



Volunteer Agreements

Introduction

Volunteer agreements outline 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 hopes and expectations on both sides, as well as recognising the rights and responsibilities for both the volunteer and the organisation.

A volunteer agreement differs from a contract of employment in that it is an aspirational document, not a legally binding obligation. Within an 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."*

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) have some [further information](#) which may help you. This [example volunteer agreement](#) may help you get started with developing one for your own organisation.

Benefits of having a volunteer agreement

The agreement emphasises an element of commitment on the volunteer's behalf to the volunteering role. While a volunteer can choose to participate or not, an agreement helps them understand that they should abide by the policies of the organisation and perform to the best of their abilities.

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.

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 hope that they will adhere to the organisations policies and procedures).

There is a correlation between the rights of a volunteer and the responsibilities placed on them by the organisation (and vice versa). Further information about good practice in inducting volunteers can be found on the [NCVO website](#).

Additional Support

If you need any advice or support with creating the policy documents outlined in this resource, Community First Yorkshire can help. Find out more about the volunteering support we offer on our [website](#), or simply fill in an [enquiry form](#) and we'll get back to you.

Don't forget, you can advertise your volunteering roles for free on our [Volunteering in North Yorkshire \(VINY\)](#) directory?

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