



## Volunteer Agreements

### 1. Introduction

Volunteer agreements formalise the arrangement between volunteers and an organisation, and are particularly useful for roles that require a regular or long-standing commitment. As with the Volunteer Policy, its aim is to establish the seriousness of the commitment on both sides, as well as recognising the rights and responsibilities for both the volunteer and the organisation.

It differs from a contract of employment in that it is an aspirational document, not a legally binding obligation. Within the agreement you should cover:

- The volunteer's name, your organisation name, start date etc.
- A brief introduction thanking them for becoming a volunteer
- Your commitment to them, which could include providing them with adequate information, training and support so that they can carry out their volunteering role, respecting their needs, skills and views
- What you expect of them i.e. to perform to the best of their ability, to adhere to your organisation's policies and ethos and to meet time and duty commitments as agreed
- Signature of both parties
- A final sentence emphasising that the agreement is not a legal contract, for example:  
*"This agreement is not a legally binding contract between us and may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. Neither of us intends any employment relationship to be created, either now or at any time in the future."*

### 2. Benefits of having a Volunteer Agreement

The agreement emphasises an element of commitment on the volunteer's behalf to take their volunteering role seriously. Whilst a volunteer can choose to participate or not to participate, an agreement makes it clear that they must abide by the policies of the organisation and perform to the best of their abilities.

It is no help to your organisation if a volunteer fails to turn up or produces very shoddy work. If, as occasionally happens, an organisation has to let a volunteer go, the manager can often point to the fact that the volunteer has failed to abide by the volunteer agreement that they signed.

### 3. Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

Although the place of volunteers within the law is a grey area, it is obviously good practice to ensure that volunteers are treated well within your organisation. The volunteer agreement should set out in simple terms the rights and responsibilities of the volunteer (for example, the right to have out of pocket expenses reimbursed or the obligation to adhere to the organisations policies and procedures).

There is an obvious correlation between the rights of a volunteer and the responsibilities placed on them by the organisation (and vice versa). You may feel that you wish to expand on these areas in a separate document. This could be placed in your Volunteer Induction Pack.

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