

Thinking about.....involving volunteers

Involving volunteers for the first time or simply moving towards a more structured way of volunteer management can feel very daunting. The good news is that there is lots of help and advice available. The aim of this guidance note is to identify some key good practice principles and to signpost on to other sources of support and information.

New to involving volunteers?

Before embarking on this significant journey, it is important to take some time to consider the following:

- Why would you like to involve volunteers?
- What kind of tasks will volunteers carry out?
- Is everyone on board with involving volunteers?
- What is your application process for selecting volunteers?
- Who will be responsible for looking after volunteers?
- Have you got the resources to involve volunteers?
- Have you got a Volunteer Policy, a Health & Safety Policy and sufficient insurance?

If your answers to these questions have raised issues for the organisation that cannot be resolved, you will need to consider if it is appropriate to involve volunteers at this time.

Where can you go to find out more?

This guidance note touches on the basics that organisations using volunteers need to consider. There is a wealth of information available online for anyone who wants to know more about these topics. Here is a short list of further useful resources.

Malvern Hills Volunteering offers help and advice on volunteer recruitment and volunteering good practice.

www.malvernhillsvolunteering.org.uk

Malvern: Kay Bromley 07510 012092 Tenbury, Upton & rural areas: Jacqueline Smith 07935 407190

NCVO champions the voluntary sector and volunteering. NCVO membership offers organisations a range of benefits and a number of NCVO Information Sheets are freely available online.

www.ncvo.org.uk

KnowHow Nonprofit is NCVO's main advice and support website. You'll find lots of information on all areas of volunteer and voluntary sector management.

www.knowhownonprofit.org

A number of Volunteer Centres around the country have developed excellent resources that are freely available. eg.

www.brightonhovevolunteers.org.uk www.volunteernow.co.uk

Are you volunteer ready? A good practice checklist for organisations involving volunteers

Involving volunteers in your work requires good planning and preparation. The following checklist is based on indicators identified by Investing in Volunteers quality standards (iiv) - the UK quality standard for good practice in volunteer management. Completing this checklist will give you an idea of where your organisation is with respect to the management of volunteers. It is intended to help you build a good foundation for involving volunteers and think about where your organisation would like to take volunteering in the future.

The full Investing in Volunteers (iiv) Standard can be found here <http://iiv.investinginvolunteers.org.uk/>.

| Good practice principle | Met / unmet/ unsure |
|---|------------------------|
| The organisation has a written policy on volunteer involvement that sets out the organisation's values for volunteer involvement and highlights the need for procedures for managing volunteers, based on principles of equality and diversity. | |
| The organisation designates responsibility for recruiting, selecting, supporting and protecting volunteers, to a key person or group of people within the organisation; and these responsibilities are clearly outlined in job or role descriptions and regularly reviewed. | |
| Time is given during staff meetings to discuss volunteer issues. | |
| The organisation seeks to secure adequate financial resources to cover the running of the volunteer programme and ensure that all volunteers have the necessary resources and materials to carry out their role. | |
| The organisation is open to involving volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities, and commits the necessary resources. | |
| A 'description' is drawn up for each volunteer role. | |
| The organisation sets out the necessary skills, attitude, experience and availability needed to carry out the role. | |
| An assessment of potential risk to volunteers is conducted when designing volunteer roles. | |
| Volunteers are covered by appropriate insurance. | |
| There is a clear policy on the reimbursement of volunteers' out of pocket expenses which is rooted in the organisational ethos, and which takes account of the organisation's financial situation. | |
| Volunteers' personal details are protected in line with Data Protection principles. | |
| People interested in volunteering are provided with clear information about the opportunities, the recruitment and selection procedure, what volunteers can expect from the organisation, and what the organisation's expectations are. | |
| Volunteers are informed if their application is unsuccessful and are offered feedback and are signposted to other organisations as appropriate. | |
| The organisation's approach to the use of official checks takes into account the relevant Government guidelines, and the roles in which volunteers will be placed. | |
| All new volunteers are introduced to the relevant paid staff and other volunteers with whom they will come into contact. | |
| Volunteers are provided with the necessary information and/or training to carry out their role, including any policies as appropriate. | |
| There is clarity between the volunteer and the organisation about the boundaries of the volunteers' roles. | |
| All volunteers know what forms of support/supervision the organisation offers them, and who to contact regarding their role. | |
| Management Committee/Trustees and paid staff recognise the value of volunteers' contributions and communicate effectively their appreciation to volunteers, both formally and informally. | |
| Volunteers leaving the organisation, who have made a regular commitment to it, are offered a reference and/or other statement of their achievements. | |