Code of Practice on Volunteering

1. Definition

Volunteering is ‘any activity which involves spending time, unpaid, doing something which aims to benefit someone (individuals or groups) other than or in addition to close relatives, or to benefit the environment’. [The Institute of Volunteering Research.]

2. Aims

This Code of Practice aims to set a framework for raising the profile and volume of volunteering in East Sussex, encouraging best practice in the management of volunteers and removing the barriers to volunteering.

3. Commitments

1. Recognise that whilst volunteering is freely given, it is not cost free – volunteering needs to be effectively resourced and well managed to sustain and develop it.
2. Recognise the diverse range and contribution of volunteers to improving public services, from consultation through to involvement in design and delivery.
3. Recognise and give volunteers the support, training, management and other resources they need to be involved effectively.
4. Recognise the important role volunteers play as trustees and committee members, and the need for appropriate training and support for them.
5. Recognise the value of volunteering experience in recruiting new employees and promote volunteering opportunities to existing staff where appropriate.
6. Work together to develop, promote and celebrate volunteering across East Sussex.
7. Work to increase the diversity of people involved in volunteering and recognise that everyone has the right to volunteer without experiencing unfair discrimination.
8. Work to increase the quality, quantity and scope of volunteering across all sectors.
9. Work together to share, develop and implement good practice in volunteering.
10. Involve volunteers in decision making related to their volunteering.
11. Work to overcome the institutional, attitudinal and practical barriers to volunteering.
12. Improve the measure of voluntary and community activity and assess and publicise, to staff and the wider community, the extent to which this plays a key part in achieving organisational objectives.
13. Where Public Sector organisations directly manage volunteers, they will act on relevant undertakings for the Voluntary and Community Sector. They will not expect volunteers to do work that should be undertaken by paid staff.
14. Follow good practice in the reimbursement of reasonable expenses and include these costs in any funding proposals.
15. Ensure that volunteers are given thanks and recognition for their contribution and make visible the value of volunteers’ contribution, including to volunteers themselves.
Volunteering Checklist

Both sectors recognise the value of volunteering: high levels of volunteering can be seen as an indicator of healthy and active communities and add a unique contribution to the value of service delivery.

Raising the profile of volunteering, developing best practice in management and removing barriers to volunteering can help to get more people involved in various forms of voluntary activity.

This checklist guidance aims to promote and develop the best volunteering framework possible.

Volunteering as a result of free choice

- Pressure is not placed on any individual asking about volunteering opportunities
- Support and guidance is given to potential volunteers to help them make an informed decision and find opportunities that best fit their individual needs, interests and abilities
- The recruitment and management of volunteers is based on mutual trust and respect
- Processes are in place that allow individuals to discuss any issues in confidence and make decisions freely
- A degree of flexibility is adopted for the management of volunteers: it is recognised that volunteers are acting through free choice and are not expected to carry out work that should be undertaken by paid staff

Volunteering is open to everyone

- Volunteering opportunities are actively promoted in the wider community and any barriers to volunteering are identified and attempts are made to overcome them
- Work is carried out to help increase and promote diversity among volunteers, in terms of age, race, gender and disability
- The varied individual motivations for volunteering, and the support needs that different groups may have, are recognised and provided for
- Both sectors regularly monitor proposed legislation and regulation for potential impacts on volunteering, and any updates and / or relevant information is communicated between the sectors and key partners

The mutual benefits of volunteering

- Volunteering policy promotes and allows for volunteers to benefit from their contribution to the community by: gaining a sense of worthwhile achievement, increasing their skills and experience for future employment, being reimbursed for reasonable expenses and having fun
- Volunteers are offered appropriate and relevant induction training and support on a regular basis to enable them to carry out their role
- Volunteers are invited to be involved in processes for improving public services, from consultation through to involvement in design and delivery
- Both sectors work together to share and develop best practice to benefit future volunteers

Recognising the value of volunteering

- Thanks and recognition is given to individual volunteers, but is also given publicly to highlight the contribution volunteering can make to a community, an organisation or a particular project
- Efforts are made to gather relevant and valuable data on volunteering and the impact of voluntary activities in communities
- The long-term contribution of volunteers is recognised and addressed when making decisions around sustainable long-term funding