

# Creating a Volunteering Policy

This information page is for organisations that have a clear understanding of how, why, and where they involve volunteers and have planned adequate resourcing.

Whether you are drafting a volunteering policy for the first time or reviewing an existing one, it makes sense for your Volunteering Policy and Volunteering Strategy to align.



## [Developing your volunteering strategy](#)

For those considering involving volunteers for the first time, see [this resource](#).



## [Model Volunteering Policy](#)

Please read our **Model Volunteering Policy** with [this resource](#).

Ideally, developing a Volunteering Policy should be led by an individual with knowledge of volunteering within the organisation. This lead coordinates its drafting and engages key stakeholders—including volunteer managers, senior managers, trustees, staff supporting volunteers, and volunteers themselves.

## Volunteer Centre

If you feel that you would like some support in creating a Volunteering Strategy you can contact your local Volunteer Centre

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## Purpose of a Volunteering Policy – what and who is this policy for?

A Volunteering policy sets out for your volunteers, staff and trustees how your organisation supports and involves its volunteers.

The policy documents your day-to-day practices, ensuring all aspects of volunteering with your organisation are clearly outlined.

An accurate and regularly reviewed Volunteering Policy is a marker of best practice, a requirement for advertising your volunteer recruitment on Volunteering Wales and is often beneficial for funding applications.

[The Code of Practice for Involving Volunteers](#) and [Investing in Volunteers](#) quality standards both recognise the importance of a regularly reviewable volunteering policy which defines, communicates and commits to systems that ensure the safety of its volunteers and the organisation. It is helpful if the policy echoes a recognisable best practice format and can be easily understood by those it concerns.

## Key Elements of a Volunteering Policy

Following the [Model Volunteering Policy](#) format, the following suggested headings ensure you cover all the key aspects.

## **1. Introduction and commitments**

- Include an agreed, strong, positive statement on why your organisation involves volunteers. This is an important step in building a supportive organisational culture which celebrates and invests in volunteers. This might be outlined in your volunteering strategy.
- Provide the established definition for Volunteering found in the Welsh Government Volunteering Policy, making clear why your organisation involves volunteers.
- You can pledge to a consistent and quality volunteering structure and explain who it is relevant to.
- Set out the central position volunteers have in meeting organisational aims and recognise the importance of embedded volunteering as key to supporting your organisational mission as well as individual and community wellbeing.
- Outline a commitment to adequate resourcing and investment, developing a welcoming culture between staff and volunteers, building as diverse a volunteer base as possible and supporting volunteers' contributions flexibly.
- Your commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) could include a pledge here to a. develop volunteer roles where first-hand knowledge of a particular issue is welcomed, b. to improve diversity by firstly gathering EDI data collection and then c. employing targeted recruitment strategies to recruit underrepresented groups.

## **2. Roles and responsibilities**

- Define who has designated responsibility for volunteer management.
- Explain that paid staff with responsibilities for volunteers will have this duty in their job description, be adequately trained and have time themselves to be supported and to discuss the challenges and successes in managing volunteers.
- Set out transparently what support is provided to volunteers and what they can expect from the organisation, and outline to the volunteer that there is no enforceable obligation or contract.
- It is beneficial for all that volunteer roles are designed to be as flexible and as supported as possible. You could set out that you match what your organisation would like help with to volunteers' motivation and skills.

## **3. Recruitment and Selection**

- Commit to transparent and widespread promotion of volunteering opportunities, including advertising in both English and Welsh and potentially other languages if appropriate, to attract a wide pool of potential volunteers.
- State what positive action is taken to address equality, diversity and inclusion, such as how information in differing formats about volunteering opportunities will be shared with interested people.

- Detail all the steps in the recruitment process and the support provided to volunteers throughout. This could include informal chats, completion of forms together, gathering of references and explanation of any need for DBS checks.
- Make clear how suitability is assessed and if some roles cannot be offered at that time, set out what help can be offered. Flexibility with recruitment methods allows more people to become volunteers. Consider having multiple ways to apply, such as via online, completing a form together or a hard copy paper form.

#### **4. Induction and training**

- Outline your onboarding procedure and induction options including outlining that you provide key organisation information, site orientation, as well as role preparation.
- Onboarding could include a range of options to assist new volunteers such as task or role tasters, shadowing, buddying up, or assessed training.
- Safeguarding is everyone's business, and details of how your organisation supports the understanding of its volunteers will be mentioned here.

#### **5. Support and supervision**

- Offer role flexibility, in designing and adapting roles, ongoing and refresher training opportunities, and group meet-ups for support. You may offer check in calls or emails.
- Define supervision schedules based on role type.
- Remind volunteers who their point of contact is for guidance.

#### **6. Recognition**

- Establish feedback mechanisms to value volunteers' contributions.
- Outline what mechanisms to recognise are used such as personal thank yous, social activities maybe with tea & cake, annual reports which include volunteer stats and facts, celebration events perhaps with certificates such as within [Volunteers Week](#) (which is the national week of volunteer appreciation in the first week of June), social media or website articles which share the impact of volunteers' contributions.

#### **7. Settling Differences**

- Explain that creating a culture that welcomes, embraces open communication and regularly listens to volunteers is the best way of preventing serious issues arising.
- Inform that in case of any difficulty, volunteers should be aware of who they can speak to.
- Clarify that volunteer-related issues are managed informally rather than through staff disciplinary procedures. Processes such as dealing with formal complaints, for counselling out and letting volunteers go should be widely understood and transparent, explained at induction and in any volunteer handbook.

#### **8. Reimbursement of Expenses**

- Reimbursement of expense is considered a best practice marker, a measure which supports equal access to volunteering and as a recognised budget heading in volunteering projects.
- Usually this is a reimbursement of a) travel expenses (you might wish to welcome public transport tickets as receipts, mileage claims or where appropriate and agreed, taxi fare receipts) b) refreshments which can include lunch (especially for longer periods such as a day undertaking volunteer role)
- Clearly explain how to get a timely reimbursement easily, and when upfront expenses may be provided, if applicable.



## Volunteer expenses



## Model Expenses Policy

### 9. Moving On

- Highlight how your organisation recognises volunteering develops skills beneficial for career paths or personal growth.
- Include information about steps for volunteers considering leaving, the importance of a final thank-you and the purpose of exit interviews.
- Outline procedures for handling complaints and managing situations where volunteers are not suitable for the role.

# Things to consider



## Language

Avoid implying obligation to prevent the creation of unintended contracts. It is possible to unintentionally create a contract, which can lead to volunteers pursuing legal action against an organisation where an employment contract is perceived to be in place. Please read 'Volunteers and the Law'



## Insurance

Ensure all volunteer roles are covered by organisational insurance. Please read 'Volunteers and Insurance'

**Policy Alignment:** Volunteers as an integral part of your organisation should be reflected in all your policies. Whilst creating or renewing a Volunteering policy please review your other organisational policies to consider the inclusion of volunteers.

**Volunteer Handbook:** Your volunteering policy may also mention a volunteer handbook (which could be an online document). This can provide reminders of some of the most important information from induction training and can include an example reimbursement of expenses claim form.

**Volunteer Voices Forum:** A forum could be developed as an opportunity to formally hear the thoughts of volunteers; on areas they wish to discuss or on topics that concern your whole organisation. This can provide opportunities to coproduce volunteering roles, share ideas and be a vehicle for change.

**Scope:** Clarify that work experience and other unpaid opportunities are not covered by this policy.

A well-structured Volunteering Policy strengthens volunteer engagement, ensures clarity, and supports best practice in volunteer management. This can support all elements of the volunteering journey.

## Further information

Once you have a Volunteering Policy and you are ready to recruit volunteers, you can sign up and upload your opportunities to [Volunteering Wales](#)

[Investing in Volunteers](#)