

## Business - toolkit

### Business volunteer guide

#LoveSouthTyneside would love to promote volunteering opportunities on the #LoveSouthTyneside website. If you are a business and want to promote your volunteering opportunities email [LoveST@southtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:LoveST@southtyneside.gov.uk).

Inspire South Tyneside would love to match volunteers to organisations that need them. Businesses can submit a volunteer opportunity by emailing Inspire South Tyneside at [enquiries@inspiresouthtyneside.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@inspiresouthtyneside.co.uk)

This resource sheet provides a useful reference to help you develop the way you manage volunteers from finding volunteers to retaining them.

### Getting started

Below is a list of things to consider before recruitment:

- Is everyone in your organisation aware of plans to involve volunteers?
- Do you have the resources to adequately support volunteers?
- Have you budgeted the costs of involving volunteers such as training, DBS checks, out of pocket expenses, admin costs and staff costs for supervision?
- Are you able to provide roles that are rewarding for volunteers and meet the needs of the organisation?
- Have you considered any risks associated with involving volunteers?
- Is your insurance cover adequate?
- What policies and procedures do you already have that should be reviewed in light of involving volunteers?
- Do you need a volunteer policy?

### Writing a volunteer policy

The following areas will form the basis of your volunteering policy:

- Why do we involve volunteers in our work
- What values and principles is this based on?

### Recruitment

- How and where will we advertise opportunities?
- What recruitment methods will we use e.g. application forms, interviews?
- What will we do if someone is unsuitable for the role?

### How and when will references be taken up?

- What roles, if any, will require DBS checks?

### Induction and training

- How are volunteers welcomed into the organisation?
- What information are they given?
- What training, if any, is essential to the role?
- What opportunities to develop skills will volunteers have?

### Expenses

- What expenses will be covered?
- How will these expenses be paid?



## Creating a Volunteer Role

Volunteering is a two-way process: volunteers will do something that your organisation needs if it is interesting, stimulating or rewarding for them. Being a volunteer needs to be a positive experience and the first step is to be clear about their role.

Start with a volunteer role or task description (NOT a job description as that suggests an employment relationship). This is a straightforward outline of what the volunteer will do and any skills that might be needed. Think about:

- Name of role - does it make sense and sound interesting?
- Purpose of the role
- Outline of tasks
- Where the tasks will be carried out
- The skills, qualities and experience needed
- The commitment required
- What supervision, support and training volunteers will need

Think about how you can make the role open to as many people as possible. Could people with physical disabilities be volunteers? Or people who need extra support, such as someone with dyslexia or someone who speaks English as a second language? Writing the volunteer role description will help you to think about what you need for the rest of your volunteer programme, such as:

- An introduction to your organisation
- How you will recruit and select volunteers and put your equal opportunities policy into action
- Who will be responsible for supervising volunteers and how they will do this?
- How you will handle any difficulties or disagreements

## Health and Safety

In terms of legal requirements, there are two main considerations for organisations with volunteers. Firstly, the 'duty of care' is a common law duty which applies to all individuals and organisations and has been developed by the courts.

Secondly, health and safety legislation such as Acts of Parliament and regulations set specific duties for employers in order to limit the risks to anyone coming into contact with their organisation.

A health and safety policy is the foundation on which to develop health and safety procedures and practices. The policy announces the organisation's commitment towards good health and safety standards. The policy can help to clarify procedures and areas of responsibility.

## Support and Supervision

- What support and supervision is available?
- How frequently will it take place?

## Insurance

- What is the level of cover?
- Are there any boundaries e.g. age and location?

## Equal opportunities

- Are volunteers covered by your organisation's equal opportunities policy?
- What does this mean for volunteers?

## Health and safety

- How are you exercising your legal duty of care to volunteers?
- How is information regarding health and safety communicated to volunteers?
- Have you got an up to date Safeguarding Policy?

## Problem solving

- What processes are available to enable volunteers to raise issues they are concerned about?
- How are any problems with the work of volunteers addressed?

## Confidentiality

- What is required of volunteers?
- How are volunteers protected?

## Organisations with paid staff and volunteers

Employers with fewer than five employees are not obliged to have a written policy, but are strongly advised to do so. If an organisation involves volunteers, they should always be included in the health and safety policy as a matter of good practice. The Health and Safety Executive has examples of model health and safety policies which can be used as a template for creating your own health and safety policy.

## Volunteer-only organisations

If your organisation has no employees, you are not obliged to have a written health and safety policy, but are strongly recommended to draw one up. Developing a health and safety policy is a positive step and will help you clarify your procedures and responsibilities. If you also involve volunteers in the process, it will make them much more aware of health and safety issues within your organisation.

## Health, Safety and Welfare

Organisations with paid staff and volunteers All employers must provide a safe place to work which is clean and free from risks, to reduce the risk of ill health or injury. A safe system of working is required: for example, having proper procedures for handling dangerous substances and adequate guards for machinery. All employers should provide adequate supervision. Employees must be given training and information to give them sufficient skills and knowledge to carry out their work safely.

## Volunteer-only organisations

These regulations do not apply to organisations with no employees. However, they do need to ensure that their volunteers can work in a safe environment where levels of risk have been reduced to a minimum. It is important that volunteer organisations understand issues relating to health and safety including safeguarding. If you need advice contact [enquiries@inspiresouthtyneside.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@inspiresouthtyneside.co.uk)

## First Aid

Organisations with paid staff and volunteers

All employers have a duty under law to make a first aid assessment. The need for first aid will depend on the organisation's activities. For instance, an outward bound centre will have very different needs from a morning coffee club. Again, an assessment of the workplace is the key to deciding what first aid to provide. There are, however, minimum standards for organisations with employees.

There must be at least one first aid box and a notice displayed in the workplace that tells staff:

- The location of the first aid box
- Who is the first aider or appointed person (see below)
- Where the first aider or appointed person can be found.

An appointed person is someone who has basic first aid knowledge, and is available whenever people are at work. They can take charge in an emergency and are responsible for calling the emergency services. Details of one-day courses to train appointed persons are available from the Health and Safety Executive (see overleaf for contact details).

## Volunteer-only organisations

Voluntary groups with no employees are not bound to do a first aid assessment, although it is clearly good practice. However, in certain circumstances, such as a large public fireworks display, there may be a legal duty to provide first aid facilities. For example, if you hold a public exhibition without first aid facilities and someone is injured, you may have broken your duty of care. If you have any doubts whatsoever you should always contact the local Health and Safety Executive office for advice.

## Risk assessments

A key element of managing health and safety is risk assessment, a technique for identifying and mitigating potential hazards involved with any activity. The HSE provides detailed guidance on risk assessment, including example risk assessments. Organisations are required to carry out risk assessments on all activities. This is a legal requirement under the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1992. In small organisations with straightforward operations the assessment can be carried out by a member of staff or committee member. In bigger and more complex organisations, with more hazardous activities, expert advice will be needed and there must be written records of any significant findings on risk assessments. Although this is not a legal requirement, it is recognised as good practice for all organisations, regardless of their size, to keep records of the risks and what is being done to minimise them with a timescale for actions. Your organisation can be held liable if you:

- Fail to assess and minimise risks.
- Fail to take sufficient care in selecting volunteers.
- Fail to provide appropriate training or supervision.

## Recruitment

Different people have different reasons for volunteering.

Look at your volunteer role description - who is your target audience and what might motivate them to volunteer for you? Are you offering training? Is it a caring role? Will they be helping to change or improve something? Will they be outdoors? Will they gain practical skills? You want people to want to volunteer for you because it is the best match for them.

Your message will probably include:

- What the voluntary work is
- What the organisation as a whole does
- How a new volunteer can make a difference
- How to find out more

## Getting your message out there:

Talk - word of mouth is the most cost effective tool there is. Make sure that everyone who knows about your organisation knows that you need volunteers. Ask friends and family first and ask them to pass it on.

Register - with #LoveSouthTyneside - we'll tell potential volunteers about your opportunities and will also advertise them on the business volunteering web page.

## Think about:

- **Leaflets and posters** - in community centres, local shops, libraries, places of worship, front windows etc.
- **Websites and social media such as Facebook and Twitter** - change your messages often to keep them fresh.
- **Events, talks and presentations** - use every chance to say you need volunteers.
- **Local media** - volunteering makes a good story and gets you free publicity.
- **Partnerships** - team up with schools, colleges, employers, places of worship etc.

Remember you are competing with other organisations, so sell what you do. How will you communicate with hard to reach groups? Do you need to translate things into other languages? Will people with disabilities know that you will support them to volunteer with you? If you know your message is not getting to specific groups in your community go and talk to them and find out why.

## The interview

If an interview situation seems too formal for your group, then an informal chat may be more appropriate. When interviewing volunteers it is best to base initial questions around a set list.

Set questions promote equal opportunities and are a more reliable method than 'instinct' or a 'gut feeling'.

It is important to tell volunteers about:

- The organisation and the role of volunteers within it
- Training and support offered
- The organisation's expectations of the volunteer
- The time commitment required for the role, both frequency and duration (if time limited)
- Resources available to volunteers, such as the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses

When conducting an interview, it is best to have a quiet area to speak to the volunteer. You need to make sure that the interview is a two-way process, and that you give the volunteer an opportunity to ask questions. This is a good point to find out what skills a volunteer can bring to a role, why they became a volunteer and what motivated them to apply for your specific role in order to establish if the role will meet their needs.

If a volunteer is unsuitable to carry out the role required by your organisation, then they should be provided with constructive feedback. The organisation should help to identify other suitable roles (if any) before giving constructive feedback.

## Taking on volunteers who are in receipt of benefits

There is no reason why a person in receipt of benefits should not be considered for a volunteering role. In the past there has been confusion regarding whether a person in receipt of benefits could volunteer without it affecting their income.

The current position is that the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) is happy for people in receipt of benefits to volunteer. This is partly in recognition of the potential benefits that volunteering offers in terms of working routine, social aspects and learning new skills.

## Criminal record checks (DBS)

Not all organisations will need to check if volunteers have a criminal record. The need to screen will depend on what the volunteer is doing or who they are working with. It's important to realise that for many people with criminal records, the nature of their offence will have no bearing on their ability to volunteer. It's good practice to have a clear policy on this. The online Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has further guidance. <https://www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service>

## Corporate Volunteering

Corporate volunteering (also called employee volunteering) is a really simple and effective way for businesses to contribute to the community. Companies give their employees an allowance of paid time off annually, which they use to volunteer at a charity of their choice. This enables staff to make a difference in as little as an afternoon, and has incredible potential for community impact.

Although employee volunteering is, for now, voluntary, more and more businesses are introducing it, and are recognising the hugely beneficial effects on the employee, the business and the community. Employee volunteering is fast becoming the norm, and a strong EV programme is crucial when it comes to staying ahead of your competitors.

Businesses large and small are running amazing projects.

## Sounds great - how do I get involved?

The first thing to do is to create a good employee volunteering policy, and then think about how to organise it so that staff will actually get out of the office and volunteer. Good luck!

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