training.
- Organisations should offer to pay out of pocket expenses to volunteers, including travel, and childcare/care costs where possible. Proactive steps should be taken to secure funding to cover these expenses. The procedure for claiming expenses should be made simple and known to volunteers.

THIS CODE WAS PRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVES FROM KIRKLEES COUNCIL, VOLUNTARY ACTION KIRKLEES, WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE, LOCAL HEALTH ORGANISATIONS AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR GROUPS THAT WORK WITH VOLUNTEERS

APPENDIX 1

The definition of vulnerable adults used to determine whether there is entitlement to a standard or enhanced level check comes from the exceptions order of the rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Order 1975) as amended in 2002:

‘vulnerable adult’ means a person aged 18 or over who has a condition of the following type:

- i) a substantial learning or physical disability;
- ii) a physical or mental illness or mental disorder, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs; or
- iii) a significant reduction in physical or mental capacity.

(from ‘Volunteers and the Law’; Volunteering England 2005)

More information on CRB checks can be obtained from the CRB and Disclosure websites:

www.crb.gov.uk

www.disclosure.gov.uk

or the Criminal Records Helpline on 0870 9090 811