





VOLUNTEERING

A General Guide for all Potential Volunteers

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Welcome to the world of volunteering!!

The purpose of this booklet is to offer guidance to all current and *potential* volunteers.

Volunteering Development England promotes volunteering as a powerful force for change, both for those who volunteer and the wider community. In increasing the quality, quantity, contribution and accessibility of volunteering in England, we will campaign to remove barriers and ensure that volunteering is kept high on the policy Agenda.

What is a Volunteer?

A volunteer is an individual who willingly gives their time, energy and skills without pay, to benefit people in their communities. Volunteers make a vital contribution to all aspects of community life.

What do Volunteer Centres do?

- We hold information about the different types of voluntary work available.
- We can have a confidential informal discussion regarding the different types of work you are interested in. Furthermore we can contact the appropriate organisation on your behalf.
- We can offer support if you are experiencing difficulties within your placement.
- Together with offering advice, training and support to organisations that seek volunteer help, Volunteer Centres also assist organisations to develop new volunteering opportunities.
- Volunteer Centres try to ensure that volunteers are not discriminated against and that volunteers are supported in their voluntary activity.

General Responsibilities of Volunteers

- To support and embrace the organisation's aims 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 & safety issues, insurance liability and general good practice as necessary for the voluntary work undertaken.
- To abide by any relevant policies and procedures.
- To offer suggestions for changes/improvements in working practices to the Volunteer Co-ordinator/Project Officer.

Volunteer's 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 & safety regulations and public liability as paid employees.

- To be offered opportunities for training and skills development, appropriate for the voluntary tasks involved.
- To have a complementary relationship with paid staff, who should be fully aware of the role and responsibilities of a volunteer.
- To have access i.e. through volunteer meetings etc., and to play a part in the decision-making process of the organisation/project.
- To be informed about the agency's policies relevant to the volunteer i.e. health & safety, grievance and disciplinary procedures.
- To be provided with appropriate equipment, tools and materials associated to their tasks.
- Volunteers may join a trade union relevant to the work in which they are involved. NUPE, MSF and UNISON currently welcome volunteers into their membership.
- To be supported when things go wrong and to be encouraged to learn from their mistakes or difficulties.
- 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
 - ♦ Be subject to any discrimination e.g. on the basis of race, sexuality, age, gender
 - ♦ Be out of pocket through undertaking voluntary work – travel and other expenses should be reimbursed

(Full Information on Rights & Responsibilities will be determined and imparted by the Voluntary Organisation with whom you have agreed to undertake voluntary work)

Some Feedback from other Volunteers

We like to get feedback from volunteers who have come through the Volunteer Centre. The following quotes have been taken from the responses to the question 'How would you describe your volunteering experience' on the volunteer feedback forms:

“Invaluable - have been sent on lots of training courses, which I believe have helped me now secure a new post [paid] elsewhere part-time.” **Lisa**

“I really enjoy it and feel a valued member of the team”

Roy

“Great, makes you feel you are making a difference for someone else”. **Bridget**

“Excellent, I feel the work is valuable. Everyone is pleasant and helpful”

Mark

“Extremely good - I have had the opportunity to try different aspects of work within the organisation, which I wouldn't have been able to do otherwise; the staff and other volunteers are friendly and helpful; there's a real sense of working as a team.” **Sharon**

“Very positive – being immediately accepted and befriended by the paid staff. Being able to take time to talk and listen to people without the pressure that paid work often brings.”

Chris

“Good training, friendly people, can't wait to become a fully fledged volunteer advocate.” **Gemma**

“It has really helped my confidence – meeting new people and gaining new skills – it has improved my communication skills too.”

Maggie

Referral Details

Opp ID No	Organisation	Opportunity	Contact Name	Contact 


What happens now?

We will pass on your contact details to the organisations you have agreed which are listed above. The Organisation should contact you within 10-14 days.

If you do not hear from them please feel free to make contact yourself from the details we have given you. Alternatively ring the Volunteer Centre and inform us, and we will make the call for you.

Please let us know if you have a successful placement and who with, or if you require further help.

For confidential advice regarding all aspects of voluntary work contact:

Dudley CVS Volunteer Centre, 7 Albion Street, Brierley Hill, West Mids, DY5 3EE  **01384 78168** or

 **vb@dudlevcv.org.uk**