



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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SECTION ONE

Introduction to **(NAME OF ORGANISATION)**

Introduction to Policies

General Housekeeping Information

Support and Supervision

Welcome to (NAME OF ORGANISATION)

Dear Volunteer,

Thank you for your decision to join **(NAME OF ORGANISATION)**. We would like to make your volunteering experience a positive and a happy one. The induction programme will provide in-depth information about **(NAME OF ORGANISATION)** and its work, your role within the organisation and our organisational policies and procedures. This booklet will serve as a reference point for the information covered during your induction.

1. Who are we?

(NAME OF ORGANISATION) is a registered charity with an office in **(OFFICE LOCATION)**.

Brief about the Organisation

Our small team consists of and volunteers.

2. What do we do?

Explain your organisation's mission (e.g. We provide support to volunteers and volunteer involving organisations to increase the number and diversity of local volunteers and encourage the growth of quality volunteer management.)

3. How do we do it?

Explain your organisation's core activities (e.g. marketing volunteering – encouraging interest in volunteering and community activity.)

4. Why do we involve Volunteers in our Organisation?

Explain your organisation's vision (e.g. Volunteers are an important part of our service provision. We benefit from your contributions in lots of ways. Your involvement raises our awareness of local issues and how best to overcome them. From you we learn how to reach various groups in the community and make volunteering accessible to all. We also learn what inspires volunteers and how volunteers like to be treated. We appreciate your enthusiasm and input into our work.)

5. Benefits of Volunteering with (NAME OF ORGANISATION)

- You will be valued and treated as part of a team.
- You will receive support from staff to help carry out your voluntary work.
- You will have access to training to help you do your job well.
- Out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed.
- We will celebrate your successes and achievements.
- We will give you the opportunity to practice and develop your skills.
- We will listen to, value and take into consideration your opinions and suggestions.

6. Our Expectations of Volunteers

We have policies that set out the procedures that everyone needs to follow. We will provide copies of these policies to you and help you in understanding how they apply to your work.

In particular, we expect all volunteers to:

- Have a non-judgmental attitude.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Be a good timekeeper.
- Work as part of a team.

7. Job Search and Volunteering

If your ultimate goal is paid employment, we are happy to facilitate your job search by rearranging your time commitment with the office. Anyone in receipt of JSA, Income Support, Incapacity or any other benefits is fully entitled to volunteer. It is good practice to let the Job Centre Advisor know about your volunteering activity. Also on request we can write to your Job Centre Adviser to assure them that your work with the office is voluntary and you receive no payments.

SAMPLE

POLICIES

In the sections below, you will find statements relating to our policies. Hard copies of the policies are situated in the main office. It is in your interest to familiarise yourself with these policies and procedures.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In your work as a volunteer for **(NAME OF ORGANISATION)** you may have access to confidential information from service users and staff that you should not share with people outside of the organisation. In this you will be maintaining confidentiality.

It is not appropriate for you to discuss or disclose personal information about service users, staff members or volunteers outside of the organisation, e.g. addresses, phone numbers, etc.

(NAME OF ORGANISATION) only shares a potential volunteer's personal information with those projects that the volunteer has expressed an interest in carrying out voluntary work with.

As a volunteer it is okay for you to discuss details about a potential volunteer with a member of staff. This will often be relevant to your development as a volunteer in learning about our work.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY

(NAME OF ORGANISATION) values and celebrates diversity. We encourage diversity in our own workforce and amongst volunteers. We seek to promote the values and benefits of diversity to all the people and organisations we work with.

We are committed to pursuing equality and fairness for our employees, our volunteers and in our service delivery. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination and work to ensure that no person is discriminated against on the grounds of their gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, HIV antibody status, AIDS, disability, religion, belief or age.

We aim to provide a working environment where everyone can give his or her best. We condemn all forms of workplace harassment and bullying and are committed to ensuring that our workplace is free of such behaviour.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

(NAME OF ORGANISATION) recognises and accepts its duties under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and subsequent relevant legislation. We will provide a safe place of work and a healthy working environment for all our staff, volunteers, visitors and members of the public who are affected by our working activities.

For all volunteers working with us we will:

- Provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our work activities.
- Consult with our volunteers on matters affecting their health and safety.

- Provide and maintain safe plant and equipment.
- Ensure where relevant the safe handling and use of substances.
- Provide information, instruction and supervision for all volunteers to enable them to avoid hazards and contribute positively to their own health and safety at work.
- Ensure all volunteers are competent to carry out their work and give them adequate training.
- Prevent accidents and cases of work related ill-health.
- Maintain safe and healthy working conditions.

During your induction we will discuss in detail any relevant health and safety issues. You will also have access to written information relating to health and safety.

INSURANCE

We have appropriate public liability insurance to cover volunteers whilst they are working with us. However the insurance policy is subject to limitations and exclusions and the cover may change from time to time.

Motor Insurance Guidance - Volunteers using their own cars whilst volunteering with us should inform their insurance company of their voluntary activities. This should not result in an increase in premium, as volunteering should be regarded as part of the 'social, domestic and pleasure' use of the vehicle.

VOLUNTEER EXPENSES

Although voluntary work is given freely, with no expectation of payment, it would be unreasonable to expect volunteers to be out of pocket as a result of the work they undertake. At your induction we will discuss how to claim out of pocket expenses, i.e. travel expenses to and from the office, and any other expenditure incurred through your voluntary work, as long as it has been authorised in advance. We ask that you claim out of pocket expenses at the end of each month.

TIME KEEPING

As a volunteer we really appreciate you giving your time. However to benefit fully from this we expect our volunteers to be good time keepers whilst carrying out their volunteering. If for any reason you are unable to keep your commitment please ring the office as soon as you can on the first day of your absence. Absence without notice for a period of six weeks will result in termination of your volunteering activity with us.

TIME COMMITMENT

You are free to end your volunteering commitment at any time, however to benefit from volunteering, we encourage our volunteers to consider giving at least a three month commitment.

TRIAL PERIOD

There is normally a six weeks trial period at the end of which both parties will discuss the experience and decide whether or not to continue the volunteering arrangement.

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

We will make every effort to make your volunteering experience pleasant and fulfilling and will support you in enhancing your skills. When you join us, we will identify a staff member who will be responsible for your induction, day-to-day work support and training. You will find, however, that every member of the team is there to support you in your role so don't be afraid to ask for help and support with your work when you need it.

HAVING YOUR SAY AND INFORMATION UPDATES

(NAME OF ORGANISATION) values volunteers' suggestions and where possible integrates them into its practices. If there is something that you feel you would like to discuss then please bring this to the attention of the member of staff responsible for supporting you, who will be happy to listen to your suggestion.

PROBLEM SOLVING

(NAME OF ORGANISATION) aims to provide a high quality of services to its volunteers and service users. If you feel, for any reason, our service is less than what you expect, please let us know as soon as possible and in the first instance we will try to resolve the issue by talking to both parties.

If the outcome of this isn't satisfactory to either party, we will investigate the complaint in line with our grievance / complaints procedure and keep both parties informed at all stages of the process. (Please see the attached step-by-step guide to making a complaint for more information.)

As a volunteer our expectations of you will be to maintain the quality of service we strive to provide to our service users. If a complaint is received about a volunteer's conduct we will investigate it according to our grievance / complaints procedures. Our complaints policy / procedure is kept in the main office in the folder marked **(NAME OF ORGANISATION)** Policies.

GENERAL INFORMATION / HOUSEKEEPING

Our team works from **(OFFICE LOCATION DETAILS)**. Each room has a space for up to three people to work comfortably and houses one desk for volunteers. Depending on availability you will be allocated a work desk and a drawer to keep your work and personal items.

As your desk will be used by other staff / volunteers please ensure that you clear and store away the documents you have been working with and remember to clear up and put away your used cups and plates etc.

Photocopier - The photocopier belongs to **(NAME OF ORGANISATION)** and all projects based in the building use an access code for photocopying. During your induction period we will demonstrate how the copier works and where the paper is kept.

GENERAL FACILITIES

The kitchen and the toilets are located **(LOCATION)**. The office also has use of two storage cupboards in the kitchen where we store our cups and tea / coffee supplies. Please ensure that you use the electrical equipment with care and report any faults to a member of **(NAME**

OF ORGANISATION) staff. Everyone using the kitchen facility is responsible for clearing up after him / herself.

FIRE SAFETY / EVACUATION PROCEDURE

Instructions for evacuation are on the wall by the door in each office. Please familiarise yourself with the procedure. In the event that the alarm goes off, please leave the building immediately and make your way to the assembly point.

MOVING ON

We really appreciate long-term commitment, however there comes a time when every volunteer leaves the organisation. To end your commitment please give us as much notice as possible and the opportunity to learn about your general experience with the organisation, what you enjoyed and benefited from and what we could do differently to make it a more positive and valuable experience for new volunteers.

REFERENCE

We are happy to act as a referee for volunteers, who have volunteered for **(NAME OF ORGANISATION)** for a minimum six months on a regular basis.

SECTION TWO

Induction Checklist

Personal Development and Training Plan

Role Description

Risk Assessment

How to Claim Expenses

Expenses Claim Form

(Name of Organisation)

Volunteer Induction Checklist

Name: _____

Date: _____

Information related to (Name of Organisation)

	Completed	Date
(Organisation) mission statement and values		
Introduction to work of project, client group and services		

Volunteer Support

	Completed	Date
Volunteer Agreement		
Access to information / updates and decision making		
Expenses		
Training		
Support		
Volunteer meetings and events		

Policies

	Completed	Date
Volunteer policy		

Equal Opportunities / Diversity		
Health & Safety / Risk Assessment		
Confidentiality		
Complaints / Grievance		

Practical Details

	Completed	Date
Tour of project and the building		
Introduction to other staff and volunteers		
Work space (e.g: access to computer/telephone)		
Tea/coffee/kettle		

Practical Details (continued)

	Completed	Date
First Aid		
Fire Drill		

Office Procedures

	Completed	Date
Telephone system		
Photocopier/computer system etc		

Mail system		
What's kept where (e.g. stationary, stamps)		

Job related training

	Completed	Date

SAMPLE

VOLUNTEER POSITION – ROLE DESCRIPTION

Based at **(LOCATION)**, Slough

Purpose of Role

State the purpose of the role.....

Responsibilities

Your work will include:

List responsibilities.....

Skills and Knowledge

This is a varied role and in particular you will need:

List the skills required and any particular knowledge needed in order to carry out the role.....

Commitment

You will work to a rota during office hours (Monday – Friday, 10.00am – 3.00pm) for at least 3 hours per week. We will agree your days and hours with you as part of the initial discussions and can tailor these to suit your needs.

Assessment

If you are interested in the above role, please complete and return the application form along with the names of two people who would be willing to comment on your suitability for this role. Following this we will invite you to an informal discussion to discuss the volunteering opportunity and your suitability to the role. If for any reason you are unable to provide the names of two referees, we would be happy to accept one reference.

Training

We will provide in-house training in interview skills, use of the database and the administration required to support your work. There may also be the option of more advanced external training if further development is sought in the role. Initial training for this role is primarily on the job and takes about 1 month to complete. This role is therefore most suitable for someone who is willing to commit at least 3 months to the role.

How you will benefit

This role will give you an opportunity to improve your listening skills, learn how to receive and decipher information, develop interviewing skills, improve computer and office skills and build your knowledge of the voluntary sector locally. The role would help build your CV and may suit someone who wants to gain or develop experience in working with people in an information or advice role. It may also suit someone who is considering work in the voluntary sector or on a gap year / career break.

You will be fully supported and will join a small and friendly team. If you provide a regular commitment to us (over at least 6 months) we will be happy to provide work references, subject to satisfactory performance.

Expenses

We will reimburse your travel expenses against receipts for each of the days you work at our office. If you commit to working more than 4 hours in a day we will also pay your lunch expenses, up to a maximum of £4.50 per day.

Equal Opportunities

We have an equality and diversity policy which supports and welcomes all volunteers regardless of their gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, HIV antibody status, AIDS, disability, religion, belief or age.

We will make all reasonable adjustments to support volunteers who wish to work with us who have a disability.

This is a rewarding volunteer role where you will have the satisfaction of helping people find the voluntary work that best suits them and at the same time supporting the vital work of local charities.

We hope you are interested in this role and we look forward to discussing the opportunity with you.

Area of Risk	Issues Identified	Who affected?	Chances of happening	Severity of impact	Actions proposed	By whom	When / How
Use of VDU's	Using VDU's for long periods	Volunteers	Rare	Low	1) Suggest regular breaks from the VDU 2) Regular breaks from the VDU	1) VCS team 2) Volunteer	1) Induction 2) Ongoing
Personal safety	Working alone	Volunteers	Rare	High	Ensure that volunteers are not left on their own in the office	VCS team	Ongoing
Personal safety	Inappropriate / threatening behaviour from a service user	Volunteers	Rare	M / H	Volunteer move away from the situation and report the incident to a member of staff Following the incident staff to offer support to ensure volunteer's wellbeing	VCS team	Induction, Training, Ongoing support
Fire	Evacuation procedure for new volunteers	Staff, volunteers and visitors	Occasional	High	Regular evacuation practice Written & verbal info	VCS team	Ongoing / Induction
Premises / Equipment	1) Care re: cabling or equipment	Staff/volunteers and visitors	Occasional	High	1) Keep regular check for trailing flexes	1) All	Ongoing
Photocopier / phones, and other office equipment	Damage to equipment through misuse	Volunteer Centre	Occasional	High	Provide complete training during Induction	Supervisory staff	Induction, Continuous support
Breach of data protection / Confidentiality	Breach of confidential information	Service users Volunteers Staff VCS	Rare	M / H	Volunteers to receive guidance during induction and the written information related to the topic	VCS team	Induction Access to relevant policies
Inappropriate use of the Internet	Inappropriate emails / visiting unethical websites	Volunteer Centre			Review best practice and develop approach in consultation with the team	VCS team	Ongoing

Risk Assessment for Volunteer Match-Maker Role

TRAINING & PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Name: _____

Role: _____

(EXAMPLE)

Learning Needs	Comments	Completion Date
Introduction to Community Database: • Background and Introduction • Organisations' Info • Opportunity Info • Events Info • Volunteers' Info		
Volunteer registration process: • Introduction and information sharing • Inputting the volunteer's details • Matching opportunity • Analysing the opportunity information • Follow up		
Database Search: • Ways of searching the database • Follow up		
Using the electronic calendar: • Understanding the information on the calendar • Making appointments and the relevant information, saving the data • Allocating time slots • Booking the information correctly and allocating appointment • Changing appointments		

Emails: • Accessing the emails • Sending and receiving emails • Dealing with email enquiries • Using email signatures • Sending attachments		
Enquiries: • Type of enquiries, i.e. organisations / volunteers / general • How to deal with postal / phone / email / face to face enquiries • Logging information		
Database training		
IT Training		
Health and Safety		
Equal Opportunities		
Diversity		
First Aid		
IT Management		
Confidence Building		

VOLUNTEER EXPENSES

(NAME OF ORGANISATION) recognises that although voluntary work is freely given, with no expectation of payment, volunteers should be reimbursed for any out of pocket expenses. We believe that reimbursement of out of pocket expenses is an equal opportunities issue and we hope that by reimbursing expenses we will attract a wider range of volunteers.

Which expenses do we reimburse?

In general we will reimburse any reasonable expense incurred as part of the voluntary work being undertaken on behalf of **(NAME OF ORGANISATION)**. All expenses are reimbursed against a signed claim form and a receipt and can include:

- Travel to and from our office or place of volunteering (we would expect this to be the cheapest form of public transport or private car. If taxis are required this will need to be agreed in advance with the supporting member of staff.)
- Travel while volunteering.
- Where volunteering for at least 4 hours in one day we will also cover the cost of a meal (up to a maximum of £4.50 per meal)
- Any additional expenses incurred including postage, phone calls, stationery etc.

Mileage incurred in a private vehicle whilst volunteering for the **(NAME OF ORGANISATION)** will be reimbursed at the approved Inland Revenue rates. These rates are set at a level to take into account depreciation and other running costs as well as fuel. The volunteer is responsible for checking that their insurance covers them for use of the car whilst volunteering. The Inland Revenue approved mileage rates are:

- Cars and vans – 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles

How do we reimburse expenses?

We will only reimburse expenses against receipts, bus tickets etc. This is extremely important as volunteers in receipt of benefits are only entitled to receive out of pocket expenses. Claimants receiving more than their actual expenses may lose part of their means tested benefit, and the nature of their volunteering may also be called into question. Money over and above out of pocket expenses is regarded as income by the Inland Revenue, and is therefore taxable.

Expenses are usually reimbursed on a monthly basis using the standard form provided (see below). However if this arrangement causes any difficulties we can arrange to reimburse for cash on a weekly or even advance basis against the usual receipts.

Expenses are usually reimbursed by cheque but alternative arrangements will be made according to the needs of individual volunteers.

Why claim expenses?

(NAME OF ORGANISATION) wants all volunteers to be reimbursed for their out of pocket expenses. We ensure that we have funding in place to cover these costs and encourage

every volunteer to claim their costs so that we can have an accurate picture of our true costs to help us with future funding applications.

(NAME OF ORGANISATION)

Volunteer Claim Form Public & Private Transport / Incidental Expenditure	
Month:	Year:
Full name:	
Address:	
Post code:	
Car registration (if appropriate):	

This form is to be used to record authorised journeys you made while on official duties for **(NAME OF ORGANISATION)**, for which reimbursement of incurred expenses will be made, as set down from time to time by the board of trustees. Mileage allowance is paid at 45p per mile.

Date	Description (i.e. casual meal, destination from/to etc)	No. of miles	Cost	Expenditure Code
TOTAL COST				£

Please Note: Claims for reimbursement of expenses are to be accompanied with proof of expenditure, i.e: receipt(s) or bus/train ticket(s) where appropriate.

These represent an accurate account of my expenses

Claimant Signed:	Line Manager Signed:
---------------------------	-------------------------------

Official Use Only

Payment Date Cheque No

SECTION THREE

Our commitment to involving volunteers (Volunteer Policy) (SAMPLE)

Organisations can include their detailed volunteer policies like:

Volunteer Equal Opportunity / Diversity Policy

Volunteer Health & Safety Policy

Data Protection and Confidentiality

How to make a complaint

VOLUNTEER POLICY

(Our Commitment to Involving Volunteers)

(NAME OF ORGANISATION) is committed to involving volunteers in the delivery and development of its services:

- We recognise and celebrate the unique and valuable contribution that volunteers make to the delivery of our services.
- We aim for excellence in our volunteer management and seek to continuously develop our policies and procedures so that our volunteers feel motivated and enriched by the work that they undertake on our behalf.
- We encourage the involvement of volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds so that our services are more representative of communities in **(NAME OF TOWN)** and we are better able to respond more effectively to local needs.
- We look to learn, from experience and feedback, about what inspires volunteers and how they like to be treated. This helps us support other groups locally who are seeking to involve volunteers.

Our volunteer policies and procedures cover:

1. Equal Opportunities: We pursue equality and fairness in the recruitment of our volunteers and work hard to ensure that no person is discriminated against on the grounds of their gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, HIV antibody status, AIDS, disability, religion, belief or age. We monitor our volunteer participation (including our management committee / board of trustees) to ensure that our volunteers are broadly representative of the local communities we serve.

2. Diversity: We are committed to building an organisation in which volunteers with different ideas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are included. We recognise and value these differences and believe that this diversity strengthens our services and aids the development of our organisation.

3. Recruitment and Selection: The sole qualification for volunteers is the suitability to perform a task on behalf of the organisation. Volunteers are recruited for their interest in a specific role or general interest in volunteering, which is then matched with a specific role. All potential volunteers attend an interview and provide references. Volunteers working with children, young people or adults at risk are also required to have a Disclosure and Barring System (DBS) check. A criminal record does not automatically bar someone from volunteering with us; each case is judged on its individual merit and the extent to which we are able to work towards minimising the risk to anyone who might be affected.

4. Task Descriptions: We develop flexible and diverse volunteer roles that complement (but do not substitute for) the roles of paid staff. Where possible, volunteer roles are adapted to meet individual needs.

5. Induction and Training: Volunteers are involved at every level of our organisation in flexible and diverse roles that complement (but do not substitute for) the roles of paid staff. We aim to ensure that volunteers receive induction and training to be effective in their roles. During induction we provide background information on the project in question, explain its structure and the services it provides. All volunteers receive a copy of our Volunteer Handbook, which serves as a reference point for our policies and procedures. Volunteers have the opportunity to discuss these in detail with their reporting manager. All volunteer placements are subject to a trial period, the length of which depends on the nature and hours of voluntary work.

6. Support and Supervision: We offer support to all our volunteers and provide regular opportunities for volunteers to give and receive feedback and raise concerns about their roles and responsibilities. Each volunteer has a designated member of staff responsible for their support, the name and contact details for whom each volunteer is given during their induction.

7. Feedback: We encourage feedback from our volunteers and identify actions required to further enhance our volunteer management and practices. We use one to one support, team meetings and information boards to receive volunteers' points of view.

8. Expenses: We are committed to breaking down barriers to volunteering and have a clear policy for reimbursing volunteer expenses. We provide guidance in our Volunteer Handbook for claiming expenses and ensure that volunteers are promptly reimbursed for their agreed out of pocket expenses. The full details for claiming expenses and the options for reimbursement are discussed with volunteers during their induction.

9. Problem Solving: Situations may arise where a volunteer, staff member or service user has reason to complain about another individual. In the first instance, we always try to resolve the issue, however if either party is not satisfied with the outcome, we would then follow our complaints procedure. Our volunteers receive written and verbal information about this procedure during their induction.

10. Insurance: Our volunteers are protected by **(NAME OF ORGANISATION)** public liability insurance. However volunteers using their car for voluntary work must inform their own insurance company to ensure adequate cover.

11. Health and Safety: **(NAME OF ORGANISATION)** takes its responsibility for volunteer's health and safety in the workplace seriously and works hard to ensure that we provide a safe place of work for all our volunteers. Our Volunteer Health and Safety Policy explains how we do this and how volunteers can help us to maintain a safe and healthy working environment for everyone. During their induction we will discuss the following areas of the policy with each volunteer:

- General Information
- Responsibilities
- General Safety

- Fire Safety
- First Aid
- Training and Support
- Personal Safety

Signed for and on behalf of the management committee of **(NAME OF ORGANISATION)**:

Signed:

Signed:

Date:

Date:

SAMPLE