

Charter for Effective Volunteering

Volunteering is a two-way relationship, one that should benefit both the volunteer and the organisation. As in any relationship both parties will have expectations of the other. By being aware of these expectations both volunteers and organisations are more likely to have a successful partnership.

Volunteers can expect to:

- Know if, and how, they are being selected
- Be given meaningful work to do
- Know what is expected from them
- Be offered appropriate training
- Be thanked and to have their voluntary contribution recognised
- Receive supervision and support
- Get something out of the work for themselves
- Know who to go to if there is a problem
- Be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred when volunteering
- Make mistakes and learn from them
- Be made aware of complaint and grievance procedures
- Be made aware of how issues or difficulties will be dealt with
- Be treated fairly and not to experience discrimination
- Have safe working conditions, including insurance cover
- Be informed about, and given the opportunity to play an active part in the organisation as a whole
- Be able to say 'no' and to leave without feeling guilty

Volunteers are asked to:

- Respect the values and aims of the organisation
- Be committed
- Be reliable and give the organisation sufficient warning if unable to turn up
- Be punctual
- Attend essential training and support sessions
- Undertake the work to a high standard
- Be honest if issues or difficulties arise

Organisations are expected to:

- Ensure the volunteering experience is a rewarding one
- Ensure equal access and not to discriminate
- Define clear, meaningful roles for volunteers
- Have policies and procedures for volunteers
- Provide all necessary information to volunteers
- Be available for volunteers
- Provide training where necessary
- Thank and value volunteers
- Provide insurance cover
- Inform volunteers of any legal liabilities
- Supervise and to provide support
- Reimburse out-of-pocket expenses
- Provide a safe working environment
- Have procedures in place for dealing with complaints and grievances
- Have procedures in place for dealing with issues or difficulties that may arise

Organisations can ask:

- For certain qualities and skills in volunteers
- For volunteers to understand and buy into the organisation ethos
- Volunteers to sign a volunteer agreement or 'contract'
- For tasks to be done in a particular way, to a certain standard and within certain timeframes
- For volunteers to see through their time commitment
- For reliability
- For punctuality
- To ask volunteers to leave if their involvement hinders the organisation achieving its goals

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.” - Margaret Mead