

DRAFT

NORTH TYNESIDE COMPACT

VOLUNTEERING CODE OF PRACTICE

INTRODUCTION

The North Tyneside Compact

The North Tyneside Compact is an agreement between the Community and Voluntary Sector and statutory organisations in North Tyneside. It explains how they plan to work together, and contains a number of commitments.

The North Tyneside Compact, including an up to date list of the statutory organisations that have 'signed up' to its commitments, can be downloaded from the North Tyneside Council website (<http://www.northtyneside.gov.uk>)

There are a number of Codes of Practice linked to the North Tyneside Compact. These aim to give more information about the commitments of the North Tyneside Compact, and concentrate on the practical details of how the commitments can be turned into reality. The Codes of Practice will be:

- Funding and Procurement
- Consultation and policy appraisal
- Equality and Diversity
- Volunteering
- Community groups

Additional Codes of Practice may be developed in time.

THE VOLUNTEERING CODE OF PRACTICE

This Code of Practice sets out good practice for organisations working with volunteers.

It is recognised that volunteers are an essential component to many services that are currently delivered within North Tyneside and that it is vital that they are both recognised for the contribution they make, and at the same time, are adequately supported in their roles.

Definition of Volunteering

Volunteering is an activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment, or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives. (**Volunteering England**)

SCOPE AND SCALE OF VOLUNTEERING IN NORTH TYNESIDE

There are volunteers in both the Statutory and Community and Voluntary Sectors. They undertake a wide variety of volunteer roles reflecting a range of time commitment, for example:

- Participating in environmental or conservation projects
- Running local community groups, such as Mother & Toddler groups
- Fundraising or providing other support (such as administration support) for a Community and Voluntary Sector Organisation
- Giving advice (e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau Advisors)
- Assisting or providing emergency services (e.g. RNLI, Mountain Rescue, Special Constable and First Responders)
- Working with young people (e.g. Scout and Guide leaders)
- Befriending
- Running a sports club
- Mentoring
- Leading or advising an organisation (e.g. as a trustee or school governor)

This is not an exhaustive list but gives a good idea of the range and scope of volunteering activity.

Case study

Jean is 53 and has been suffering from a long period of depression after some personal events that took place in her life a few years ago. She has been receiving regular medication and treatment which is starting to have a positive effect.

Jean felt that she wanted to get back into a regular routine of having to get up in the mornings and getting ready to go out but felt that she wasn't ready at this time to get a permanent job.

She popped into the Age concern office to talk about becoming a volunteer. They went through her reasons and motivations for volunteering and gave her some options to think about. She was very interested in the day centres, so they arranged for her to visit there to see what they were all about. After visiting the day centre Jean said that she would like to go ahead and volunteer there.

At the day centres Jean was involved in a variety of tasks supporting older people including helping them with their meals and drinks, taking part in activities and just spending time with them.

Jean's volunteering enabled her to get back into a regular routine in an unpressurised and relaxed way and she continued to volunteer at the day centre for over six months.

After six months of regular volunteering Jean felt that her confidence had really grown and her health was much better. She now felt ready to apply for a part time job which she did and successfully obtained.

PRINCIPLES OF VOLUNTEERING

There are four principles fundamental to volunteering:

Choice

Volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual, including the choice to stop volunteering without pressure or guilt.

Diversity

Volunteering should be open to all, no matter what their background, race, colour, nationality, religion, ethnic or national origins, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation or disability, whilst ensuring roles are appropriate and compatible with the skills of the volunteer.

Mutual Benefit

Volunteers offer their contribution and skills unwaged but should benefit in other ways in return for their contribution. Benefits that volunteers should expect to gain include a sense of worthwhile achievement, useful skills, experience and contacts, sociability and fun, access to training and inclusion in the life of the organisation and the wider community.

Recognition

It is vital that the value of volunteers' contribution is recognised by all involved. This includes recognising the contribution to the organisation, the community, the social economy and wider social objectives. There are various ways to demonstrate how an organisation values its volunteers:

- By providing a parking pass
- Putting on social events
- Giving certificates or awards
- Providing references
- Involving them in decision-making
- Including items about their achievements in newsletters

LOCAL VOLUNTEERING INFRASTRUCTURE

In North Tyneside there are many different ways someone can become a volunteer. This includes making contact with the Volunteer Centre based at VODA or Age Concern North Tyneside, in addition people may contact an organisation directly, or an organisation may advertise for volunteers. There are also specialist organisations for young people, such as VODA's Active Youth Project and involved team.

The Volunteer Centre works with other organisations to meet the following strategic objectives defined by Volunteering England:

Brokerage

VODA and Age Concern North Tyneside hold information on volunteering opportunities. They provide potential volunteers with accessible support and advice in matching individual skills and interests to appropriate volunteering opportunities.

Marketing

Marketing and promotional activities aimed at stimulating and encouraging interest in voluntary and community activity. VODA and other organisations will market and promote volunteering through local, regional and national events and campaigns.

Good practice development

Promoting and actively supporting good practice when working with volunteers.

Developing volunteering opportunities

Working creatively, in partnership with other agencies, to develop volunteering opportunities and stimulate volunteer participation.

Policy response and campaigning

Identify and lead on policy development concerning proposals or legislation that might have an impact on policy or campaign issues.

Strategic development of volunteering

Inform regional and national thinking; develop local strategies ensuring that volunteering has a place in local planning.

COMMITMENTS TO SUPPORT VOLUNTEERING

All organisations working with volunteers undertake to:

- Identify a named person within their organisations to be responsible for volunteer involvement, and co-ordinating support. Ensure this person receives full training and is adequately supported in their role.
- Make sure that the contribution of volunteers is given adequate recognition and publicity.
- Ensure that no volunteers are unfairly disadvantaged on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, religion, ethnic or national origins, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.
- Ensure that volunteers are matched to suitable roles.
- Work together to create and maintain a modern and dynamic volunteering infrastructure.
- Encourage volunteers to claim for out-of-pocket expenses to ensure that volunteers who wish or need to claim expenses do not feel disadvantaged.
- Encourage the involvement of volunteers in ongoing decision-making and ensure their inclusion in internal communications.

Community and Voluntary Sector organisations undertake to:

- Promote volunteering opportunities, ensuring that recruitment is achieved on the basis of equality of opportunity and that all volunteers are subsequently managed sensitively and appropriately.
- Ensure that the sector has appropriate resources and procedures to support and train volunteers and volunteer co-ordinators/managers.
- Encourage the use of full cost recovery in relevant bids, to enable and develop volunteering, and recognise the financial contribution.

Statutory Sector organisations undertake to:

- Consult the sector so that development and implementation of legislation/regulation, guidance and policies take account of the ways they may affect volunteers and volunteering activities.
- Work to actively reduce barriers to volunteering resulting from regulation and policies.
- Recognise that it is legitimate for voluntary and community organisations to include the costs of enabling greater access to volunteering in relevant applications for funding. e.g. co-ordination costs, volunteer travel and training.
- Work with the Community and Voluntary Sector to expand the public perception of volunteering by improving the profile, status and range of volunteer activity.
- Work to effectively tackle discrimination to ensure that volunteering is open to all.
- Support staff who wish to volunteer, for example, through employee volunteering schemes.
- Adopt policies to help ensure that specialist volunteering infrastructure can develop realistic sustainable long term funding.

NORTH TYNESIDE COMPACT VOLUNTEERING CODE OF PRACTICE APPENDIX 1 – THE VOLUNTEER CHARTER

All signatories to the Code will observe and promote the Volunteer Charter.

Volunteers' Rights

- To be given a clear description of their role as a volunteer and responsibilities within the organisation.
- To be given the name of someone in the organisation that will look after their interests whilst they volunteer, and who will offer them appropriate induction, training and support and regular supervision.
- To be assured that any information shared with the organisation is kept confidential and is in compliance with the data protection act.
- To be given the same protection under health and safety regulations and public liability as paid workers.
- To ensure that there are clear grievance procedures (examples available from VODA, ACNT and Volunteering England).
- To be offered opportunities for training and skills development, appropriate for their role and tasks as a volunteer.
- Not to be exploited – 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

- To be given the chance to play a part in decision making within the organisation.
- To be paid out-of-pocket expenses such as travel and lunch whilst doing voluntary work.
- To be able to take a break from or cease to volunteer.

Volunteers' Responsibilities

- To accept the organisation's aims and objectives and work within agreed policies and procedures.
- To do what is reasonably requested of them, to the best of their ability.
- To treat information obtained whilst volunteering in a confidential manner.
- 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 as necessary for the voluntary work undertaken.
- To recognise the right of the organisation to expect quality of service from its volunteers.
- To share suggestions for changes in working practices with the Volunteer Organiser.

NORTH TYNESIDE COMPACT VOLUNTEERING CODE OF PRACTICE APPENDIX 2 – CONTACT DETAILS

Voluntary Organisations Development Agency (VODA)

The Shiremoor Centre
Earsdon Road
Shiremoor
NE27 0HJ

Tel: 0191 200 8555

Fax: 0191 200 8556

Email: volunteering@voda.org.uk

Web site: www.voda.org.uk

Contact:

Age Concern North Tyneside

The Bradbury Centre
13 Saville Street West
North Shields
NE29 6QP

Tel: 0191 280 8484

Fax: 0191 280 8485

Email: office@ageconcernnorthtyne.org

Web Site: www.ageconcernnorthtyne.org

Contact:

Volunteering England

Regents Wharf
8 All Saints Street
London
N1 9RL

Email: volunteering@volunteeringengland.org

Website: volunteering.org.uk

On-line information sheets available include:-

- Definitions for volunteering
- Health & Safety
- How to say thank you
- Monitoring and evaluating a volunteer programme
- National statistics on volunteering
- Problem solving procedures
- Screening and CRB checks
- Types of insurance policy which cover volunteers