

2. Volunteering and Workforce Development

Introduction:

This code concerns the development of the voluntary and community sector workforce, in terms of both paid and unpaid staff.

As the number of paid employees in the local voluntary and community sector has increased, so has interest in the role of the sector as an employer. Voluntary and community organisations are increasingly running with a combination of paid and unpaid staff and with this in mind, it is important that workforce development in the voluntary and community sector is inclusive of paid and unpaid staff alike.

The large number of part-time workers is a significant part of the voluntary sector paid workforce. This has implications for human resource management, both in terms of organisational and individual development. Furthermore, the increasing emphasis on the delivery of public services, the changing working patterns of the sector's employees and the increased professionalisation of the sector bring both challenges and opportunities.

Meanwhile, volunteers continue to make a large and varied contribution to community and individual life through their experience, skills and commitment. Volunteering is important in building community spirit and a sense of responsibility for one another.

This Code has been developed using the national good practice, other local compacts and local research and consultation giving it a Trafford context.

Volunteering and workforce development in Trafford

Several thousand people are involved in voluntary and community organisations in Trafford as volunteers, committee members and paid staff. The context in which they work is increasingly complex in terms of legislation and funding and there are increasing demands from service users for high quality services. It is essential that we develop and support a vibrant and effective paid and unpaid workforce in Trafford.

The voluntary and community sector in Trafford is largely populated with small and medium sized organisations, which requires a more co-ordinated approach to volunteering and workforce development.

Whilst we recognise that many Trafford residents volunteer for local agencies already, we believe that there is the potential for many more people to volunteer. It is the aim of the Trafford Partnership to help to realise the potential growth of Trafford's volunteer workforce.

Aims and Principles:

The aim of this Code of Practice is to set out the basis for all partners in Trafford to agree a set of good practice principles that will enable more people to become involved in the wide variety of volunteering and community activity that is so vital to our town, and to provide the necessary support for them to do so.

- This code of practice will seek to create a skills framework that reflects the needs of Trafford's voluntary and community sector's paid and unpaid workforce.
- It will recommend good practice in the use of volunteers, recognising the benefits and different ways volunteers can contribute to an organisation, and promote safe and effective ways to attract, develop and keep both paid and unpaid staff.
- This code will develop a range of targeted volunteering initiatives, looking to recruit and support volunteers from across Trafford into a diverse range of opportunities.

Definition of volunteering

Since there is no legal definition of what a 'volunteer' is, the word is used at different times to mean different things. Volunteering is defined by the national Code of Good Practice on Volunteering as - "an activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives."

Volunteering takes place in voluntary organisations and community groups, and in public bodies, (such as schools, the Fire Service, the hospital etc). Many community groups are made up entirely of volunteers, some larger voluntary organisations have both paid staff and volunteers. Public bodies clearly have paid staff, but often many hundreds of volunteers are helping them to deliver their services to the community. Volunteers operate at many different levels of responsibility, for example, volunteers in local schools may be hearing children read, under the guidance of a teacher, other volunteers in the same school are Governors and have overall management responsibilities. Trustees are volunteers who are the legal managers of voluntary organisations. Other volunteers in the same organisation carry out the 'hands on' volunteering role for which the organisation is known, (anything from supporting victims of violence and abuse, to feeding rescued swans).

The Trafford Compact embraces the four principles of volunteering which are taken from the National Compact:

1. Choice

Volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual. Although volunteering is encouraged it should not result in any form of coercion or compulsion.

2. Diversity

Volunteering should be open to all, no matter what background. Inclusiveness builds bridges, social exclusion barriers can be overcome by skills, experience, confidence and contacts gained while helping others. Equal opportunities principles are basic to supporting diversity.

3. Reciprocity- a two way beneficial relationship

Volunteers offer their contribution unwaged, but should benefit in other ways in return for their contribution to wider social objectives. Benefits include worthwhile achievement, skills, experience, contacts, sociability, fun and inclusion in the life of the organisation.

4. Recognition

Public recognition of the value of what volunteers contribute to the organisation, community, the social economy and wider social objectives, is fundamental to a fair relationship between volunteers, organisations (public and voluntary), national and local government policy and practice.

Agreed Priorities for Volunteering Development in Trafford:

Volunteer Management

To support this Code of Good Practice, partners in the Compact will undertake to-

- Recognise the importance of high standards and effective management of volunteers, and that fulfilling this responsibility requires allocation of organisational resources. People who recruit, induct and manage volunteers should have this work recognised as part of their job descriptions or work plans, and receive appropriate training and support.
- Identify senior managers to be responsible for volunteer involvement, and for monitoring and reporting on it.
- Recognise that as part of the reciprocal relationship, volunteers should be given thanks and recognition for their contribution at the very least. They should get fair treatment, induction, training and support including out of pocket expenses, so that disadvantaged groups are not excluded from volunteering.

Investing in volunteering

Partners in the Compact recognise that, although volunteers and community activists give their time free, they need resources with which to work, and need their volunteering activities not to leave them out of pocket.

Partners recognise that short term funding creates problems for attracting, motivating and supporting individual volunteers. Poor experiences of volunteering do not just affect the individual volunteer and the organisation, but detract from the wider public perception of volunteering.

Promoting volunteering

Partners agree to take positive action to promote the status and image of volunteering and community involvement, recognising the value of diversity of volunteers from differing backgrounds. Positive action includes monitoring the benefits that volunteers bring to an organisation, and publicising the results.

The volunteering infrastructure

Partners recognise that the volunteering infrastructure in Trafford needs to improve. Currently there is no funded volunteering infrastructure agency in the Borough;

- Trafford Volunteer centre has operated for a number of years on an entirely voluntary basis and on limited resources.
- VCAT is a voluntary sector infrastructure organisation that provides support to agencies that use volunteers, but has limited resources to dedicate to volunteering.

Partners recognise that there is currently insufficient investment in volunteering infrastructure in Trafford.

Partners will work together to strengthen the volunteering infrastructure in Trafford. It is unlikely that funds will be identified to support a full time, fully functioning volunteer infrastructure agency in Trafford in the near future. Therefore, partners are committed to working cooperatively to develop a range of targeted volunteering initiatives, looking to recruit and support volunteers from across Trafford into a diverse range of opportunities.

Partners agree to work cooperatively to develop initiatives that aim to:

- Promote volunteering
- Provide information to people interested in volunteering
- Recognise the contribution of volunteers
- Promote good practice

A good practice checklist for the management of volunteers

1. Before recruiting volunteers, be clear about why you want them and what you want them to do.
2. Plan your recruitment methods, and decide on a selection procedure that is suitable for your organisation and encourages a diversity of volunteers.
3. Provide volunteers with a clear role description, identifying the needs of the organisation, including the level of commitment needed from volunteers.
4. Provide an initial induction and training programme.
5. Provide the volunteer with appropriate line management.
6. Add volunteers to the organisation charts, and encourage volunteers to participate in the organisation's wider decision-making process.
7. Monitor and acknowledge the contribution that volunteers make to the organisation, to the wider public, to funders and to other volunteers.
8. Ask the volunteer what they seek from their placement and share with them what you want. Remember that any placement should be by mutual consent.
9. Always offer to reimburse out-of pocket expenses. These normally include travel and lunch. The Inland Revenue and Benefits Agency publish joint advice in relation to the reimbursement of out of pocket expenses.
10. Ensure that Health and Safety standards are in place and applied equally to all employees and volunteers. Insurance policies should be extended to cover volunteers.
11. Provide opportunities for volunteers to acquire or develop new or existing skills, and assist volunteers who want to gain accreditation towards existing qualifications.
12. Volunteers should not be recruited to fill the place of paid staff. This could be seen as exploitation of the volunteer and a deprivation of someone's livelihood.
13. Ensure that the work and contribution of the volunteer adds quality and value to the organisation's aims and objectives.
14. Ensure that Equal Opportunities and / or diversity policies are in place and applied equally to volunteers. Examine the organisation's ways of working for anything that may pose a barrier for some members.
15. Encourage and promote a diverse range of employees at all levels. This will help volunteers of different ethnic groups, age, disabilities etc to feel welcome.
16. In order to attract volunteers from groups of people that the organisation has previously failed to reach, it may be helpful to approach those groups of people directly to establish what would make volunteering with the organisation more appealing to them.

Don't forget to say 'Thank You!'

SKILLS FRAMEWORK:

Voluntary and community organisations range from national and international ‘household name’ charities with thousands of paid staff, a high turnover, and formal contracts with customers to small community-based organisations with no staff.

Voluntary and community organisations provide a wide range of campaigning, lobbying, advocacy, advice, information, delivery and support services that are vital for a cohesive and healthy society. This includes support for disadvantaged and marginalised groups of people, care for animals and the environment, and protection of our cultural heritage. Many organisations are involved in the delivery of learning, whether through accredited training or informal learning. Voluntary work is an important channel by which people can improve their employability.

Despite the variety within the sector the common element is its ethos – the organisations are brought into existence and are driven by the desire to take action for the improvement (as they see it) of the community, and are established otherwise than for financial gain.

Given the important contribution made by the voluntary and community sector to the quality of life of our communities, it is in all our interests that the organisations are run effectively. Organisations are only as good as the people who run them and work in them – whether as paid staff, as trustees or as volunteers. In order to build the capacity of the sector to work effectively, measures need to be in place to support the development of the skills of the individuals who work within the sector. This strategy focuses on addressing the skills of the sector’s paid and volunteer workforce.

The breadth of the sector encompasses many different types of work. Some roles within voluntary and community organisations are no different to those found in other sectors, some roles are unique and some have special aspects.

Many people in smaller organisations have multi-functional roles, for example one person might be responsible for fundraising, recruiting and managing volunteers, and compiling monitoring reports

It is true that the sector is a major provider of formal and informal learning opportunities including to many people from areas of deprivation and people facing difficult personal circumstances. This represents an important part of the sector’s role but is not the main focus of this strategy.

It is recognised that there is a wealth of good practice within the sector, however, some areas have more developed support systems and better access to resources than others.

The top 12 skills shortages identified in Futureskills 2003

1. Planning and Organising
2. Problem Solving
3. Team Working
4. Strategic Use of IT
5. Project Development/Management
6. Written Communication Skills
7. Strategic/Business Planning Skills
8. Basic Computer Literacy/Using ICT
9. Oral Communication
10. Leadership Skills
11. Customer Handling
12. Skills to Deliver/Negotiate Contracts

UNDERTAKINGS

The Code of Practice is made up of a series of undertakings for all or specific partners, which all work towards the main aims of the Code, as set out above.

Shared Undertakings

- Recognise the 4 principles of volunteering: -
 - Choice
 - Diversity
 - Reciprocity- a two way beneficial relationship
 - Recognition
- Recognise the importance of high standards and 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 descriptions or work plans, and receive appropriate training and support.
- Identify senior managers to be responsible for volunteer involvement, and for monitoring and reporting on it.
- Recognise that volunteers should be given thanks and recognition for their contribution at the very least.
- Recognise that volunteers should get fair treatment, induction, training and support including out of pocket expenses, so that disadvantaged groups are not excluded from volunteering.
- Partners agree to take positive action to promote the status and image of volunteering and community involvement, recognising the value of diversity of volunteers from differing backgrounds.
- Partners will work together to strengthen the volunteering infrastructure in Trafford.
- Partners agree to work cooperatively to develop initiatives that aim to:
 - Promote volunteering
 - Provide information to people interested in volunteering
 - Recognise the contribution of volunteers
 - Promote good practice
- Good practice guidelines apply equally to all people undertaking volunteering, whether within a voluntary sector or statutory sector organisation. Partners are committed to developing a good practice handbook for agencies that use volunteers.
- To collaborate to develop, learning networks to share resources and workforce development activities

Statutory Sector Undertakings

- Ensure that all its funding and partnership agreements recognise the contribution made by volunteering
- Recognise the need for infrastructure support for volunteering
- Keep volunteering policies under regular review
- To accept that funding and contracting arrangements should include the costs of staff and volunteer development
- To encourage voluntary & community groups to be more strategic in developing their paid and unpaid workforces

Voluntary Sector Undertakings

- to recognise the importance of investing resources in developing the skills of their paid and unpaid workforce
- to identify learning needs and linking this to their planning process and ensuring that the costs of skills development is included in funding bids
- formal training is just one way to develop skills – coaching, mentoring, action learning and secondments can also be effective. Existing good practice in these areas is ad hoc and could

be far more widespread therefore the voluntary sector is committed to identifying and sharing good practice to work towards greater consistency across the Borough.

- trustees and senior staff need to continue developing their skills and taking opportunities to learn and develop
- small voluntary and community organisations need access to advice, information and good practice tools to help them plan for and meet the skills needs of their paid staff and volunteers
- develop learning and skills strategies for all volunteers and paid workers, integral to their organisations' planning and appraisal systems. These can be as complex or as simple as the organisation needs, depending on size and whether or not there are any paid staff
- include resources needed for volunteer involvement in all funding bids and contracts
- collaborate more effectively with each other to share and promote good employment practice

Action Plan:

An action plan will be draw up annually in relation to the undertakings:

Links to other codes of practice:

The Trafford Compact group will seek to identify areas of common concern for all Codes of Practice Work streams.

Annexe 1

Volunteering in Trafford – Research project :

In the preparation for this Code of Practice the working group undertook a small scale research project exploring the views and experiences of volunteers and non-volunteers and agencies who use volunteers and those who do not. The project aimed to find a representative cross section of the Trafford community – but the numbers involved are too small to extrapolate much detailed information.

Motivations to volunteer:

In terms of people's motivations for volunteering: the top 4 reasons were:

- Contribute to society
- Help people
- Use a skill
- Change things

The researchers believe that this reflects the motivations of the older people involved in the survey – those with more career experience, or those in retirement.

Conversely; further down the list of motivations other reasons included:

- Learn new skills
- Work experience

The researchers believe that this reflects the motivations of the younger people involved in the survey – those with less career experience.

Almost everyone said that these were still the reasons that they continue to volunteer.

Recruitment of volunteers:

Volunteers were asked about how they found out about their volunteering opportunity:

- 60% were recruited via methods of recruitment such as word of mouth, being asked by a friend or relative, or through already being involved in the group.
- 20% were recruited via methods of recruitment such as local press, posters or flyers
- The remaining 20% were recruited through referrals from other agencies such as colleges, JobCentre, local councillor etc...

This corresponds with findings from the organisations who work with volunteers, that show that 74% of volunteers are recruited via word of mouth.

What do volunteers do?

The most popular type of volunteering opportunities are:

- Administration – 40% use volunteers in this way
- Computers / ICT / Website – 25% use volunteers in this way
- Events – 25% use volunteers in this way
- Advice / Advocacy – 18% use volunteers in this way
- Campaigning and lobbying – 18% use volunteers in this way

It was interesting to note that no charity shops took part in this survey, therefore no one reported using volunteers in retail. The researchers believe that this is because very few charity shops are members of VCAT or involved in local networks, many are run as trading arms of national charities and therefore slightly "outside" of the local voluntary sector. We believe that further research in this field would be useful.

Supporting volunteering:

Most popular responses when asked what would improve their volunteering experience:

The three most popular responses were connected with recognition:

- Seeing the difference my volunteering makes
- Feeling I had a role
- Using my skills more

In terms of support for volunteers

- 65% of volunteers receive training
- 53% are involved in meetings or events
- 35% have one-to-one meetings
- 32% take part in social events
- Other support received include support in applying for work or courses and help with other areas of life.

These figures correspond with similar responses from organisations that work with volunteers.

Volunteers' Budgets:

Organisations that use volunteers were asked about their volunteering budgets:

- 31% have budgets for Expenses
- 24% have budgets for training
- 14% have budgets for a volunteer co-ordinator
- 14% have budgets for social events

It's probably more useful to say they:

- 86% do not have budgets for Social Events
- 86% do not have budgets for a volunteer co-ordinator
- 75% do not have budgets for training
- 69% do not have budgets for expenses

47% of the groups that took part in the survey had an income above £50,000 per year.

Trends in volunteering.

Agencies were asked their thoughts on the state of volunteering now compared to 5 years ago, Similar numbers said that they have less volunteers now to those who say they have more, or that they had more men or women, or that they had more older or younger volunteers – we believe that this shows a fair balance in volunteering trends – the type of person volunteering and the recruitment methods used (mainly word of mouth).

What was most interesting, and worrying, was that twice as many groups said it was harder to recruit now than five years ago, compared to those who said it was easier.

People who don't volunteer:

As part of the research we also sought the views of people who do not volunteer and those agencies who do not use volunteers.

Overwhelmingly, the main reason why people do not volunteer is that they do not think they have the time – 68%, the second reason was that they had never been asked – 23%.

In terms of being encouraged to volunteers,

- 30% would want to know how they could make a difference,
- 20% would want help to find a volunteering opportunity,
- 18% would want to try it out first
- 15% would want more information

Other responses included; open days, volunteers' fairs, knowing it was fun, finding a flexible opportunity, having a crèche.