

Bath & North East Somerset Council
Future of Modern Libraries



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READING OFFER

A guide to managing volunteers

For organisations interested in running a Community Run Library



Content

1. Introduction
2. Planning Ahead
3. Roles and Responsibilities
4. Recruitment
5. Volunteer Agreements
6. Safeguarding and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
7. Induction and Training
8. Expenses
9. Support and Supervision
10. Insurance
11. Diversity & Equality
12. Health & Safety
13. Problem Solving
14. Data Protection and GDPR
15. Useful resources

Appendix 1 - Volunteer Policy Checklist – What should it cover?

Appendix 2 - Sample Volunteer Library roles

1. Introduction

Volunteers give their time freely and want to feel their contributions make a real difference. Volunteers have many reasons for helping. Some want to socialise and make new friends, others want to develop their skills and experience and many will feel passionate about the cause.

Volunteers will be a key part of developing any Community Run Library. It is important to give consideration early on to the tasks and roles that will be required. Every organisation will be different, so planning ahead is essential if your volunteers are to be clear about their role and the support they can expect.

Volunteers may be of any age and therefore your approaches to volunteering may have to differ accordingly. Organisations need to have systems and procedures in place to ensure their volunteers have a great experience.

This Volunteer Pack has been prepared by Bath & North East Somerset Council and the Volunteer Centre to provide support for organisations wishing to develop a Community Run Library. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information given in the guide, the Council does not accept liability for loss of any kind resulting from the use made by any person of such information.

2. Planning ahead

2.1 Getting your organisation ready

Careful planning is the key to building a good foundation for involving volunteers. Consider the following:

- Is everyone in the organisation aware of plans to involve volunteers?
- How will different people be affected – staff, trustees, service users, other volunteers?
- Do you have the resources to adequately support volunteers?
- Are the people who will support volunteers suitably skilled and trained?
- Have you budgeted for the costs of involving volunteers such as payment of out of pocket expenses, training, staff costs for supervision and administrative costs for DBS checks if required?
- Are you able to provide roles that are rewarding for volunteers and meet the needs of the organisation?
- Do you have the necessary space and resources (such as a spare desk or computer)?
- Volunteers bring fresh ideas, enthusiasm and experience – are you ready for this?
- Have you considered any risks associated with involving volunteers? (this includes risks to the volunteers themselves and to the organisation)
- Is your insurance cover adequate?
- What policies and procedures do you already have? Do you need any new policies and/or procedures such as a Volunteer Policy?

2.2 Developing a Volunteering Policy

A Volunteering Policy will give an overall framework for volunteer involvement in your organisation. It will refer to any other policies adopted by your organisation that include

volunteers, bringing it all together in one document. A Volunteering Policy will help demonstrate:-

- **Commitment** - shows the care and thought that have gone into involving volunteers.
- **Consistency** - ensures that decisions are consistent and not made on an ad hoc basis and that all volunteers are treated equally and fairly.
- **Clarity** - allows volunteers to know where they stand, how they can expect to be treated and where to turn to if they feel things are going wrong.
- **Unity** - helps ensure that paid staff and trustees fully understand why volunteers are involved and what role they play in the organisation.

In developing your Volunteering Policy ask the question - "why does our organisation involve volunteers"? This will start any discussions and give you an opening statement for the policy. It may be helpful to look at other organisations' policies to get an idea of style, language and levels of complexity. Although it is possible to obtain template policies they should be used with caution. Nothing can replace the value of working through the process and ensuring that the policy is right for your organisation.

What should a Volunteer Policy cover?

The following list of topics will help inform the basis of your policy. We have prepared a template in Appendix 1 to help you complete each section. The questions will help you think about what you need to include in each section.

- Introduction
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Recruitment
- Induction and training
- Expenses
- Support and supervision
- Insurance
- Diversity and Equality
- Health and Safety
- Problem Solving
- Data protection and GDPR
- Review

What other policies should you considered?

The NCVO recommends that organisations need to consider adopting the following policies:-

- As a minimum an organisation of any size must conduct a health and safety risk assessment. Whilst by law you are only required to have a written [health and safety policy](#) if you employ five or more people, it is considered good practice to produce one regardless of employee numbers. See more details in Section 12.
- [Safeguarding policy](#) for children and young people and/or vulnerable adults relevant and applicable to your organisation's activities. See more details in Section 6.

- Privacy Policy including [Data Protection and GDPR](#). See more details in Section 14.
- [Equality & Diversity Policy](#) with particular regard to anti-discrimination and harassment of employees and volunteers as well as service users. See more details in Section 11.
- [Risk management](#) including assessment and mitigation.
- Finance – including a [financial procedures manual](#) and a [reserves policy](#).
- [Board basics](#) – a [Trustee Code of Conduct](#); [Conflict of interest policy](#); and [Trustee Expenses policy](#).

For more information and guidance on these policies and other policies, visit the [NCVO website](#).

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Creating roles for Volunteers

To create and maintain a successful volunteer programme, the benefits need to be two-way. The roles that the volunteers undertake should assist the organisation to meet its aims, while at the same time being of benefit to the volunteer and it is vital to keep this in mind when designing new roles. For roles to be meaningful, it should be possible to describe how they contribute to the organisation's overall aim.

Some points to consider

- Are you able to attract a broad range of people by having both opportunities that can be done by any willing helper and those that are more specialised, requiring particular expertise?
- Is there flexibility around when the role/s can be carried out to fit in with the availability of volunteers?
- Is the role of benefit to the volunteer? How interesting/challenging is it? What will they gain through it?
- Are you able to involve volunteers who may have additional needs? What support is available? What form might this take?
- Do you have the resources available to support the role/s eg supervision time, physical resources (desk, PC etc)?
- Does the nature of the role require taking up references and/or DBS checks?

Detailed in Appendix 2 are four sample volunteer roles within Community Libraries.

4. Recruitment

1. Know your opportunities

- Be sure your volunteer opportunities are integral to achieving your group's or organisation's aims and objectives.
- Prepare volunteer role descriptions which clearly explain what is involved.
- Acquaint yourself thoroughly with each opportunity, including its purpose, responsibilities and what the value of the experience is for the volunteer.

2. Create a clear path to your door

- Put together a process for application and screening - don't start recruiting until everything is in place.
- Ensure that everyone involved in the organisation knows who to direct enquiries to.
- Respond promptly - aim to answer initial enquiries within 24 hours.

3. Make your recruitment message "user-friendly"

- Produce publicity that answers the volunteer's unspoken question "Why should I volunteer for you?" rather than your need "why you should volunteer for us".
- In your publicity, answer other typical questions that new recruits ask: "What will I be doing? How often and when? Where?"
- Reassure volunteers that they will be trained and that you will support them.
- Avoid words like "need" and "desperate" that may scare volunteers away.

4. Get your message out

- Consider all available methods including word of mouth, leaflets and posters, talks and presentations, local newsletters, websites, local media coverage.

5. Volunteer Agreements

Many organisations choose to use a formal document as a means of recording expectations and any agreed commitment between themselves and a volunteer. If used, it should be a two way agreement, detailing what each party can expect of the other. Often this is phrased in terms of "rights and responsibilities" or "hopes and expectations".

The agreement is not a contract, neither is it legally binding and care should be taken not to imply either. It is not compulsory. There are arguments both for and against using a Volunteer Agreement which are set out below.

Reasons for using an agreement

- Provides a written understanding of the relationship between the volunteer and the organisation.
- Clearly sets out what the volunteer can expect from the organisation.
- Seeks to ensure that the volunteer understands and will honour the commitment they have made to the organisation.

Reasons against using an agreement

- Risk that the agreement may be interpreted as a contract thus potentially bringing volunteers under employment legislation.
- The information may be duplicated in other places such as a Volunteer Policy or handbook.
- As the agreement is not binding it may be of limited use.

Typically in an agreement an organisation might commit to:

- Providing a written description of the volunteer's role.
- Providing a full induction and any training necessary for the role.
- Providing a named supervisor or person the volunteer can go to for support.
- Reimbursing out of pocket expenses.
- Providing a safe working environment.
- Treating volunteers in line with its diversity and equalities policy.
- Providing insurance cover for volunteers.

Volunteers might be expected to:

- Work within the policies and procedures of the organisation, including health and safety, equal opportunities and confidentiality.
- Work within the boundaries of their role description.
- Honour mutually agreed time commitments and let the organisation know if they are unable to volunteer for any reason.

What else to include

In their publication "Volunteers and the Law", Volunteering England suggested the following wording is used:-

"This agreement is not intended to be a legally binding contract between us and may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. Neither of us intend any employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future."

Signing agreements

Some organisations like to have signed agreements. In such cases it is doubly important to ensure that it is clear that the agreement is intended to be binding in honour only. Otherwise it would be a reasonable question to ask: if you do not intend it to be a binding document, then why do you need signatures?

The Gov.uk has more information about [volunteer rights](#) on their website.

6. Safeguarding and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

“Everybody has the right to be safe no matter who they are or what their circumstances. Safeguarding is about protecting everyone from harm, abuse or neglect. This includes the beneficiaries and clients we work with, staff and volunteers. We are all responsible for the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults and we must ensure that we are doing all we can to protect the most vulnerable members of our society.

The level and nature of any particular safeguarding approach should be determined by, and proportionate to, the risk inherent in activities of the volunteering opportunity in question. Some roles will be very informal, and often require little more than an introductory talk about what the role demands and what the volunteer expects to gain from the opportunity.

For example, a local community group organising a one-off litter-pick event in a city park, involving minimal public interaction. Of course sometimes even occasional or informal volunteering roles such as this can potentially involve risk. For example, if children were involved with the litter pick the organisation would need to consider child protection. The informality or occasional nature of a role does not automatically preclude the need for safeguarding. The point to remember is that the safeguarding approach should fit the risk inherent in the activities of each volunteering opportunity”.

Source NCVO, [Safeguarding for volunteer involving organisations](#)

Your organisation should consider developing a Safeguarding Policy. You will need to consider a range of approaches within your policy such as: roles that require DBS checks, recruitment processes (applications, interviews, references), training and supervision and clear guidance on the process for dealing with an allegation or incident.

The [Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\)](#) helps organisations make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children. It replaces the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).

There are different levels of checks that can be carried out. Firstly your organisation will need to understand what roles are required, prepare role descriptions and define which of these roles will require a DBS check. The Gov.uk website has a helpful [online toolkit](#) and helpline (03000 200 190) or email customerservices@dbs.gsi.gov.uk) to assist.

You can't carry out a basic check as an organisation - you must ask the person to [request their own basic DBS check](#). A basic check shows unspent convictions and cautions.

The following DBS checks apply (when you are working with vulnerable adults and children). Organisations can apply but maybe required to use an umbrella organisation to process the DBS check (see below):-

- a **standard check** shows spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings.

- an **enhanced check** shows the same as a standard check plus any information held by local police that's considered relevant to the role.
- an **enhanced check with barred lists** shows the same as an enhanced check plus whether the applicant is on the list of people barred from doing the role.

If you carry out criminal records checks, you must have a [policy on employing ex-offenders](#) and show it to any applicant who asks for it.

If you are not already registered to process DBS checks you will need to identify an [umbrella organisation](#) to do this on your behalf. Standard and Enhanced DBS checks for volunteers are free but umbrella organisations will charge an administration fee. This fee varies.

A free service to volunteers, the [DBS Service update](#), reduces the need to apply for multiple certificates when you move roles or when a recheck is required. You can register for the update service when you first apply or within 30 days of your DBS certificate being issued.

NCVO provides information on writing a [safeguarding policy](#) as well as some example policies and good practice guides. It has also produced guidance on '[Safeguarding for volunteer involving organisations](#)', page 8 provides details of what organisations need to consider when developing a safeguarding policy.

For more information on the [Local Safeguarding Adults and Children Board](#) within Bath and North East Somerset.

7. Induction and Training

Each organisation will have different needs. An induction aims to introduce new volunteers to an organisation and to their role within it.

At the Start

We all learn in different ways, some by reading, or by doing, by being shown or by shadowing others. Consider having a variety of ways for a new volunteer to learn their role. If there's a lot of information for a new volunteer to take in you may need to think about how to stagger the induction so the volunteer doesn't feel overwhelmed.

What does the volunteer need to know before they start, or before they deal with clients or the public? What can they learn 'on the job'? At the outset you will need basic details about the volunteer: name, address, age, any relevant medical information, an emergency contact name and number and anything else the volunteer feels you may need to know. If you intend to reimburse expenses, you will need their bank details. Make sure the volunteer knows why you are taking this information, who will see it, and that it will be held securely.

What does the Volunteer need to Know?

Introduce the volunteer to the team they may be connected with and to other staff/volunteers, particularly the ones they will come into most contact with. It may help to have an

organisation structure chart handy if your organisation is larger. In many cases volunteers will be representing your organisation in public - it might be helpful to give them some background information about the work the organisation does locally, regionally or nationally, including other services the organisation provides that are outside the volunteer's immediate role.

Your volunteers will need to abide by your organisation's policies and procedures in the same way that staff do. If you have a volunteer policy, make sure your volunteers have a copy and that they know where to find other policies and procedures.

Volunteers should be made aware of:

- Fire procedures
- Expenses and how to claim them
- Insurance, and anything they may need to do to be properly insured, such as informing their car insurers if they are using their car as part of their role
- Procedures to follow if they have a problem, complaint or concern
- The right to refuse tasks if they feel uncomfortable undertaking them
- Any training they will be required to undertake such as manual handling or food hygiene

Induction Process

It might be helpful for your organisation to have group inductions to go through any issues that might benefit from discussion such as confidentiality or boundaries. Group inductions might also be more time efficient for covering routine subjects such as how to claim back expenses, or the fire procedures. Make sure there is still one to one time for volunteers to ask specific questions, or raise issues that it might not be suitable to discuss in a group. It might be helpful to have this after a group induction, so people can go through anything they are not clear about and feel comfortable asking niggling questions - where can I leave my bag, can I help myself to tea and coffee, do I have to tell anyone when I leave the building?

What is volunteer training?

Training means different things to different people and there are many ways that people learn. Volunteers may need less formal training than paid staff as they may be doing very specific roles for limited periods. However, it is important that they are given opportunities to get feedback on how they are doing in the role.

Without being too formal, supervision and support sessions can provide these opportunities. Volunteers can think about their role and how they contribute to the organisation's objectives. Volunteers like to know about any changes coming that are likely to impact on them!

The right types of volunteer training

If you are responsible for supporting volunteers you will need to think about the amount of time volunteers have available, their own preferred way of learning and what resources you have available: for example, capacity, time, location, materials, budget for external courses.

8. Expenses

Volunteers should receive no payment except the provision of subsistence and the necessary means to do their tasks efficiently. Expenses should be genuine and can include childcare and lunch expenses. All expenses should be receipted or have a travel claim which clearly states mileage and journey information. Under no circumstances should a volunteer be given a fixed amount to cover expenses. Whilst it is good practice to reimburse expenses, it is recognised that not all organisations will have the necessary finances to do this.

Why reimburse expenses?

Although people give their time freely they should not be out of pocket through their volunteering. If expenses are not available you could have a situation where only people who can afford to volunteer do so. This clearly has implications for equal opportunities.

What can be reimbursed?

Whilst it is good practice to reimburse care expenses it is recognised that not all organisations will have the necessary finances to do this. Examples of expenses that might be reimbursed are:

- travel to and from the place of volunteering
- travel whilst volunteering
- meals taken whilst volunteering (generally if volunteering for more than 4 hours in one day)
- postage, phone calls, stationary etc
- cost of protective clothing
- care of dependents whilst volunteering

Making expenses payments

It is very important that only genuine out-of-pocket expenses are paid. You should ask for receipts for your records. Although it might seem easier to pay a lump sum to all volunteers or to round up payments, to do so can lead to a number of problems:

- for tax or benefits calculations the “extra” amount would be seen as a payment.
- regular payments could put the organisation at risk of creating a contract with the volunteer, thus bringing them under employment legislation, including the right to the minimum wage.

Provide a simple form for the volunteer to sign and attach any receipts. Payment in cash may be easier for some volunteers as not everyone has a bank account.

Mileage

The HM Revenue and Customs approved [mileage rates](#).

What if volunteers do not want to claim?

Everyone should be encouraged to claim expenses to avoid a situation where some people feel bad about claiming because not everyone does. Covering their own expenses is seen by some volunteers as an additional way of giving to the organisation. In these circumstances

they can be encouraged to claim and then gift back the money to the organisation. This way you have an accurate record of how much the volunteer programme costs for future budgeting. If volunteers are tax payers then gift aid can also be claimed on their donation.

Volunteers who are claiming benefits

People claiming state benefits are allowed to volunteer for as many hours as they wish, as long as they tell their local Job Centre Plus before they start, and continue to meet the rules regarding their benefit, for example actively job seeking if they are claiming Job Seeker's Allowance. Job Centre Plus could argue that someone who is volunteering full time does not have time to seek work. It is important that the agreement a volunteer has with your organisation is not an employment contract and they should not be volunteering for a close relative. The volunteer should not be choosing to work unpaid. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to follow the rules for the benefit they get. An organisation may be asked to provide a letter confirming that the person is volunteering for them, that they are not paid and that they are free to take up a job offer or attend an interview. Volunteers claiming benefits can keep any reasonable expenses they receive.

9. Managing volunteers

Set Expectations

This is a good time to reiterate your organisation's expectations of volunteers, remembering to be careful of 'must, should' language - "So we can open on time we would like you to be here at 10am". Have you got any expectations about dress codes? It might be useful to have a check list to run through and you can ask a volunteer to sign this. This will help both of you be clear what you have discussed and agreed.

Volunteer hours and setting a rota

You should be clear in the role description the minimum number of hours your volunteers are expected to commit to. Remember they are volunteering, so don't over commit them to tasks which they are unable to achieve.

You may need to set up a rota and this will be dependent upon the type of work you do, your opening hours, the roles and volunteer availability. Talk to your volunteers about what would suit them best. One volunteer may prefer to commit to two hours each week, and another may prefer volunteering for one day per month. Try and be as flexible as possible although you must ensure your organisational needs are met.

In addition, consider your organisation's approach to lone-working. You may require a minimum number of volunteers to operate such as; two volunteers must cover one shift at all times. You will need to consider this as part of your risk assessment any relevant safeguarding practices. For more information, the Health and Safety Executive has produced a useful guide on [Working Alone](#).

Consider a Having a Contact Person

Consider having a named contact for the volunteer in case they have any questions or issues as they settle in. You may like to allocate a 'mentor', perhaps a more experienced volunteer,

who can do this. Make sure the volunteer knows who their manager or supervisor is. If the volunteer knows who they should answer to, everyone is clear. Think about the limits of the volunteer's responsibility - who deals with petty cash or keys for example. Setting out these issues at the beginning, and having a clear policy that everyone understands, may avoid misunderstandings in the future.

Wellbeing

Ensure you've considered accessibility, 'time out' during the day if the role is potentially stressful or demanding and any other factors around keeping people safe. Are there any activities or roles that should be risk assessed? Do you have a working policy about mobile phones - on, off or silent? Has the volunteer had chance to tell you if they need to have their phone on for childcare or other family issues? Do they need to be contactable by a potential employer if they are job seeking?

10. Insurance

You will need to consider what type of insurance your organisation will need to put in place. As a minimum you should have employer's liability insurance and public liability insurance. You may also need to consider other professional indemnity insurance depending on the type of work that you do.

You will need to ensure that your policy:

- explicitly mentions volunteers
- does not have any restrictions such as upper and lower age limits for volunteers
- covers all the activities of your organisation, the people within it and those whom you serve.

For more information and guidance available visit [NCVO](#) website.

11. Diversity and Equalities

Diversity means difference, and people's differences can be many and varied. They may include race, culture, national origin, region, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, politics, religion, ethnicity, disability, socio-economic differences, family structure, health, values and many more.

A diverse organisation is one that values these differences. Managing diversity follows on from, and expands upon, equal opportunities. It is a more wide-reaching approach. Whereas equal opportunities is concerned with making sure that the law is upheld and that personnel decisions are fair and do not discriminate, diversity values, rather than ignores, differences between people. Diversity is about learning to include different perspectives and processes so that the work of the group or organisation can be as effective as possible, to as wide a range of people as possible.

Diversity should be at the heart of volunteer involvement - not a bolt-on to normal practice.

A written policy will demonstrate your commitment as well as setting out what is expected from those people working in your organisation. For more information and sample templates visit [NCVO](#) website.

12. Health & Safety

All organisations have a duty of care to protect their volunteers from harm. Failure to meet that duty could result in the organisation and its trustees being liable if a volunteer is injured as a result. Organisations with 5 or more employees must have a written health and safety policy and must carry out risk assessments. Regardless of the size of your organisation it is good practice to do this. Volunteers should also be included in your organisation's health and safety policy and their activities risk assessed. It is important that volunteers are insured and that your public liability insurance policy covers them. It is strongly advised to insure volunteers under employer's liability insurance as well.

Health and Safety Policies

Much of Health and Safety legislation is designed to protect workers and employees and does not cover volunteers. However, it is hard to imagine a situation where it would be justifiable to treat volunteers in a less favourable manner than paid staff, even if it were possible to do so whilst maintaining a duty of care. For this reason volunteers should be included in an organisation's Health and Safety Policy.

Risk assessment

To demonstrate that you have exercised your duty of care you will need to assess any potential risks that volunteers may encounter and take the necessary steps to minimise them. Each volunteer role should be subject to a risk assessment.

Carrying out a risk assessment

The Health and Safety Executive recommend a 5 step approach to risk assessment:

1. Look for the hazards
2. Decide who might be harmed, and how
3. For each hazard, evaluate the chance, big or small, of harm actually being done and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or more should be done
4. Record the significant findings of your risk assessment, eg the main risks and the measures you have taken to deal with them
5. Review your assessment from time to time, and revise if necessary

The easiest and most systematic way to carry out a risk assessment and record your findings is to use a risk matrix table. This will help you to calculate the likelihood and seriousness of any risks.

Carrying out a risk assessment requires a detailed knowledge of your organisation's activities. Involving staff and volunteers in the process will give you an accurate picture of your operational practices. The risks for example of volunteers visiting people in their homes are very different from those of volunteering in an office environment.

For more guidance and sample risk assessment visit [Health & Safety Executive](#) website.

13. Problem Solving

The general aim, that volunteering is a positive experience for everyone involved, is frequently met. There are occasions however, when problems may arise. This information covers what to do when a volunteer raises a concern or complaint and how to handle any concerns or complaints that you may have about a volunteer.

Preventing problems

You can minimise problems occurring in the first place by ensuring that you have planned well for volunteer involvement. Attention should be paid to the following:

- Know why you are involving volunteers
- Have meaningful roles with enough tasks to sustain interest
- Take care in matching volunteers to roles - find out what they hope to achieve through volunteering so that you can be sure that the role is appropriate
- Have clear expectations on both sides
- Provide any necessary training
- Ensure that you have appropriate support in place
- Provide opportunities for volunteers to raise their views and contribute to decision making

Being prepared

You should have clear procedures in place for dealing with problems that may arise. It is not advisable to use the same discipline and grievance procedures that you have for staff as these have been developed to satisfy employment legislation which does not cover volunteers. The procedures you use will, however, be based on similar principles of fairness. You may include these within your Volunteer Policy or it may refer to a separate policy. Either way, they should be written in plain English that is easy to understand.

14. Data Protection and GDPR

New rules relating to how you collect and process personal data - the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) – is enforceable from 25th May 2018.

The GDPR is Europe's new framework for data protection laws. It replaces the previous 1995 data protection directive which current UK law is based upon. It will be enforced by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Find out more about what steps your organisation needs to take with a handy [12 step guide](#) prepared by Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

15. Useful resources

[DSC Directory of Social Change](#) - Useful publications, guides and resources for voluntary sector on fundraising, management & leadership, personal development, marketing & communications, finance & law, governance, policy, campaigns & research.

[Guidance on Community Managed Libraries: good practice toolkit](#) - Guidance prepared by heads of library services, community libraries and local communities.

[NCVO \(National Council for Voluntary Organisations\)](#) - NCVO support the voluntary sector by providing resources, research and expertise. NCVO is a member organisation and is free for voluntary organisations with a gross annual income lower than £30,000. There is a lot of free resources available on their website but being a member enables access to additional information on policies, governance, guidance on writing funding bids, volunteer management and much more.

Volunteer Policy Checklist – What should it cover?

Introduction

Explain why you involve volunteers in your organisation.	
How will volunteers help you meet the aims of your service?	

Roles and Responsibilities

Have you developed volunteer roles that outline the purpose, tasks and main requirements of the roles?	
Are you clear about what support volunteers will need and who will provide this support on a day-to-day basis?	
Have you identified adequate resources for volunteers to perform their roles?	
Do you have a budget and a policy for paying volunteer expenses?	

Recruitment

Do you have an equal opportunities policy which can be applied to volunteering?	
Have you developed a fair and open recruitment and selection process for volunteers? What will you do if someone is unsuitable for the role?	

Volunteer Policy Checklist – What should it cover?

How will you advertise the roles?	
How and when will references be taken up?	
What roles, if any, will require DBS checks?	

Induction and Training

How are volunteers welcomed into the organisation?	
How are volunteers kept informed about key issues and changes in the organisation (and made to feel part of the organisation)	
What information are they given?	
What training if any is essential to the role?	
What opportunities to develop skills will volunteers have?	

Expenses

What expenses will be covered?	
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Volunteer Policy Checklist – What should it cover?

Support and Supervision

What support and/or supervision is available?	
How frequently will it take place?	

Insurance

What is the level of cover?	
Are there any boundaries (age, location etc)	

Diversity and Equality

Are volunteers covered by your organisations diversity and equality policy?	
What does this mean for volunteers?	

Health and Safety

How are you exercising your legal Duty of Care to volunteers?	
How is information regarding Health and Safety communicated to volunteers?	

Volunteer Policy Checklist – What should it cover?

Reviewing

What processes are available to enable volunteers to raise issues they are concerned about?	
How are any problems with the involvement of volunteers addressed?	

Data Protection and GDPR

What information is held on volunteers?	
How is volunteers' personal data protected?	
How do you inform volunteers about what you will do with their personal information?	

Review

How often will you review your volunteer policy and who will be involved?	
Who will be involved in conducting the review?	
How will you communicate the results of a review to your staff?	

Sample Council Volunteer Library Roles

Sample 1 Volunteering Opportunity

Role: Library Volunteer Co-ordinator

Place: Paulton 'The Hub'

Background: The Paulton Hub consists of a library, coffee bar, internet provision and meeting rooms. It will hopefully soon become the centre of village life – somewhere to meet friends, find out information, bring children to storytimes and enjoy a great cup of coffee! To make this happen we are looking for volunteers to help support the library in providing a friendly and helpful service to all library users and to help library users to get the most from their local library. Volunteer Co-ordinators are required to act as the main point of contact for the volunteers, including organising rotas and providing support. The role involves:-

Tasks:

- Advising and supporting the library volunteers
- Organising the volunteer rota for agreed opening hours
- Arranging cover for volunteers in the events of holidays or sickness
- Acting as main point of communication and contact between volunteers and library staff
- Assisting library staff to recruit and train new volunteers, including help with paperwork relating to new volunteers
- Helping with the on-going training of volunteers
- Attending training sessions relevant to the role

In addition, a volunteer co-ordinator would be required to understand and perform the volunteer tasks:

- Offer a friendly welcome to all members of the community using the library
- Assist customers with using the self service equipment to issue, renew and return items, check their account and make payments
- Shelve stock and keep the library in a safe and tidy condition
- Assist customers to join the library and take out material
- Refer customers who need further information or support to local library staff
- Help library users to search the catalogue online and place requests
- Help customers log on to the public access computers
- Ensure the building is open during advertised hours and secure the building at the end of the session

Skills, qualifications and knowledge: Library service Volunteer Co-ordinators are required to have:

- An ability to get on with people, particularly older people and children
- Be reliable to ensure a regular service
- A love of books and reading
- Willingness to help customers to use simple self-service equipment
- Enough knowledge of computers to help customers get on-line and access their account
- An interest in and commitment to the library service

Sample 2 Volunteering Opportunity

Role: Library Volunteer **Place:** Paulton 'The Hub'

Background to work: The Paulton Hub consists of a library, coffee bar, internet provision and meeting rooms. It will hopefully soon become the centre of village life – somewhere to meet friends, find out information, bring children to storytimes and enjoy a great cup of coffee! To make this happen we are looking for volunteers to help support the library in providing a friendly and helpful service to all library users and to help library users to get the most from their local library. Volunteer Co-ordinators are required to act as the main point of contact for the volunteers, including organising rotas and providing support. Library volunteers are required to:-

Tasks:

- Offer a friendly welcome to all members of the community using the library
- Assist customers with using the self service equipment to issue, renew and return items, check their account and make payments
- Shelve stock and keep the library in a safe and tidy condition
- Assist customers to join the library and take out material
- Refer customers who need further information or support to local library staff
- Help library users to search the catalogue online and place requests
- Help customers log on to the public access computers
- Help customers to use the Enquiry Service
- Liaise with local Volunteer Co-ordinator and library staff as appropriate
- Ensure the building is open during advertised hours and secure the building at the end of the session
- Attend training sessions relevant to the role

Skills, qualifications and knowledge: Library service volunteers are required to have:

- An ability to get on with people, particularly older people and children
- Be reliable to ensure a regular service
- A love of books and reading
- Willingness to help customers to use simple self-service equipment
- Enough knowledge of computers to help customers get on-line and access their account
- An interest in and commitment to the library service

Sample 3 – Volunteer Opportunity

Role: Lego Volunteer

The purpose of the Lego Club Volunteers is to design and deliver a monthly session of Lego Club to children age 5-11. Lego is a great STEM learning tool and Lego Club aims to encourage children to develop their STEM skills, while enjoying fun building challenges with other children. They will be based in Bath Central Library, although may be asked to help with clubs in other libraries occasionally.

Lego Volunteers Task List:

The tasks will include the following:

- Deciding on a theme for each session of Lego Club – previous themes have included “tallest towers” and “strongest bridges”
- Explaining the theme to the children at the club
- Offering design support to the children, encouraging them to consider engineering challenges like “What makes a structure stable?” or mathematical questions like “How can you work out how many bricks you need to finish the structure?”
- Awarding certificates to the attendants and helping them to clear up at the end of the session.
- Understanding and supporting Equal Opportunities.
- Undergoing induction training and familiarisation where relevant.

Volunteers will NOT be expected to deliver Lego Club alone – another volunteer or a member of staff will be with them. Each child attending Lego Club will have an adult with them, who will be expected to stay for the duration of the session.

Volunteer Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

- Enthusiasm!
- An interest in Lego, model building and how these activities can promote STEM learning.
- Used to dealing with different groups of people. Experience of working or volunteering with children or young people would be an advantage.
- Good teaching and communication skills.
- Empathy for the Library environment and the role of Libraries in society.

Statements included in each role description.

Note: Volunteers are appointed subject to an application / interview process and satisfactory references.

Supervision and Support: The Volunteer Co-ordinator will liaise with Library Service staff to ensure the smooth running of the library. They will report to the local Library Manager.

Training and Materials provided: Training will be provided in the specific task/s as required. This will include: Use of library Self-service machines, how books and other materials are arranged and shelved, general library services, library catalogues or computer software specific to library use; Health and Safety guidelines and diversity training. Most training will be provided by the Library service directly, but some training may be provided through a third party. All materials necessary to the tasks will be provided. The Volunteer will be expected to have their own clothing and footwear appropriate for everyday tasks. The Council will reimburse incurred travel and associated costs.

What’s in it for you? This is a great opportunity to gain experience in working within a customer focused environment and would be useful for people wishing to update their CV and looking for job experience. Also for anyone who has an interest in people and some spare time.

References and Disclosures: Disclosure and Barring Checks may be required. These will be arranged and paid for by the organisation.

Commitment: Ideally, in order to keep their skills refreshed, volunteers would be available for a minimum of 2 hours per fortnight. Exact times/days to be arranged locally by mutual consent

General: In accordance with the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (which also applies to volunteers), you are expected to take reasonable care for the health and safety of yourself and of other persons who may be affected by your acts or omissions when volunteering; and to co-operate with the Council, so far as is necessary, to enable the Council to perform or comply with its duties under any statutory health and safety provisions

Length of Opportunity: Ongoing