



**A GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE
TO INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE
AS VOLUNTEERS**



vinvolved

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WELCOME

Young people get a bad press. They are widely portrayed as anti-social, hoody-wearing gang members who don't care about the people around them. We have a different story to tell. Our experience of young people is that they are passionate, creative and committed – prepared to give up their time to help other people and make our world a better place.

In a survey in 2005, 58% of young people aged 16-24 were involved in some kind of volunteering at least once a month¹.

We know that organisations can benefit from involving young volunteers.



¹ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/2005citizenshipsurveyactive>



WHAT IS INVOLVED?

involved is a national volunteering scheme for 16-25 year olds, launched in April 2008 to replace the Millennium Volunteers (MV) programme. It is managed and funded by the national youth volunteering charity, v (www.vinspired.com), and delivered by local involved teams working in each authority area.

As your local involved team, we work with young people across Bristol and South Gloucestershire encouraging them to volunteer and to help them identify suitable volunteering opportunities. We also offer local organisations free training, support and advice to help them to work with young volunteers. We want to ensure that organisations feel positive, confident and supported in involving young volunteers.

If you think we could help you to support young volunteers in any way please get in touch with us. Our contact details are on the back of this booklet.

WHY SHOULD YOU INVOLVE YOUNG VOLUNTEERS?

Young people can bring:

- Energy & enthusiasm
- A new perspective
- Commitment
- Employee benefits – Paid employees may appreciate the opportunity to supervise a volunteer.
- New skills and IT literacy
- Better links with your local community.

"In the British Red Cross Youth & Schools department young people provide an invaluable source of energy, motivation and skills that compliment and enhance our humanitarian education work. Young people are always generating new ideas and bringing fresh perspectives to the work we do, when we are out in schools pupils respond extremely well to their peers; peer education really enhances the global dimension of the curriculum and supports the humanitarian focus of our educational offer."

Lucy Tutton, British Red Cross, Wiltshire, Avon and Gloucestershire.

VOLUNTEER POLICIES

WHY HAVE ONE?

- It provides a good foundation for developing your organisation's work with volunteers and deciding how you might involve them in your organisation's activities.
- It can help to define the role of volunteers in your organisation and also provide clarity for existing staff.
- It can help to demonstrate your commitment to involving and supporting your volunteers.
- Having a written volunteer policy can aid decision-making and ensure that volunteers are treated on an equal and fair basis.

"I think it is really important that volunteers know what is available to them in terms of support and training. If taking on volunteers is a new thing for an organisation, a volunteer policy is a pretty fundamental starting point for planning the way forward."

Cosham Gardens, Leonard Cheshire Disability

WRITING YOUR POLICY

- Consult staff and existing volunteers within your organisation on their views and ideas to make sure your policy is relevant and that they feel that their opinions have been taken into account.
- Start by considering why you want to involve volunteers and how and where they may fit into your organisation.
- Keep your policy short and simple (this can be done by referring to other policies rather than repeating them within your volunteer policy).
- Make sure your policy is clear, easy to understand, free from jargon and not unnecessarily complicated.

WHAT DOES A VOLUNTEER POLICY USUALLY INCLUDE?

- A description of the organisation and what it does.
- Why the organisation wants to involve volunteers.

- Brief summary of your recruitment, induction and expenses procedures for volunteers.
- What the organisation will offer to volunteers in terms of support, good practice, training and recognition etc.
- How volunteers are covered by the organisation's insurance policy.
- How volunteers can participate in decision-making and express their ideas and views.

VOLUNTEER CHARTER

A Volunteer Charter, or agreement, can help to clarify your expectations of your volunteer and what they can expect from you.

"You need to be very clear about the boundaries and expectations of the volunteer's role in order to protect both them and the service user."

Cosham Gardens, Leonard Cheshire Disability



MAKING VOLUNTEER ROLES ATTRACTIVE TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people volunteer for a number of reasons²:

- To improve things/help people in their community (56%)
- To develop new skills (46%)
- To meet new people (35%)
- For work experience/ to increase employment prospects (27%)

FLEXIVOL

The Institute of Volunteering Research has come up with the acronym, "FLEXIVOL", to represent what makes a volunteering opportunity attractive to young people.

Flexibility has top priority. Young people have many pressures and demands on them. It can be hard for them to make the time to volunteer. Much of their lives are controlled by others, so it is important to them to have an element of choice and spontaneity in volunteering.



2 Institute for Volunteering Research, Young People Help Out – Volunteering and Giving Among Young People, 2006-07.

Legitimacy is a widespread need. Young people's view of volunteers and of volunteering is basically favourable, but negative stereotypes persist. Peer pressure, particularly on boys, prevents many young people from getting involved for fear of being labelled a certain way.

Ease of access many young people don't know how to find out about volunteering opportunities. A major reason for not volunteering is often simply that they didn't know how to go about it. More information, encouragement and easy access points would help break down these entry barriers.

Experience is significant. Young people want relevant and interesting experiences which will stand them in good stead in their personal and career development. Volunteering needs to offer opportunities to learn new skills, take on challenges, explore different careers, and get work experience.

Incentives are important. Being clear about what young people will get out of their volunteering is vital. Examples would include; a reference, training, career development, or a qualification. Paying expenses is also a good idea if possible, meaning young people who might have limited income would not be out of pocket as a result of their volunteering. (See section on Expenses, below, for further information).

Variety in the amount of commitment, level of responsibility and type of activity helps accommodate the huge range of individual interests, goals, constraints and preferences amongst young people. Variety also helps attract the widest possible range of volunteers.

Organisation of the volunteering needs to be efficient but informal, providing a relaxed environment in which young people feel welcome and valued. They would like some appreciation and the right kind of advice and support. They do not want to be over-organised and heavily supervised but to have people there who can support them when they need it, and help them progress when they are ready.

Laughs should not be forgotten because of young people's ambitions for self-development. Volunteering should be fun. While young people may not volunteer primarily for the social side, they are more likely to continue if they are enjoying themselves.

"I was attracted to NACOA because I wanted to do volunteer work that involved working with children and using counselling skills. I could also see from the site that NACOA provided lots of training and that you could be flexible about when you did your 3 hours each week. NACOA is so grateful for every volunteer who comes in, they give everyone lots of support and time. I really feel that I and the rest of NACOA are really making a difference for the children who call/email us. The dedication everyone shows is truly amazing."

Leonora, 23, Volunteer Counsellor for NACOA

"We recognise that some of the volunteers we take on are available for a fixed period of time, for example students and plan around this. With young people we know they probably won't be here for 5 or 10 years, they will want to move on and you have to recognise that and the value that we can offer to them whilst they are here and they can take on into their future employment."

Leonard Cheshire

"We offered initial training sessions at the students' union so that it was easily accessible to students."

Cassie, Volunteer Coordinator, NACOA





HOW CAN WE RECRUIT YOUNG VOLUNTEERS?

Your local volunteer centre is a great place to start. Once you register an opportunity with them, they will ensure it is uploaded onto the national youth volunteering website, www.vinspired.com, their own website and the national volunteering website, www.do-it.org.uk.

The opportunity title and description need to be a sales pitch. You need to grab people's attention; make the opportunity sound interesting, do-able, meaningful and inspirational. Remember to include other benefits such as potential accreditation, the benefit of getting some experience in a particular field, what (if any) expenses are covered, and what the individual volunteer will get out of it.

"As an organisation we massively encourage young people to get involved with volunteering, largely due to the fact that they will be exposed to the sector, all types of people and at the same time develop and learn vital skills that will fundamentally help their employability in the future. It's also a perfect way to meet new, energised and passionate people and friends!"

Amber Andrews, Sue Ryder Care, Bristol.

If a young person contacts you about volunteering, it is important to respond promptly. As Abby, 16, says, *"We're always being offered new projects and stuff to get involved in, so it's easy to lose interest in things quite quickly and move onto something else if you're not kept engaged."*

We know recruiting volunteers can be time-consuming. One way of managing this might be to plan volunteer recruitment so it happens in phases. By putting deadlines to your recruitment process, it is likely that enquires will be grouped around those dates. If not, you will be able to explain when the next opportunity to get involved will be.

INDUCTIONS

Inducting volunteers helps them understand your organisation, what it is trying to achieve, how and where they fit in, and it can help them become effective in their role more quickly. Inductions offer an opportunity for the organisation to make the volunteer feel welcome and valued. This process may be similar to that which you conduct with paid staff.

As part of an induction you may want to cover:

- The history, aims, mission and structure of your organisation.
- Information about the service your organisation provides and the groups it serves.
- Key policies relevant to the volunteer's role e.g. health and safety, first aid, discipline procedures, expenses (what can be claimed and how).
- What support and training is available.
- A tour of the premises.
- Further information about the volunteer's role.

Inductions can be covered through conversation, an information pack, or as part of a training process.

At Leonard Cheshire's Cossham Gardens, "volunteers complete four modules of initial training on: key policies and health and safety; volunteering with Leonard Cheshire (covering our mission statement and values); protection of vulnerable adults from abuse; and disability rights and communication."

"We do want to get it right so we make sure that anyone that comes gets a full induction so we can say, "this is what we'd like you to do & this is what we'll do to support you."

Alison Hender, Brislington Neighbourhood Centre

SUPPORTING AND RETAINING YOUNG PEOPLE

SUPPORT AND COMMUNICATION WITH VOLUNTEERS

It is important for all volunteers to feel valued and part of the team. Having the opportunity to discuss work-related issues, their role and training needs can help to ensure that the volunteer's needs are being met, as well as those of the organisation and service users.

You can also support your volunteers by:

- Making sure they know who to talk to if they have any concerns.
- Keeping them informed of what's going on within the organisation.
- Giving them the opportunity to give and receive feedback.
- Including them in social and residential events and training, which can really help to integrate new volunteers.
- Providing some form of recognition for their work.

"They need to see friendly faces. Sometimes 1-to-1 help."

A young volunteer

"All our volunteers attend an annual review to give feedback on how the service could be improved. On a more informal level I work on different days each week and use a variety of contact methods to ensure that I maintain regular contact with all our volunteers. As a volunteer co-ordinator I am able to give support to them, and they are able to talk to me about issues they might not want to talk about with those they work alongside."

Cossham Gardens, Leonard Cheshire Disability

RESPONSIBILITY AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRESSION

Ensuring there is the opportunity for progression and increased responsibility in their role can be really motivating for volunteers.

"Opportunities to take on new responsibility would make me feel like I have something to aim for."

a young volunteer

"Being given the right amount of responsibility is also vitally important. Giving a young person responsibility is fantastic, but you must make sure you can be there to support the young person when and where they need it. We won't need your support all the time; however it can sometimes be hard to ask for it, so bear that in mind and make sure help is at hand when needed."

a young volunteer

ACCREDITATION AND RECOGNITION

Young people can receive recognition from v for their volunteering. All volunteers can be awarded a vThankyou certificate for any volunteering they carry out, even if it's just a one-off. Those who take part in more regular volunteering can be given a v50 award once they have volunteered for 50 hours. Volunteers who complete the v50 can then do the vImpact award. The vImpact requires a further 100 hours of volunteering and recognises the impact of the young person's volunteering on their community and the individual volunteer. Young Bristol also offer 100 hour and 200 hour certificates to recognise volunteers commitment to their volunteering. For more information about accreditation and recognition get in touch with the vinvolved team.

"I think an organisation should give young volunteers challenges to help them gain really valuable skills."

a young volunteer

"Recognition of good work can be all the support that a young person needs, whether it's just verbal, or in the form of a celebration evening. Give credit where it's due, and that will go a long way."

A young volunteer



ARE THERE ANY LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OF HAVING YOUNG VOLUNTEERS?

INSURANCE

This will depend on the activities of your organisation, what equipment and buildings you own and whether you employ paid staff. All organisations have a duty of care towards their volunteers and you will need to make sure that your insurance includes cover for all activities volunteers undertake and any claims a volunteer could make in the event of an accident.

CHILD PROTECTION

Organisations that regularly work with young volunteers should have child protection policies in place. The exact nature of the policy will depend on the work of the organisation, but it should set out adequate safeguards around day-to-day working practices, routes for complaints to be raised, procedures to deal with any such problems, and recruitment procedures for staff working with young volunteers.

Organisations should be aware that staff "caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children" as part of their normal duties are in regulated positions under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000. We advise that all paid and voluntary staff who supervise under 18s should have a Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check and references. (See section on CRBs for further information.)

People under the age of 18 are legally classed as vulnerable. Organisations should take this into account when involving them as volunteers. However, people over the age of 16 are free to undertake paid work in situations where their colleagues will not have had CRBs. Therefore, while your child protection measures should be strong for the pre-16 age group, they could arguably be less rigid for post-16s.

CRB CHECKS

CHILDCARE ORGANISATIONS

The Protection of Children Act 1999 states that "...all child care organisations have a statutory duty... not to employ a person in a child care position if that

person is included on the PoCA List or List 99." Child care positions include "...work with children in all sectors irrespective of whether the work is paid or unpaid, and whether or not it is under a contract." (DfES, 2005).

OTHER ORGANISATIONS

The DfES advises that "...there are many other organisations outside of the regulated sectors... that also care for children in one way or another." (youth projects, sports clubs, etc). These organisations are advised to undertake checks "when proposing to appoint people to work, whether for payment or voluntarily, with children." (DfES, 2005).

OUR VOLUNTEERS WILL NOT BE WORKING DIRECTLY WITH CHILDREN...

The Criminal Records Bureau advises that there is no legal requirement to vet all volunteers. Your decision to get a CRB check should be based on either:

A thorough risk assessment of the role to be performed by the volunteer and the extent to which this will bring them in to contact with children or vulnerable adults; or

If the voluntary work is to be carried out on someone else's premises, for example at a school or care home, whether it is a requirement of that organisation for a check to be done, in order to comply with the legislation that governs their business (Criminal Records Bureau, 2005).

HOW MUCH DO CRB CHECKS FOR VOLUNTEERS COST?

The CRB provide free-of-charge checks for volunteers (this does not include work experience placements). If your CRB applications are processed by an umbrella body they may charge an administration fee.

RISK ASSESSMENTS

DIFFERENTIATING VOLUNTEERS FROM STAFF

It is important to differentiate volunteers from staff to avoid unintentionally creating an employment contract with your volunteers, which could leave you vulnerable to litigation. You can do this through avoiding using language associated with an employment contract, for example “job description”, “pay”, “contract”, or “agreement”. You also need to ensure that you are only reimbursing actual volunteer expenses as any additional payment could be regarded as salary (see “Expenses”, below, for more information). If in doubt it may be worth seeking legal advice to ensure that your volunteer policies are not misleading.

Risk assessments need to be carried out and, ideally, recorded for all your volunteers’ activities. It is important to bear in mind the maturity (and not necessarily just the age) of the person carrying out the role when doing your risk assessment.

Some basic principles to remember are:

- Young people should not be left unattended
- It is safer if young volunteers are supervised by two or more adults
- Any potentially dangerous activity should have adult supervision.

EXPENSES

Volunteers are giving up their time for free, and they shouldn’t be out of pocket for doing so. If possible it is always good practice to pay your volunteers’ expenses. This is particularly important with young volunteers, for whom the cost of travelling could be the deciding factor in whether or not they can volunteer with your organisation.

The reimbursement of volunteer expenses can also help your organisation to meet its commitment to offering equal opportunities to all. Volunteer expenses should be built into all funding applications or budgets as part of the regular costs of a volunteer programme.

To avoid issues with minimum wage, benefits and tax, we would advise organisations to pay only out of pocket expenses, accompanied by receipts.

Expenses payments that exceed volunteers’ actual costs may be regarded as a payment in return for the work they have carried out. This could be regarded as a contract by a tribunal or similar body, giving the volunteers the same rights as workers or employees – including the national minimum wage. (See the section entitled “Legal Status of Volunteers” for more information.)



USEFUL CONTACTS

VINVOLVED TEAM (BRISTOL & SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE)

Young Bristol

www.youngbristol.com

or; **vinvolved team Bristol**

action@youngbristol.com Tel: 0117 907 1010

involved team South Glos

southglos@youngbristol.com Tel: 01454 317 289

VINSPIRED

The national youth volunteering website.

www.vinspired.com

VOLUNTEER CENTRES

Your local volunteer centre can help you to promote your volunteering opportunities, provide information and support and some training opportunities.

Volunteering Bristol

www.bristolvolunteers.org.uk Tel: 0117 9897733

Thornbury Volunteer Centre

www.volunteer-thornbury.co.uk Tel: 01454 413392 Email: tdvl@freenet.co.uk

Patchway Volunteer Centre

Tel: 0117 940 2056 Email: clairerigby@btconnect.com

Volunteer Centre Yate

www.yatevoluntarylink.org.uk Tel: 01454 324102

Email: volunteercentreyate@btconnect.com

VOLUNTEERING ENGLAND

Provides help and support for anyone working with volunteers. Website includes useful publications and a bank of good practice information.

www.volunteering.org.uk Tel: 0845 3056979

Email: volunteering@volunteeringengland.org

COUNCIL FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE

Your local council for voluntary service provides information, advice, support, training and representation for local community and voluntary sector groups and organisations.

Voscur (Bristol)

www.voscur.org. Tel: 0117 909 9949 Email: info@voscur.org

CVS South Gloucestershire

www.cvs-sg.org.uk Tel: 01454 865205 Email: info@cvs-sg.org.uk

GOLDSTAR

Promotes good practice in managing volunteers from socially excluded groups.

www.goldstar.org.uk

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

The NACRO (www.nacro.org.uk) helpline provides information and advice to employers and others carrying out Criminal Record Checks 0207 8406464.

They also provide information and advice for disclosure applicants 0800 0181259.

The Criminal Records Bureau has a website containing information on CRB checks and the processing system and a helpline for general information and advice. www.crb.gov.uk Tel: 0870 9090811.

FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

The North Tyneside Voluntary Organisations Development Agency (VODA) have produced a useful information sheet on insurance.

See information sheet 4.2 Insurance - what you need to know www.voda.org.uk/information.html

FOR FURTHER DETAILS ON CHILD PROTECTION

See Volunteering England's "Children and Young People as Volunteers".

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON EXPENSES

See Volunteering England's "Volunteer Expenses".

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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www.youngbristol.com

or;

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**Young Bristol**
works for young people

Registered Charity Number: 301681

This Good Practice guide was produced by the involved teams in Bristol and South Gloucestershire, which are hosted and managed by Young Bristol.

