

5.1 A GOOD VOLUNTEER POLICY

5.1.1 Why have a Volunteer Policy?

A Volunteer Policy gives the organisation a consistent way to approach the involvement of volunteers across the whole organisation. It helps to ensure that everyone involved in the organisation including Board Members, funders, staff and volunteers understand and value volunteers' involvement. Ideally the Volunteer Policy should be developed in consultation with staff and volunteers and be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it continues to be fit for purpose.

A policy also demonstrates that the organisation is serious and professional about the involvement of volunteers, and that their involvement is planned as part of the whole organisation's activities rather than as an ad hoc activity that sits alongside the main organisation.

What should you consider?

Before writing a policy, it is important to identify why you want volunteers involved in your organisation. You may be a voluntary organisation who rely on volunteers to deliver your service or volunteers may enhance the services offered by paid staff because of their local knowledge or specialist skills.

A short, user friendly volunteer policy which refers to associated policies e.g. health and safety diversity is ideal, as to have every policy and procedure along with the associated guidance included in the overall policy will make the document very difficult to use. Other policies and additional information should be included in an Induction pack for volunteers or form part of your training and development plans.

You may consider including the following sections in your volunteering policy:

- *Organisation Overview*
- *Purpose*
- *Roles and Responsibilities*
- *Recruitment, Selection & Matching*
- *Support & Supervision*
- *Training & Development*
- *Volunteers Voice & Recognition*
- *Problem Solving*
- *Endings*
- *Review Information*

This list is for guidance only and you should tailor your volunteer policy according to your organisation requirements. Any statement made in your volunteering policy should also have relevant policies and procedures.

Next steps

Once you have agreed a draft policy statement you should circulate for discussion with Management Committee or Board of Directors, paid staff, volunteers, members/clients and unions and once accepted, put in place.

Someone should be assigned responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the policy so that any issues highlighted are recorded. Any associated policies and procedures that need to be put in place, should also be rolled out across the organisation. The policy should be made available to everyone and form part of your recruitment of volunteers. You may want to post it on your website for potential volunteers to look at prior to joining the organisation. The policy should be reviewed regularly and at least annually to see if any revisions need to be made based on feedback or to reflect any organisation changes. The policy should also be reviewed when relevant legislative changes are made which have an impact.

Volunteer Scotland is an excellent source of information for Volunteer policies. A checklist for creating a Volunteer Policy and some more detailed guidance and examples can be found in [our Resource Library](#).

