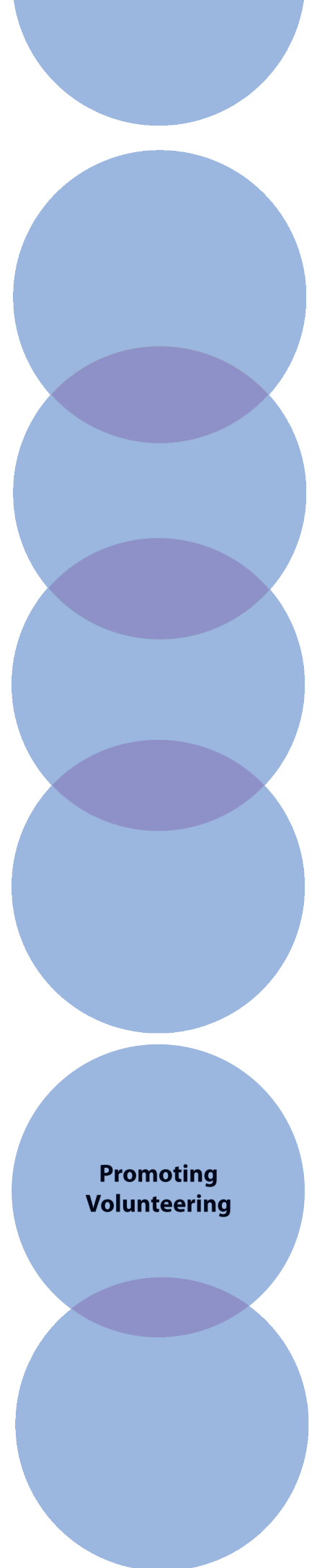


Volunteering **toolkit**

A beginners guide to developing
a **volunteering programme**

compact for leeds
public and third sector
working together for the people of leeds



**Promoting
Volunteering**

INTRODUCTION

This toolkit is designed as a first step to help design and develop a volunteering programme for your organisation. It follows the volunteering principles as set out in the Compact for Leeds. We suggest that you refer to the Compact when using this toolkit.

It is a basic toolkit aimed at organisations who wish to establish a volunteering programme or who wish to review their existing programme. It outlines the core elements of a programme and gives advice on where to go to develop the programme.

What is volunteering?

The relationship between a volunteer and the organisation they choose to volunteer with is a gift relationship, i.e. the volunteer is gifting their time to the organisation. It is not a legally binding relationship and volunteers cannot be compelled to commit their time to the organisation or carry out tasks.

There are many reasons why individuals choose to become volunteers and all these reasons are valid.

Using volunteers is not an alternative to paying employees. Volunteering England and the TUC have created a charter for Strengthening Relations Between Paid Staff and Volunteers. The Charter sets out a series of principles for employers to follow to encourage a good working relationship between volunteers, employers and paid staff, and can be found at the Volunteering England website www.volunteering.org.uk.

Starting to develop your programme

Before you start recruiting volunteers, you must look at why you feel you need to use volunteers. There has to be consultation with staff and the staff should understand the expectations of the volunteer programme and the value volunteers will add to the organisation. There must be a clear understanding as to why the organisation has made the decision to include volunteers within their service delivery.

1. Volunteering is open to everyone

All constituted groups will have an equal opportunities policy. When you decide to develop a volunteer programme, this policy should be changed to include volunteers as well.

As well as having the equal opportunities policy, you should also consider the accessibility of your volunteering programme. Things to consider are:

- Remember to recruit widely to ensure that you receive applications from all sectors of the community.
- How accessible is the place where the volunteer will be carrying out their duties?
Please note that reasonable adjustments should be made to maximise accessibility. For more information on this please contact the Leeds City Council equality team by email: **equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk**, tel: **0113 247 4190** or text: **07891 270162**.
- Some disabilities are invisible and some people's needs are not immediately apparent, such as dyslexia or mental health problems. By having a recruitment process that allows a potential volunteer to confidentially disclose their needs, the organisation will be able to make an informed decision on the volunteer's suitability for the role, and the adjustments the organisation could make.

If you have an opportunity for a volunteer role that has certain requirements, such as to be a woman, or to speak a certain language, you need to state this clearly on your application form and make sure that it follows legal requirements.

Alternatively, if you develop a role that has specific exclusions, you need to state this clearly on your application form and ensure that it follows legal requirements.

If your organisation does not have an equal opportunities policy, then please refer to the Voluntary Action Leeds website where there are examples for you to download **www.val.org.uk**.

2. Organisations aim to deliver a good volunteering experience

The volunteering experience must be worthwhile and enjoyable. When volunteering roles are identified you need to make sure that they fit in with the needs of the organisation but also offer the volunteer a rewarding and, at times, challenging experience.

In order to ensure that the volunteer experience meets these requirements, it is important to monitor and evaluate the volunteer programme. This needs to be carried out from both the volunteer's and the organisation's perspective. The Institute For Volunteering offer a useful resource publication entitled "**Monitoring Volunteers: A Guide to collecting and using data**" at www.ivr.org.uk.

Volunteer managers often work in isolation. However, there are a number of supporting networks available that can offer information, advice and support. Examples of these are:

- Volunteer Centre at Voluntary Action Leeds, www.val.org.uk or phone **0113 297 7920**.
- Volunteering England www.volunteering.org.uk
- Institute for Volunteering Research www.ivr.org.uk

Leeds also has a volunteer managers' network, co-ordinated by VA-L, which provides a space for those managing volunteers to meet, share ideas and information and sometimes receive training. In the past they have discussed how to make volunteer programmes more accessible and how national policy can affect local programmes. If you are interested in joining please contact the volunteer development manager at volunteering@val.org.uk.

A volunteer programme costs money and therefore needs a budget. All volunteers are entitled to claim expenses for travel and an organisation may also need to pay for additional expenses.

Points to consider when costing the volunteer programme are:

- **Equipment** – e.g. will additional computers or desks be required for the volunteer to carry out their role?
- **Hidden costs** – e.g. do you need to take into account the time needed from paid staff to manage, or support volunteers.
- **Volunteer expenses** – e.g. how much needs to be set aside to cover mileage or bus fares for volunteers? Are there other expenses you may wish to pay for volunteers?
- **Refreshments** – e.g. do you need to make tea and coffee available free to volunteers?

3. Recruitment of volunteers is fair and accessible

Before considering recruiting your volunteers, it is essential to draw up a role description and specification. The role description should outline the tasks that the volunteer will be expected to carry out. The role specification outlines the skills and experiences needed to carry out the role. These do not need to be two separate documents.

It is important to advertise as widely as possible to make sure your volunteer programme is accessible to all potential volunteers. You should consider advertising for volunteers in the following places:

- Volunteer Centre Leeds who upload opportunities to **www.do-it.org.uk**.
- Local community centres
- Local newspapers and magazines
- Libraries
- Places of worship
- Local newsagents and Post Offices
- National newspapers such as the Guardian

Consider if you can recruit volunteers from different backgrounds and think of ways that your advertising could reach different parts of the communities, and how you can make your advertisement accessible to all. It may be necessary to have recruitment material translated into other languages.

It is important to ensure that your recruitment advertising fully explains the volunteer role so that there is no misunderstanding when potential volunteers apply.

All volunteers must be recruited and selected using a standard procedure. The application and reference forms should be the same for every role although the role description may be different. Sample application and reference forms can be found on the VA-L website under the volunteering tab. If you do not have access to a computer, please contact the Volunteer Centre directly on **0113 297 7920** who can send you samples.

When considering questions to be asked at interview, it is important to know exactly what information you need from the volunteer, e.g. the reasons why they want to volunteer, any skills or qualifications that they may need to fulfil the role and how much time they can give. The interview should be a two way process with an opportunity for the applicant to ask questions about the role and the organisation.

An induction should be carried out before a volunteer starts their role.

This should include:

- A tour of the location where the volunteer will be based
- Security
- Health and safety
- Support and supervision
- Communication and IT including web usage guidelines
- Vehicle or transport use, if applicable

4. Organisations have appropriate policies for managing volunteers

When implementing a volunteering programme, an organisation's policies should be updated to include volunteers, where appropriate.

These could include policies for:

- Health and safety
- Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults
- Equal opportunities
- Data protection
- Lone working
- Confidentiality
- IT usage

It is important to note that the consequences of a volunteer contravening the terms of these policies will be different to those of a paid employee. This is why training is important. Volunteers must understand the importance of complying with the organisation's policies and the consequences to service users and the organisation as a whole if policies are not followed.

Organisations should have a specific volunteer policy, volunteer expenses policy, volunteer agreement and complaints procedure. Examples of these policies which can be adapted for use by organisations can be found on the Volunteering England website: **www.volunteeringengland.org.uk**.

When creating a new policy, it is essential to use plain English to make sure it is accessible to the widest audience possible. When a policy is written sometimes it is useful to ask others to comment on it. Look at the language used and simplify wherever possible.

Language that creates an implied term of contract with the volunteer must be avoided. A booklet entitled *Volunteers and the Law* can be downloaded free of charge from the Volunteering England website. The booklet gives advice such as organisations should use the term "role description" and not "job description".

5. Volunteers are supported and supervised within their role

All organisations should have a designated person who has responsibility for supporting and supervising volunteers, either in a department or in the organisation as a whole. This person should understand the difference between support and supervision. Support sessions address issues around the individual volunteer while supervision sessions deal with the needs of the organisation.

This person will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that volunteers fully understand and feel equipped to carry out their role; and
- Conducting regular support and supervision sessions with volunteers.

Information on supporting and supervising volunteers can be found on the Volunteering England website **www.volunteeringengland.org.uk** and also from the Voluntary Action Leeds website **www.val.org.uk**. Voluntary Action Leeds provide training in this area – contact the volunteer development manager to find out more.

Volunteer programmes provide
the training and information
volunteers need to carry out their role



6. Volunteer programmes provide the training and information volunteers need to carry out their role

It is important that all volunteers are fully trained to carry out and feel confident in performing their duties. Some organisations train volunteers on a one-to-one basis whilst other organisations do group training sessions. This will depend on the size of the organisation and the complexity of the volunteering roles.

Whilst initial training is important, ongoing training is essential to allow the volunteer to develop new skills and keep them motivated. Training also shows the commitment of the organisation to its volunteer programme and helps make the volunteer feel valued.

Further information on training can be found on the VA-L website www.val.org.uk.



7. Insurance, health and safety, safeguarding and other legal requirements are met

All organisations, dependent on size, will have some or all of the following insurance policies:

- Employer's liability
- Public liability
- Professional indemnity
- Personal accident

It is important that organisations make their insurers aware that they use volunteers, so that they can be included in the insurance policies.

If using volunteer drivers, the organisation must ensure that the volunteer has informed their motor insurers that they are using their cars for volunteering purposes. More information on this can be found in the booklet *Volunteers and the Law*, as mentioned in section 4.

Protecting and safeguarding

Organisations working with vulnerable clients (children and vulnerable adults) should have a clear child/vulnerable adult protection policy in place.

If volunteers will be volunteering closely with children, young people or vulnerable adults they may need a criminal record (CRB) check. These are free from the Criminal Records Bureau but organisations will either need to be an umbrella body or go through an umbrella body to access a CRB check. Guidance on whether or not your volunteers need to be CRB checked and umbrella bodies in your area can be found at www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk. The Volunteer Centre can also give advice on this matter.

Volunteers in certain roles may also need to be registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) in the future. Please ask your CRB Umbrella Body or Volunteer Centre Leeds if you require more advice on this.

Health and safety

Organisations have a duty of care towards their volunteers under section three of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. What this means in practice is that reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that the likelihood and potential seriousness of injury to volunteers is reduced. Depending on the role this may include giving volunteers adequate information, training, the use of safety clothing or equipment, closer supervision and so on.

One way in which organisations can try to ensure the safety of volunteers is to conduct a written risk assessment. The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) has a five-step approach to the process and this can be found on their website www.hse.gov.uk

Lone working

Some volunteers will be required to volunteer alone. For example volunteers who are befrienders and go into peoples homes to offer one to one support, or volunteers who volunteer outside of normal office hours, for example running a community club in the evening.

Organisations need to consider the potential hazards faced by lone working volunteers and assess the risks involved both to the volunteer and to any person affected by their role.

Guidance on this can be found at www.hse.gov.uk

This toolkit is a starting point for organisations looking to begin or develop a volunteer programme. For more in-depth advice and support contact your local Volunteer Centre or Volunteering England.

The internet is a valuable resource for researching and downloading information. Your **local library** can offer you **free internet access** if this is not available at your home or place of work.



Volunteer Centre Leeds,
12 St Pauls Street, LS1 2LE
Phone: 0113 395 0405

www.leedsyearofvolunteering.co.uk

compact for leeds
public and third sector
working together for the people of leeds

