



VOLUNTEERING CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

A guide for the relationship between statutory agencies and the voluntary & community sector in Test Valley

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Volunteering Code of Good Practice is to be viewed in conjunction with the One Compact for Hampshire. Development of the Volunteering Code of Good Practice has involved an extensive consultation process following input from a variety of voluntary organisations and community groups (hereafter all referred to as voluntary organisations) and statutory agencies.

The Volunteering Code sets out a series of undertakings on good practice in volunteering for voluntary organisations and statutory agencies in Test Valley. The aim is to enable more people to become involved in a variety of voluntary activities and to offer them the necessary support.

Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community, and can take many forms. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain. It does not include help given to close relatives.

2. PRINCIPLES

2.1. Key understandings

- a. There is an agreed recognition that volunteering makes a major contribution to all aspects of life in the local community – particularly in health, social welfare, education and the environment.
- b. Actions and decisions taken by voluntary organisations and statutory agencies can affect community and voluntary activity, and this Code highlights the need for a consistent and appropriate approach from all agencies that have an impact on volunteering.
- c. Voluntary organisations and statutory agencies are committed to maintaining best practice in the promotion, development and celebration of volunteering.
- d. All voluntary organisations adopting this Code respect volunteers' personal commitment to their organisation.
- e. In common with the National Code, the undertakings aim to tackle the barriers to volunteering, enabling more people to volunteer, and ensure that both the individual and the group benefit from the volunteering.

2.2. Fundamental principles of volunteering

- a. **Choice:** Volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual. Any encouragement to become involved in volunteering should not result in any form of coercion or compulsion. Freedom to volunteer implies freedom not to become involved.
- b. **Diversity:** People in Test Valley bring varying qualities and experience to the voluntary & community sector. Diversity is recognised, respected and valued. Volunteering should be open to all, no matter what their background, age, race, sexual orientation or faith. It is recognised that social exclusion barriers can be

overcome by skills, experience, confidence and contacts gained while helping others.

- c. **Reciprocity:** Giving voluntary time and skills must be recognised as establishing a reciprocal relationship in which the volunteer also receives. Volunteers gain a sense of worthwhile achievement, useful skills, experience and contacts, sociability and fun, as well as inclusion in the life of the organisation and the wider community.
- d. **Recognition:** The contribution made by volunteers to the organisation, to the community, to the social economy and to wider social objectives is fundamental to the relationship between volunteers, organisations and statutory policy and practice.

3. VOLUNTEER CENTRES

Within Test Valley, it is recognised that the Volunteer Centre operates as the local Volunteering Development Agency (VDA). It has the following strategic objectives, which are common to volunteer centres throughout the country:

- a. **Brokerage** - The primary function is to match both individuals and groups interested in volunteering with appropriate opportunities in the local community. Information is held on a comprehensive range of opportunities. Potential volunteers are offered support and advice matching their motivation to volunteer, with appropriate volunteering opportunities.
- b. **Marketing Volunteering** – VDAs stimulate and encourage local interest in volunteering and community activity. This may include promoting and marketing volunteering through local, regional and national events and campaigns. VDAs manage and promote a national brand for volunteering.
- c. **Good Practice Development** – VDAs promote good practice in working with volunteers to all volunteer involving groups. They deliver training and accreditation for potential volunteers, volunteers, volunteer managers and the volunteering infrastructure.
- d. **Development of volunteering opportunities** – VDAs work in close partnership with statutory, voluntary and private sector agencies as well as voluntary organisations and faith groups to develop local volunteering opportunities. VDAs target specific groups which face barriers to volunteering.
- e. **Policy response and campaigning** – VDAs identify proposals or legislation that may impact on volunteering and will lead or participate in campaigns on issues that affect volunteers or volunteering. VDAs campaign proactively for a more volunteer-literate and volunteer friendly climate.
- f. **Strategic development of volunteering** – VDAs inform strategic thinking and planning at a regional and national level.

4. UNDERTAKINGS

4.1. Statutory agency undertakings

In supporting this Code, the statutory agencies undertake to:

- a. Recognise that volunteering is an exercise of the basic human right of freedom to assemble and associate, and fundamental to democracy.
- b. Ensure that all new proposed policy and procedures are checked for their impact on voluntary and community activity and funding, before being adopted.
- c. Seek to limit the barriers to volunteering and community action presented by existing policies and practices.
- d. Assess the contribution made to local statutory policies and programme objectives by volunteering and community activities.
- e. Aim to adopt policies, which ensure that volunteering infrastructure bodies can rely on realistic, sustainable, long-term funding from appropriate statutory agencies.
- f. Recognise that volunteering infrastructure bodies are independent voluntary sector organisations, with voluntary management boards. Seek to work with those already active and organised, rather than setting up new structures.
- g. In partnership with voluntary organisations, review the strengths and weaknesses of local volunteering information and infrastructure, and make recommendations based on best practice examples identified.
- h. Support media and communications strategies which ensure that volunteer contributions to raising the quality of life are promoted, and support activities which motivate more people to become involved.
- i. Support initiatives which provide accessible information about volunteering opportunities at a local level, and ensure distribution of this information throughout the agency and its partner / subsidiary organisations.
- j. Seek ways in which statutory agencies can work with voluntary organisations to address how detailed demographic information on volunteering and community activity can be collected for comparison with other surveys and research.
- k. In consultation with voluntary organisations, seek to improve the effectiveness of voluntary and community activity.
- l. Where statutory agencies directly manage volunteers, act on the same undertakings as specified below in 4.2 for voluntary organisations.

4.2. Voluntary organisations' undertakings

In supporting this Code, voluntary organisations undertake to:

- a. Follow best practice in the management of volunteers. Paid staff and volunteers who recruit, induct, and manage volunteers will have this work recognised as part of their role and receive appropriate training and support.
- b. Assist potential volunteers to find volunteering opportunities that fit their needs, interests and abilities.
- c. Provide appropriate induction and training for volunteers to enable them to carry out their volunteering effectively. Sufficient resources will be budgeted to support volunteers, including management and/or peer support, office space and equipment.
- d. Ensure that the nature and extent of volunteering is acknowledged in all annual reports.
- e. Encourage and enable the accreditation of skills acquired through volunteering for recognised qualifications, where appropriate.
- f. Support volunteers who are actively seeking further opportunities, such as paid employment.
- g. Acknowledge the vital contribution of volunteers and ensure that they receive appropriate treatment and support.
- h. Have a clear policy on actual, out-of-pocket expenses incurred by volunteers, including consideration of care costs. Funded voluntary organisations and statutory agencies should reimburse actual, out-of-pocket expenses.
- i. Ensure that volunteers are made aware of and protected by health and safety and public liability legislation and the organisation's policies.
- j. Recognise the importance of trustees as a specific group of volunteers and ensure they receive appropriate training and support to enable them to carry out their tasks.
- k. Ensure there are appropriate procedures in place to carry out Criminal Record Bureau checks and other references as necessary.
- l. Take into account diversity and equality issues with the intention of being able to offer volunteer opportunities to all sectors of the community.
- m. Recognise that volunteers may have exceptional skills and talents and value their opinion on development and working practices.

- n. Develop systems to ensure that no volunteer potential is lost once a volunteering relationship comes to an end. Organisations will, wherever appropriate, refer volunteers back to the Volunteer Centre, so that they can discuss other options, which may be open to them.

4.3. Mutual undertakings and agreed principles

- a. Both sectors agree to work together to identify and dismantle barriers to volunteering and community involvement through embracing diversity and reducing inequalities.
- b. Both the statutory agencies and voluntary organisations agree that public funding should be invested in creating and maintaining a modern, dynamic volunteering infrastructure.
- c. Statutory agencies and voluntary organisations in Test Valley will work together to establish:
 - practices that enable people from socially excluded groups to become involved.
 - a consistent approach towards the reimbursement of expenses where it is agreed that volunteers will be involved.

5. THE VOLUNTEERS' CHARTER

Statutory agencies and voluntary organisations will use this Charter as a basis for developing good practice within their own organisations.

5.1. Volunteers' rights

- a. To be given a clear idea of their tasks and responsibilities within the organisation.
- b. To be given the name of someone in the organisation who will look after their interests and who will offer them appropriate support and supervision on a regular basis.
- c. To be assured that any information shared with the organisation is kept confidential.
- d. To be made aware of and protected by health and safety and public liability legislation and the organisation's policies.
- e. To be offered opportunities for training and skills development, appropriate for the voluntary tasks involved.
- f. 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 that is against their principles or beliefs.
- g. To be given the chance to play a part in decision making within the organisation as appropriate.
- h. To be made aware of the organisation's policy on actual, out-of-pocket expenses incurred by volunteers. Travel and other expenses should be offered by all funded voluntary organisations and statutory agencies.
- i. To be made aware of any procedures for dealing with volunteer complaints and organisational concerns about volunteer behaviour and performance.

5.2. Volunteers' responsibilities

- a. To accept the organisation's aims and objectives.
- b. To do what is reasonable requested of them, to the best of their ability.
- c. To treat all information obtained whilst volunteering in a confidential manner.
- d. To recognise the right of the organisation to expect high quality of service.
- e. To recognise that they represent the organisation and therefore need to act in an appropriate manner at all times.
- f. 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.
- g. To be willing to undertake appropriate training in respect of health and safety issues, insurance liability and general good practice as necessary for the voluntary work undertaken.
- h. To share suggestions for changes in working practices with the Volunteer Organiser.
- i. To assist with CRB checks and provision of references as necessary.

6. MEDIATION

6.1. General principles

- a. The One Compact for Hampshire has now been agreed and relates specifically to the operation of the Compact framework and associated Codes of Practice (Click [here](#) for details of the One Compact for Hampshire and all Test Valley Codes of Practice). It is recognised that organisations will have their own mechanisms in place for dealing with other disagreements that do not relate to the operation of the Compact framework.

- b. As far as possible disagreements ***over the application of the framework of the One Compact for Hampshire and this Code of Practice*** should be resolved directly between the parties involved.
- c. Where there is still disagreement, both parties have access to the mediation procedure within Test Valley.

6.2. The mediation process

- a. Any organisation or individual that feels they have not been treated in accordance with the spirit of the Compact should contact either:
 - The Chief Officer of Test Valley Community Services on 01794 519998; or
 - The Community Development Officer at Test Valley Borough Council on 01264 368000
- b. If mediation is required then a Mediation Panel will be convened. This Panel will be the group of people that developed the Compact Codes of Practice for Test Valley and will include representation from:
 - Test Valley Community Services
 - Test Valley Borough Council
 - Hampshire County Council
 - Primary Care Trusts
 - Other voluntary sector organisations
- c. The aim would always be for mediation to result in a mutually agreed solution that is acceptable to all parties. This is the sole purpose of the Mediation Panel.
- d. The Mediation Panel has no powers of enforcement. If no mutually agreed solution can be found then any further course of action would be a matter between the parties concerned.

7. CONTACTS AND OTHER RELATED INFORMATION

7.1. Contacts

For more information about the One Compact for Hampshire, any of the Codes of Good Practice or how they are implemented within Test Valley please contact either:

The Chief Officer
Test Valley Community Services
2nd Floor
Coopers House
The Horsefair
ROMSEY
SO51 8JZ

OR

Community Development Officer
Test Valley Borough Council
Housing Service
Beech Hurst
Weyhill Road
ANDOVER
SP10 3AJ

01794 519998
romsey@tvcs.org.uk

01264 368000
housing@testvalley.gov.uk

7.2. Other related information

Other information that might be of interest is (click to access the document):

- [One Compact For Hampshire \(including Funding and Volunteering Codes\)](#)
- [Test Valley Volunteer Centre](#)
- [Volunteering England](#)