

DRAFT

The Code of Good Practice on Volunteering in North Yorkshire

1. Introduction

This Volunteering Code of Good Practice builds upon and underpins the principles of the North Yorkshire Compact and should be read in conjunction with that document. The Compact recognises the “significant contribution made by volunteers and the role of voluntary and community organisations in supporting them” (page 3). The Volunteering Code sets out a series of undertakings on good practice in volunteering for the voluntary/community and statutory sectors in North Yorkshire though intends to be a framework rather than a comprehensive guide. The aim is to increase the number of volunteers and ensure they are valued and supported by improving the quality of the volunteering experience.

2. The importance of volunteering

Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community, and can take many forms. It is undertaken without the concern for financial gain. Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship. 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.

3. Principles fundamental to volunteering

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

Choice:

Volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual.

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 time 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:

Volunteers in North Yorkshire contribute greatly to society and to developing and building the local community. The contribution of volunteers and the organisations that support them should be recognised.

Source: Volunteering - Compact Code of Good Practice

4. The scope of volunteering is diverse and must be recognised.

- Helping provide a service as an unpaid volunteer within a voluntary or community organisation or statutory sector body;
- Taking part in running a voluntary or community organisation as a trustee, board or committee member;
- Leading a community initiative;
- Helping develop public policy through involvement in local and area partnerships;
- Campaigning for a public cause; and
- Employer supported community involvement.

Statutory bodies and the voluntary and community sector agree that the need to recognise the value of the work done by volunteers and the need to resource the hidden costs of volunteer activity are particularly important, Essential to these two priorities is good practice in volunteer management.

5. Volunteer Centres in North Yorkshire

Volunteer Centres, as the official quality accredited Volunteer Development Agencies, provide district level support for individual volunteers and volunteer involving organisations. The Volunteer Centres in the North Yorkshire County are as follows: Harrogate and area; Ripon; Craven; Richmondshire; Volunteering Hambleton (a district level partnership of Bedale, Northallerton, Thirsk, Stokesley, Easingwold) ;Ryedale; Scarborough; Whitby. The Volunteer Centres have six core functions:

1. Brokerage

The primary function of Volunteer Centres is to match both individuals and groups interested in volunteering with appropriate opportunities in the local community. All the Volunteer Centres hold information on a comprehensive range of opportunities on the national volunteering database www.do-it.org.uk. They offer potential volunteers support and advice matching their motivation to volunteer with appropriate volunteering opportunities.

2. Marketing volunteering

Volunteer Centres 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.

3. Good practice development

Volunteer Centres in the County promote good practice in working with volunteers to all volunteer involving organisations. Volunteer Centres and their partner organisations deliver training and accreditation for potential volunteers, volunteers, volunteer managers and the volunteering infrastructure. All have localised good practice training DVD's and up to date case studies.

4. Develop volunteering opportunities

Volunteer Centres work in close partnership with statutory, voluntary and private sector agencies as well as community groups and faith groups to develop local volunteering opportunities. Volunteer Centres understand the potential offered by the local communities and work with them to realise this potential. Volunteer Centres will target specific groups which face barriers to volunteering.

5. Policy response and campaigning

Volunteer Centres identify proposals or legislation that may impact on volunteering. Volunteer Centres campaign proactively for a more volunteer-literate and volunteer-friendly climate.

6. Strategic development of volunteering

As the local experts on volunteering, Volunteer Centres inform strategic thinking and planning at a regional and national level such as the development of this Compact Code.

6. Statutory Sector Undertakings

In supporting this code the statutory sector undertakes to:

1. Recognise the significant contribution made by volunteers and the role of voluntary and community organisations supporting them ;
2. Seek to ensure that all relevant legislation, guidance and practice are checked for impact on volunteer and community activity;
3. Work towards limiting the barriers to volunteering and community action presented by existing policies and practices; Ensure that there is staff awareness of the valuable role of volunteering and working towards employer supported volunteering policies and monitoring;
4. Acknowledge the professionalism of volunteers within their own areas of expertise;
5. Recognise and support the independence of volunteering infrastructure bodies.
6. Support the voluntary and community sectors in reviewing strengths and weaknesses of local volunteering information and infrastructures;
7. Aim to adopt policies which ensure that volunteering infrastructure bodies can rely on realistic sustainable long-term funding;
8. Where the public sector directly manages volunteers, it will act on relevant undertakings and advice from the voluntary and community sector; and work towards reimbursing expenses in line with Inland Revenue rates

9. Ensure that volunteers are fully alert to the aims and principles of the organisation.

7. Voluntary sector guidelines

Voluntary and community organisations carry out a number of roles in relation to volunteering.

- *Community organisations are those entirely or almost entirely made up of volunteers;*
- *Voluntary organisations may involve and manage volunteers, and may provide infrastructure support or funding to volunteers and voluntary groups; and*
- *Both can develop, promote and celebrate volunteering and community activity.*

Source: Government Guidance from the Home Office Active Community Unit - COMPACT getting it right together - Volunteering: A Code of Good Practice

In supporting this code, the sector undertakes to:

1. Recognise the importance of high standards of effective management of volunteers, and that fulfilling this responsibility requires allocation of organisational resources. Staff who recruit, induct and manage volunteers should have this work recognised as part of their job description or work plans, and receive appropriate training and support;
2. Allocate responsibility for volunteer involvement and management. To work towards adopting recognised quality standards for volunteering involving organisations. Ensure adequate broad volunteer representation at board level;
3. Ensure monitoring records are kept of volunteers and how funding supports volunteering and the value this produces;
4. Acknowledge that volunteers should be given thanks and recognition for their contribution and be given fair treatment, appropriate training and support;
5. Assist in providing volunteering opportunities to fit needs, interests and abilities whilst recognising the importance of risk assessment and line responsibilities

8. Working in partnership

Both the public sector and voluntary sector recognise the importance of the role played by volunteers in cross-sector partnerships and agree to:

1. Seek to identify the types of resources needed in supporting volunteering and community activity within the partnership;

2. Define the volunteer's role and seek to ensure it is not a replacement for a paid position; and
3. Work towards a set of consistent principles on reimbursement of expenses where it is agreed volunteers will be involved.
4. To promote access to and the use of the National Volunteering Database www.do-it.org.uk
5. To promote access to volunteering information.

Contact Details

The contact details of the County's Volunteer Centres can be found at www.volunteercentres.org

Volunteering opportunities in North Yorkshire can be found online at www.do-it.org.uk.