

DUDLEY COMMUNITY



PARTNERSHIP
achieving together

Compact Code of Practice For Volunteering

1. Introduction

1.1 What is the Volunteering Code of Good Practice?

This Code of Good Practice forms part of the Dudley Compact. It is one of a number of Codes of Practice being developed that will supplement the Compact.

Dudley Community Strategy's vision is the promotion of stronger communities. An indicator of a strong community is a high number of community volunteers who frequently give their time for the benefit of others.

This Code aims to make a positive impact on the relationship between the public sector and the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in the Dudley Borough and their commitment to volunteering. It is envisaged that this code will enable and support more people getting involved in the varied forms of voluntary activity that are a vital part of active citizenship.

1.2 The Dudley Compact

The Dudley Compact was published in 2003 and is an important building block in improving and strengthening relationships between the local sectors. It recognises the unique role and added value of the work of Voluntary and Community Organisations and has been endorsed by the Dudley Community Partnership (DCP) and a wide range of organisations in both sectors.

1.3 Aims and Context

This code has been drawn up using the Government's Compact Code on Volunteering by a sub-group of Dudley Volunteer Organisers Network, overseen by the Compact Steering Group. The code aims to set a shared vision and framework for:

- Understanding the broad range of volunteering
- Raising the profile of volunteering in the Dudley Borough
- Improving the recognition, value and understanding of the importance of volunteers in the delivery of service provision across all sectors
- Enabling more people to become involved in varied forms of volunteering
- Encouraging better practice in the management, support and training of volunteers
- Enabling access to volunteering opportunities and actively encouraging a diverse range of people to volunteer
- Removing the barriers to volunteering

2. Definition, scope and importance of volunteering and community activity

2.1 Definition of Volunteering

Volunteering has been described as “an important expression of citizenship and essential to democracy. It is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society, the community; the environment or individuals and can take many forms. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain”. (UK Volunteering Forum)

Another operational definition is “any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit someone (individuals or groups) other than or in addition to close relatives, or to benefit the environment.” (Institute for Volunteering Research)

2.3 Scope of voluntary and community involvement

The scope of voluntary and community involvement, as outlined by the Active Community Unit, includes:

- Helping provide a service as an unpaid volunteer within a voluntary or community organisation, the public sector or a private sector body
- Taking part in running a voluntary or community organisation, as a trustee or board or committee member
- Serving as a non-executive member of a public body or participating in civic governance
- Leading a voluntary initiative, usually as part of a voluntary organisation or community group, to improve the quality of life for people in a neighbourhood or community of interest
- In a group activity, within a neighbourhood or community of interest, providing a community service, or campaigning for a public cause
- Employer supported community involvement
- Helping develop public policy through involvement in consultation processes and campaigning
- Volunteering overseas
- Faith volunteering, around involvement in a faith congregation or community
- Young people volunteering e.g. Duke of Edinburgh

2.4 The Importance of Volunteering and Community Activity

Volunteering is a very valuable way to gain skills and experience, and build confidence and self-worth. It may also be a stepping-stone to other volunteering activities, education, training or employment.

In the Dudley Borough, there is a huge range of opportunities for volunteers, including working in health and social care, arts, sports, heritage and environment organisations and initiatives. Volunteers provide many support services for local people, including information and advice, transport, befriending, visiting and practical help.

2.5 Proportionality

When using this code of practice, it is important to recognise issues of proportionality. For a number of organisations, particularly smaller community groups who are entirely run by volunteers, some of the areas within this code will appear overly bureaucratic. It is important to have a balanced approach to these which will allow such groups time to develop and work towards reaching the areas

of good practice. The Volunteer Centre will, over a period of time, be able to offer support and guidance, and help build the capacity of such organisations.

2.6 **Volunteering Audit**

In June-August 2005, Dudley Council for Voluntary Service undertook an audit to highlight the contribution made by volunteers in the Dudley Borough. Copies of this report are available from the Volunteer Centre.

3. Key Principles for Effective Volunteering

3.1 Volunteering should be Appropriate

Volunteering is a powerful force for change, both for those who volunteer and for the wider community. Volunteering should be a quality experience for both the volunteer and the organisation. The volunteering experience and contribution is unique. The relationship volunteers have with organisations that involve them is both distinct from and different from that of an employee. Partners will ensure that they will work together to promote policies, which recognise differences in volunteer's motivation and contribution. This will also be reflected in the way that volunteers are managed by organisations.

- Volunteers must be appropriate to an organisation's needs and the organisation appropriate to the volunteer's needs, to ensure a mutually beneficial relationship. [See Appendix 1]
- The culture and the structure of an organisation must be such that it enables volunteering to take place in order to ensure a quality and satisfying experience for all concerned.
- The scale of resources within organisations must be sufficient to support the level of volunteering needed in order to ensure realistic expectations are fulfilled, and a positive experience of volunteering.
- Organisations should examine their overall purpose, values and objectives, particularly focusing on how involving volunteers might relate to the purpose, values and objectives of the organisation.

3.2 Choice

Volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual, without any form of sanction, penalty, pressure or coercion.

3.3 Diversity

Volunteering should be open to all, whatever their background, age, race, sexual orientation or faith. Implementing equalities policies and schemes and a welcoming approach are key to supporting diversity.

3.4 Mutual Benefit

Volunteers offer their contribution unwaged but should benefit in other ways in return for their contribution to the community. Giving voluntary time and skills must be recognised as establishing a reciprocal relationship in which the volunteer also receives. Benefits that volunteers can expect to gain include a sense of worthwhile achievement, useful skills, career enhancement and enrichment, personal and social development, experience and contacts, sociability and fun and inclusion in the life of an organisation.

3.5 Recognition

Explicit recognition of the value of what volunteers contribute to the organisation, to the community, to the social economy and to wider social objectives, is fundamental to a fair relationship between volunteers, organisation and government policy and practice.

3.6 Support

Good support, management and training of volunteers are an essential part of volunteering. For volunteers to have a worthwhile experience and to feel valued, as well as being able to contribute to an organisation's objectives, they must be well supported.

3.7 **Assessing the Impact of Volunteering**

Volunteering works best when the benefits of volunteering can be demonstrated. In order to develop and constantly improve organisations need to be able to show the benefits that volunteering has made. This can include the impact on:

- The volunteer themselves
- The organisation
- The service users or beneficiaries
- The wider community

3.8 All sectors that engage with volunteers should try to measure the performance and effectiveness of their activities against other regional and national organisations. Regular reviews will show the benefits of volunteering and will help the development of the organisation and services offered and the development of individual volunteers.

4. Framework for Volunteering

Because volunteers are active in all areas of life and have a wealth of expertise, energy and experience to offer their communities, all decision-makers need to be aware of ways that their actions and decisions may affect community and voluntary activity. Public sector organisations can play a vital strategic role here by enabling volunteering and community activity to contribute to wider social policy objectives.

4.1 Statutory Sector Undertakings

The statutory sector recognises the role of volunteers in undertaking valuable work that often complements the work of paid staff and also recognises that although volunteers give their time freely, they may need the resources with which to work. It is also recognised that volunteers bring a range of skills and experiences to their voluntary work.

The Statutory Sector undertakes to:

1. Recognise the work that volunteers do and not expect volunteers to do the work that should be undertaken by paid staff.
2. Not exploit volunteers and ensure that equal status, treatment and back-up resources for community or lay members of public bodies are in place.
3. Recognise and support the role of volunteers on management committees and boards of trustees.
4. Work to ensure barriers to volunteering are overcome by:
 - Providing assistance with Criminal Records Bureau checks and/or setting up the process for undertaking these checks through a local development agency (Volunteer Centre);
 - Recognising the need for volunteer out of pocket expenses;
 - Recognising the legitimacy of the costs of volunteering in organisations' budgets;
 - Exploring and developing volunteering opportunities within the statutory sector;
 - Promoting volunteering within the statutory sector;
 - Ensuring that all funded organisations have a volunteering policy in place;
 - Ensuring recruitment process of volunteers is inclusive and reflects equal opportunities and diversity.
5. Support initiatives to promote accessible information about volunteering opportunities at local, regional, national and international level.
6. Where the statutory sector directly manages volunteers, act on relevant undertakings for the voluntary and community sector, as set out in sections (4.2, 6, 8 and Appendix 1) of this code.
7. Endeavour to assist volunteers to access skills development, recognising that personal development should be individually tailored to broaden opportunities, including accreditation.

8. Fund and actively support local development agencies (e.g. Dudley CVS Volunteer Centre) to promote voluntary and community involvement and raise awareness of the value of volunteering with policy makers across all sections.

4.2 Voluntary & Community Sector Undertakings

Voluntary and community organisations carry out a number of roles in relation to volunteering. Both can develop, promote, celebrate and provide opportunities for volunteering and community activity. [See 2.5 pg 3-4 - Proportionality]

Recognising this the sector will:

1. Develop policies for working with volunteers, identifying key responsibilities for both the volunteer and the organisation, in order to be inclusive and as accessible as possible – no barriers to volunteering.
2. Recognise the importance of high standards and effective management of volunteers, and that fulfilling this responsibility requires allocation of additional resources.
3. Identify an appropriate person with authority in the organisation to be responsible for ensuring volunteer involvement and for monitoring and reporting on it, as well as championing volunteering.
4. Endeavour to assist volunteers to access skills development, recognising that personal development should be individually tailored to broaden opportunities, including accreditation.
5. Work in partnership with other agencies to ensure that no volunteer's potential is wasted, developing referral systems to enable this. Organisations/agencies that provide infrastructure support for voluntary and community groups should provide support for these systems.
6. Take action and campaign on behalf of small developing groups (particularly BME community groups and disability groups) to ensure barriers to volunteering are broken down.
7. Undertake Criminal Records Bureau and other checks e.g. references, as appropriate to the role of the volunteer.
8. Champion and promote volunteering generally and support the statutory sector in developing key volunteering policies and practices.

4.3 Partnerships & Community Participation

1. Partnership initiatives involving organisations from both sectors are an important aspect of modernising public services and regenerating disadvantaged communities.
2. In the Dudley Borough, examples include:
 - Regeneration partnerships such as the Economic Development & Regeneration Partnership
 - Health and care partnerships such as Sure Start, frequently involve service users on their committees

- Area-based forums feeding in to the Local Strategic Partnership and community planning
3. Partnership boards and committees should ensure that:
- The involvement of volunteers and community representatives is worthwhile, rewarding and appropriate.
 - Explicit responsibility for volunteer involvement and interests is allocated to a named board or committee member.
 - Processes for the reimbursement of volunteers' expenses in attending meetings are straightforward and speedy.
 - Opportunities to contribute to and be a member of partnerships are widely publicised.
 - There are clear policies in place to ensure equal status, treatment and resources for community or volunteer members, including opportunities for continued personal development.
 - Meetings, structures and processes are managed appropriately, taking account of the needs and situations of community or lay members.

4.4 **Mutual Undertakings & Agreed Principles**

Both statutory and voluntary sectors will:

1. Recognise that more can be achieved for the benefit of local residents by working together effectively and striving for equal access.
2. Apply and adhere to the principles of this code of practice in their work with volunteers.
3. Strive to treat volunteers with respect and care, and protect them from exploitation.
4. Maintain the principles of this code of practice in service provision agreements between the statutory and voluntary/community sector organisations.
5. Ensure proper records are kept of how funding supports volunteering, and the value this produces.
6. Recognise that, as part of the mutual relationship, volunteers should be given thanks and recognition for their contribution. All organisations should ensure volunteers receive fair treatment, training, supervision and support and a clear definition of roles and responsibilities.
7. Ensure that volunteers reflect the diversity of the local community.
8. Ensure that opportunities for volunteering will be meaningful with recognised outcomes.
9. In partnership review the strengths and weaknesses of local volunteering information and infrastructure, and make recommendations based on best practice examples identified.
10. Strive to include volunteers at all levels during consultation, review and development of services.

5. Investing in Volunteering & Community Involvement

- 5.1 Volunteers give their time freely but need resources with which to work. The key to enabling people on lower incomes to become involved is to ensure their volunteer activity does not leave them out of pocket.
- 5.2 Funded organisations should offer to reimburse any actual out-of-pocket expenses incurred, which may include care costs. There is also a need to ensure proper records are kept of how funding supports volunteering and the value this produces.
- 5.3 It is important to recognise the importance of high standards and effective management of volunteers and that fulfilling this responsibility requires allocation of organisational resources. The most basic of these is dedicated paid staff time.
- 5.4 This may mean that an identified senior manager has to take responsibility for volunteer involvement and for monitoring and reporting. It may also be necessary to identify a Management Committee member to champion volunteering.
- 5.5 Staff involved in recruiting, inducting and managing volunteers should have this work recognised as part of their job descriptions, work plans and receive appropriate training and support.
- 5.6 Volunteers should be recognised for their efforts in appropriate ways and where possible they should be offered personal development, including appropriate accredited training.



A 2005 survey from the Institute for Volunteering Research found that for every £1 that volunteer-involving organisations spend on supporting volunteering, they can expect a notional payback of up to 14 times.

6. Barriers to Volunteering

- 6.1 There are significant barriers to volunteering. The effect of these is to reduce the opportunity and motivation for individuals to become involved in volunteer activity. Government and the voluntary and community sector will ensure that they will challenge through policy work barriers to volunteering including institutional, geographical and attitudes
- 6.2 The statutory and voluntary and community sectors are committed to making it easier for people to get involved and to work towards inclusive volunteering policies and practices. Both sectors agree to work together to identify and dismantle barriers to volunteering and community involvement.
- 6.3 Some of the barriers are attitudinal, Commitments on 'Promoting Volunteering' (in section 8 of this code) will tackle these.
- 6.4 Some real and perceived barriers to volunteering have been identified, and include:
- Organisational stereotypes that discriminate against people by race, culture, gender, sexuality, age, health status, disability, faith, criminal conviction and life style;
 - Lack of understanding of benefits rules;
 - Volunteers being out of pocket if they are not paid expenses;
 - Poor image of volunteering in the media and amongst young people in particular;
 - Social isolation, which can make it difficult to obtain information about volunteering;
 - Lack of appropriate information regarding volunteering;
 - A lack of clarity and consensus about what constitutes volunteering activity;
 - The perception about what constitutes voluntary activity; what commitment is required and the perception that volunteering will take over rather than enrich their lives.

7. Volunteering Infrastructure

- 7.1 The volunteering infrastructure is the physical facilities, structures, systems, relationships, people, knowledge and skills that exist to support and develop, co-ordinate, represent and promote front-line organisations, thus enabling them to deliver their aims more effectively.

The volunteering infrastructure has a unique role in supporting the volunteers, volunteer-involving organisations, the wider voluntary and community, statutory and private sectors, as well as delivering volunteering initiatives and programmes.

Both the Government and the voluntary and community sector agree that public funding should be invested in creating and maintaining a modern, dynamic volunteering infrastructure.

- 7.2 At national and regional level there are a range of umbrella organisations that deliver different aspects of the volunteer development function. At a local level there should be one specialist volunteer development agency e.g. Dudley CVS Volunteer Centre, delivering the volunteer development functions. That agency should work with other agencies locally to develop volunteering. The volunteer development functions will be delivered from different perspectives at a local, regional and national level but in complementary ways.

Brokerage

The volunteering infrastructure will hold information on volunteering opportunities. It will offer potential volunteers support and advice in matching their motivations to volunteer with appropriate volunteering opportunities.

Marketing Volunteering

The volunteering infrastructure will aim to stimulate and encourage interest in voluntary and community activity. It will market and promote volunteering through local, regional and national events and campaigns. It will manage and promote a national brand for local volunteering infrastructure.

Good Practice Development

The volunteering infrastructure will have an active commitment to promoting good practice in working with volunteers to all volunteer-involving organisations, and will actively support this. After consultation, it will develop and deliver training and accreditation strategies for potential volunteers, volunteers, volunteer managers and volunteering infrastructure organisations.

Developing Volunteer Opportunities

The volunteering infrastructure will take a strategic approach to the development of volunteering opportunities. It will work in close partnership with other statutory, voluntary and private sector agencies, as well as with community and faith groups, to develop imaginative opportunities (both formal and informal) for potential volunteers.

Policy Response and Campaigning

Supporting and working in partnership with voluntary sector colleagues, and challenging/campaigning on issues relating to volunteering in the Borough.

Strategic Development of Volunteering

Supporting Volunteering England in their strategic development role.

8. Promoting Volunteering

8.1 The statutory and voluntary/community sectors agree to promote the status of volunteering and community involvement. Ways to achieve this could be:

- Promotion of volunteering events such as Volunteers Week and Make a Difference Awards to secure greater media coverage, and a higher public profile for volunteering and community activity;
- Developing and promoting innovative programmes for enabling the contribution of volunteers;
- Developing partnerships between organisations and the media to encourage greater media coverage in order to inspire, promote and encourage individual volunteers, community activities and special volunteering events;
- Use of information and communication technology (ICT) to communicate volunteering information via the Internet, while ensuring organisations without access to ICT are not excluded;
- Encourage and develop networking opportunities e.g. Dudley Volunteer Organisers Network to increase awareness of volunteering opportunities.

9. Implementing the Code of Practice

- 9.1 The Compact and its associated Codes of Good Practice are not intended to be documents that are never changed. All parties involved in the Compact will have much to learn and experience will undoubtedly show the need to revise some aspects of the documents. Therefore there will be regular opportunities to revise and update this document in light of experience.
- 9.2 Responsibility for overseeing the implementation and development of the Dudley Borough Compact and its associated Codes of Practice lies with Dudley Community Partnership's Compact Steering Group. This group is made up of key partners from the statutory and voluntary and community sectors.
- 9.3 The steering group meets quarterly to review implementation, monitor targets and timescales and further develop the Compact and its Codes of Practice.
- 9.4 As a minimum standard this Code will be reviewed each year as part of the Compact annual review process. This will be linked to the Borough Conference.
- 9.5 Partners will work together to encourage all public sector organisations and voluntary and community organisations who involve volunteers to adopt this code.
- 9.6 Feedback from statutory partners and voluntary and community organisations on their experience of using this document is essential.
- 9.7 Each of the agencies, and within Dudley MBC each directorate, has a Compact 'champion' to oversee the implementation of the Compact within their area of work.
- Their role is to:
- oversee Directorate contact with voluntary and community sector bodies;
 - review the effectiveness of the service in adhering to the Compact; and
 - provide a point of liaison and referral for the Sector if there are felt to be issues arising from that Service's contact with the Sector.
- 9.8 It should be emphasised this does not mean that contact with partners is limited to, or should be exclusively directed towards these Champions. The Compact Champion will, however, try to help you with any queries under the Compact. Issues can also be raised with Andy Gray, Chief Officer, Dudley CVS (Chair of Steering Group) and any questions of principle will be referred to the Dudley Community Partnership's Compact Steering Group.

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Dudley MBC Compact Champions:

Chief Executives/General Compact Enquiries:

Geoff Thomas ☎ 01384 815270 and
Simon Manson ☎ 01384 814713

Education & Life Long Learning:

Dewi Williams ☎ 01384 815184 and
Cindy Peek ☎ 01384 815206

Finance, ICT and Procurement:

Menna Flavell ☎ 01384 814807

Housing:

Tony Arthurs ☎ 01384 812508

Social Services:

Mike Marshall ☎ 01384 815146 and
Christine Ballinger ☎ 01384 813061

Urban Environment:

Andy Webb ☎ 01384 815579

To contact any of the Champions from Dudley MBC, please ask for the appropriate person on: ☎ 01384 818181

Other partner Champions:

Dudley Beacon and Castle PCT:

Val Little ☎ 01384 239376

Dudley South PCT:

Alan Torbet ☎ 01384 366124

Dudley Group of Hospitals:

Ann Close ☎ 01384 456111

Other contacts:

Dudley CVS:

Andy Gray ☎ 01384 78166

Dudley Community Partnership:

Dennis Hodson ☎ 01384 814756

Dudley Racial Equality Council:

Kenneth Rodney ☎ 01384 456166

You can get a copy of the Compact and its Codes of Practice by visiting the following:

www.dudleycvs.org.uk/compact or www.dudley.gov.uk

Thanks to:

The Dudley Community Partnership would like to express its thanks to the following people who worked on this Code:

Kate Coxon	Age Concern Dudley
Ann Evett	Thomas Pocklington Resource Centre
Eileen Fielding	Dudley CVS Volunteer Centre
Tina Hanson-Jones	Supporting People Project
Suzanne Oliver	Dudley Children's Fund
Jane Pilsbury	Dudley Group of Hospitals
Sharon Sinclair	W.R.V.S.
Dewi Williams	Community Education & Lifelong Learning (DMBC)

Key Principles And Good Practice Guidelines To Volunteering

- Volunteers should be recruited to enhance a service not to replace paid staff
- Before recruiting, be clear why a volunteer is wanted or needed
- Organisations should provide clear written task descriptions for their volunteers and agreements
- Opportunities should be developed for volunteers, which are skills based – meaningful tasks with opportunities for personal development
- Provide the volunteer with an induction and preparation/training programme, and where appropriate, additional support for volunteers with disabilities
- Be clear about what volunteers are seeking from the placement
- Make sure the volunteer has appropriate line management and knows whom to contact about problems or difficulties
- Establish a simple and easily accessible process for volunteers to claim out of pocket expenses
- Ensure that health and safety standards for volunteers are in place, including risk assessment of the work volunteers will be doing
- Ensure that volunteers are covered by appropriate insurance
- Ensure that a range of policies are in place and applied equally to volunteers e.g. Diversity and/or Equal Opportunities, Policies on harassment including race, sexuality, disability, age and faith, Complaints and grievance policies for volunteers, Disciplinary policies, Confidentiality policies
- Organisations should meet the costs of compulsory training for volunteers
- Encourage volunteers to participate in the organisation's wider decision- making processes
- Where appropriate, provide opportunities for volunteers to acquire or develop new or existing skills, and support volunteers who want to gain accreditation towards recognised qualifications
- Monitor and acknowledge the contribution volunteers make to the organisation to funders, other volunteers and the wider public
- Ensure that the work and contribution of the volunteers adds value and quality to the organisation's aims and objectives
- Ensure that the organisation's working practices do not create obstacles for volunteers, or for potential volunteers from a wide and diverse range of backgrounds
- Ensuring that staff are involved and informed so that volunteers are integrated within the staff team
- Organisations should ensure that their working practices offer appropriate protection to volunteers, as well as paid staff. Support should be available to volunteers going through these processes.

Volunteers' Charter – Rights and Responsibilities

Volunteers' Rights

- To be given a clear idea of their tasks and responsibilities within the organisation.
- To be given the name of someone in the organisation who will look after their interests and who will offer them appropriate support, and supervision on a regular basis.
- To be assured that any information shared with the organisation is kept confidential.
- To be given the same protection under health and safety regulations and public liability as paid employees.
- To be offered opportunities for training and skills development, appropriate for the voluntary tasks involved.
- To be given the chance to play a part in decision-making within the organisation.
- Volunteers should not: -
 - Be used to replace paid workers
 - Have unfair demands made on their time
 - Be asked to do something which is against their principles or beliefs
- Not to be out of pocket through doing voluntary work. Travel and other out-of-pocket expenses should be offered by all funded organisations.

Volunteers' Responsibilities

- To support and embrace the organisation's aims, values and objectives.
- To do what is reasonably requested of them, to the best of their ability.
- To treat information obtained whilst volunteering in a confidential manner - this can be information about clients or other workers, paid and unpaid.
- To recognise the right of the organisation to expect quality of service from all its volunteers.
- To recognise that they represent the organisation and therefore need to act in an appropriate manner at all times.
- To honour any commitment made to the best of their abilities, notifying the organisation in good time should they be unable to keep that commitment e.g. for holidays.
- To be willing to undertake appropriate training with respect to Health and Safety issues, Insurance liability and general good practice as necessary for the voluntary work undertaken.
- To offer suggestions for changes/improvements in working practices with the Volunteer Organiser.

Employee Volunteering – What Employers should do

The following are points for employers to consider:

- Aim to establish flexible working practices and adopt 'time-off' policies for volunteering in line with leave policies, public duties and family responsibilities. Such flexibility may range from a few hours a month to longer-term secondments.
- Think about establishing an employee-volunteering scheme. Provide guidelines on what resources the organisation will provide e.g. use of accommodation/facilities, match funding, time-off in lieu and secondments, to assist employees who volunteer.
- Seek to identify volunteering activities compatible with the organisation's aims. Develop links and relationships with voluntary and community groups, and overseas development agencies.
- Ensure that voluntary and community activity is incorporated into staff development and human resource policies, and that it is valued and recognised.



All of the major Government Departments have signed up to the Prime Minister's Active Community Challenge for employers to give their employees the equivalent of a day's paid time to volunteer. The Government is encouraging employers from all sectors of society to similarly make a commitment to this challenge.



A new survey by the CSV Make a Difference Day Campaign and Barclays, reveals that half (53%) of staff who give time to local communities through employee volunteering, feel more productive in the workplace.



The same survey also found that 88% of employees felt that employee volunteering had improved staff morale.

Diversity

People from different backgrounds can bring fresh ideas and skills to volunteering. Managing diversity requires action to ensure organisations have an open workplace culture based on trust and mutual respect. In such a culture people value each other and treat each other with dignity. Personal backgrounds and characteristics must not prejudice decisions about the suitability of individuals for volunteering, or how they are managed.

Managing diversity requires an integrated approach to equality. Like equal opportunities, it requires that all decisions about volunteering and the training of people are objective, based on merit and relate to personal development criteria. It broadens the concept of equal opportunities beyond these issues covered by law. It welcomes difference and recognises that action might be needed to give everyone a chance to contribute on equal terms. It recognises that the organisation may need to become more flexible and adaptable in order to realise the full potential of the volunteers.

Diversity policies should cover a wide range of personal differences, including academic or vocational qualification, accent, age, caring responsibilities, ethnic origin, gender, learning difficulties, marital status, physical and mental disabilities, political affiliation, previous mental illness, religion, sexual orientation, spent or irrelevant convictions, trade union or non-trade union membership.

NB *This section has been taken from the Compact Volunteering: a Code of Good Practice, Appendix 2: 'Promoting a Diverse Volunteer Base'.*

Questions to ask before you involve volunteers

- Why are you recruiting volunteers?
- Is the Organisation at all levels in favour of volunteers – are there any worries over redundancies, job substitutions, falls in standard, role conflict etc.?
- Have you a budget for volunteers e.g. for travel expenses? Is it based on realistic costings?
- Do similar organisations you know involve volunteers? What is their experience?
- Have you looked at legal implications, confidentiality and safety?
- Are there specific problems that volunteers may face, e.g. safety or health risk, advice liability?
- Volunteers bring new dimensions, new skills and enthusiasm. Can your organisation cope with change?
- Have you allocated staff time to manage volunteers long-term and in the start-up phase? (Ideally the role of volunteer co-ordinator should be undertaken by a single member of staff for continuity).
- Will your staff (volunteer co-ordinator) require further training for the role?
- Have you estimated the staff time required and cost to train and manage volunteers?
- Have you sufficient space available and sufficient equipment etc. to accommodate volunteers.
- How will the client group react to volunteer involvement – ask them?
- Have you thought about your volunteer policy and what will be included within it?
- Do you have a written task outline for any volunteer roles, which give a clear idea of their tasks and responsibilities within the organisation?
- Have you taken specialist advice (contacted your own national headquarters etc and your local Volunteer Centre)?
- For further guidance, please see Appendix 1 - Key Principles And Good Practice Guidelines To Volunteering and Appendix 2 – When not to use Volunteers

When not to involve Volunteers

Do not involve a volunteer if any of the following apply:

- The work is intended to make a profit
- There is no adequate provision of support, supervision, training or space for volunteers
- Expenses, necessary clothing or equipment, and/or adequate insurance cover are not provided
- The work is widely considered in that locality to be the responsibility of a statutory service

- The volunteer would be performing a task formerly (or even currently) done by a paid worker and his/her involvement would reduce the likelihood of staff being replaced
- The involvement of volunteers would jeopardise the wages or employment conditions of paid staff, particularly those in low-paid jobs
- There is a disagreement within the organisation about the nature and purpose of volunteer involvement
- The volunteer does not perceive any value in the work, or any opportunity to develop his/her skills and talents
- The task is such that the volunteer is expected to do tasks for individuals having the means to pay someone to do the work
- There is no commitment to make sure that all sections of the community can volunteer i.e. no Equal Opportunities Policy
- Unacceptable risks are involved e.g. physical danger or violence
- Volunteers can play no part in decision making

Useful Contacts

www.thecompact.org.uk

Comprehensive resource on the Compact includes materials to download, good practice examples and news and articles

www.volunteering.org.uk

Offers a range of resources for anyone who works with or manages volunteers as well as those who want to volunteer

www.energizeinc.com

Aimed at Volunteer Managers

www.voluntarysectorskills.org.uk

Skills development in the voluntary and community sector – for paid staff, volunteers and trustees

www.dudleycvs.org.uk

For information on voluntary and community sector issues e.g. funding, constitutions, volunteering issues etc. There is a Volunteering page with general information for volunteers and a link from this page to a good practice page for volunteer-involving organisations: www.dudleycvs.org.uk/volunteering.htm

www.crbdisclosures.co.uk

Information on Criminal Records Bureau Checks