

Blackpool Compact Code of Practice: Volunteering

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Introduction

Volunteering plays a major part in the lifeblood of our society as a whole and in our communities at a local level. It is crucial therefore that the act of volunteering is recognised and valued for the contribution it makes to our social economy.

This code of practice which forms part of the Blackpool Compact lays out the minimum standards that organisations need to observe when recruiting and managing volunteers to ensure that volunteering in Blackpool is a world class experience for all.

The principles of this code are contained in the Blackpool Third Sector Strategy for Volunteering and the undertakings that are contained in the code form part of the aspirations for the Third Sector Strategy. It is expected that all organisations that are using volunteers will adopt these aspirations and that the Third Sector Strategic Partnership and other partners will provide the support to turn these aspirations into a reality.

This document has been developed by the Blackpool TSSP Volunteering Workgroup and the Volunteer Centre for Blackpool Wyre & Fylde and the Blackpool Strategic Partnership would like to extend their thanks for the work that has been done.

What is volunteering?

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship and fundamental to democracy. It is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community, and can take many forms. It is freely undertaken and not for financial gain. The principle of non-payment of volunteers is central to this Code and to the wider sector and society's understanding of volunteering.

We understand the term volunteering to include formal activity undertaken through public and voluntary organisations as well as informal community participation and campaigning.

For the purpose of this Code, volunteering is defined as an activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or individuals or groups other than (or in addition to) close relatives.

People volunteer for many different reasons. They may choose to volunteer to develop skills or gain experience, to socialise or to give something back to society/ They may also volunteer because they feel a moral duty or compelling reasons to take part in voluntary action or support a particular cause.

The key element is that it is freely undertaken.

Principles of Volunteering

The Compact recognises four principles fundamental to volunteering. These are Choice, Diversity, Mutual Benefit and Recognition. These inform every aspect of this Code and the National Volunteering Code of Practice.

Choice:

Volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual. Freedom to volunteer implies freedom not to become involved.

Diversity:

Volunteering should be open to all, no matter what their background, race, colour, nationality, religion, ethnic or national origins, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.

Mutual Benefit:

Volunteers offer their contribution and skills unwaged but should benefit in other ways in return for their contribution. Giving time voluntarily must be recognised as establishing a reciprocal relationship in which the volunteer also benefits and feels that his or her contribution is personally fulfilling.

Recognition:

Explicit recognition that valuing the contribution of volunteers is fundamental to a fair relationship between volunteers, voluntary and community organisations and Government. This includes recognising the contribution to the organisation, the community, the social economy and wider social objectives

Summary of our commitments

The Blackpool Strategic Partnership members will work together to:

- Improve access to volunteering opportunities
- Improve support for volunteers through mentors etc.
- Make the recruitment process more appropriate and timely
- Ensure volunteering does not cost the volunteers money to do
- Ensure all volunteers are trained appropriately
- Ensure that volunteering is recognised and valued by the wider community
- Improve the quality of volunteer management
- Improve the quality of volunteer opportunities

Making volunteering more accessible

Improve access to volunteering opportunities

- Run 6 week pre-volunteering courses for appropriate volunteers
- Run a volunteer support programme for volunteers with special or specific needs
- Set up a car sharing scheme for volunteers

Improve Volunteer support through mentors etc.

We will increase the number of volunteers that have access to mentor support and ensure that all volunteers with special needs have adequate support.

- Provide mentor training for organisations using volunteers
- Run a volunteer mentor scheme to help people settle into their roles

Make the recruitment process more appropriate and timely

- Organisations to respond quickly to a person who has expressed an interest in volunteering with them.

Recognising the value of volunteers and volunteering

Ensure volunteering does not incur any financial cost to the volunteer

- Volunteers should be reimbursed for all out-of-pocket expenses incurred while volunteering.
- Volunteers are encouraged to claim reimbursement of all reasonable expenses.
- Publish guidelines on paying volunteer expenses and create a town wide policy regarding the payment of volunteer expenses.

All volunteers are trained appropriately

- All volunteers to be provided with Induction training including, Health & Safety, before they commence volunteering.
- All volunteers to be given training specific to their volunteer activity.

Ensure that volunteering is recognised and valued by the wider community

- National Volunteer's Week to become a major event in Blackpool
- A major volunteering celebration event to be held in Blackpool annually
- A Volunteer Awards programme to be set up in Blackpool.

Improving quality standards

Improve the quality of volunteer management

To improve the quality and standards of volunteer management we will

- Provide accredited learning for Volunteer Managers
- Make available standard Volunteer policy and procedure documents for all organisations (Involving Volunteers)
- Promote 'Investing in Volunteers' standards
- Promote 'SAM' for Volunteer Management
- Volunteer Community Awards Programme

Improve the quality of volunteer opportunities

- Volunteering opportunities are given a role description and risk assessed
- Design and implement town wide volunteer recruitment and induction standards
- Volunteers are provided with appropriate training to meet the needs of the role, the individual and the organisation

Useful resources

Websites

www.blackpooltssp.org.uk/images/library/compactdraft.pdf

The compact between partners in the Third Sector and Public Sector in Blackpool (draft document/link to be replaced by approved document/link)

www.thecompact.org.uk

Comprehensive resource on the Compact includes materials to download, good practice examples and news and articles.

www.blackpoolvolunteers.org.uk

Volunteer Centre Blackpool, Wyre & Fylde for resources and information on volunteering and local volunteering opportunities.

www.volunteering.org.uk

Offers a range of resources for anyone who works with or manages volunteers as well as to those who want to volunteer.

www.voluntarysectorskills.org.uk

Skills development in the voluntary and community sector – for paid staff, volunteers and trustees.

www.volunteeringlancashire.org.uk

Volunteering Lancashire promotes volunteering throughout Lancashire and seeks to represent the interests of everyone involved in recruiting, developing and training volunteers

Publications

ChangeUp: Capacity Building and Infrastructure Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector, Home Office Active Community Unit, London, 2004

Compact Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community Organisations: a Code

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Davis Smith, Justin, *The 1997 national survey of volunteering*, Institute for Volunteering Research, London, 1998

Forster Andy; Hurley Gail, *The Legal Position of volunteers in the United Kingdom*,

Association of Voluntary Service Organisations, European Volunteer Centre, Brussels, 2004

Gaskin, Katharine, *A choice blend: what volunteers want from organisation and management*, Institute for Volunteering Research, London, June, 2003

Penberthy, Chris and Forster, Andy, *Building on Success: a strategy for the Volunteering Infrastructure in England 2004-2014*, Volunteering England, Birmingham, London, 2004

Volunteering for All? Exploring the link between volunteering and social exclusion, Institute for Volunteering Research, London May, 2004

Disability Equality in Volunteering by Rachel Wilson on behalf of Skill published by Skill:National Bureau for Students with Disabilities: 1998

Volunteers and the Law by Mark Restall on behalf of Volunteering England, 2005