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## Volunteer Agreements

Organisations are understandably aware of the dangers of creating a contract with their volunteers, and can be reluctant to have any form of written agreement with them. However, as long as the organisation avoids any form of obligation or contractual language any risk is outweighed by the benefits of having a written agreement.

Volunteer agreements set out the organisation's commitment to its volunteers, and what it can expect from its volunteers. They act as a reference point for the volunteers, and a reminder to the organisation that it should meet the standards of good practice that it has set itself.

A typical agreement might state that the organisation will reimburse volunteer expenses, provide adequate training and supervision, carry out adequate risk assessments, and treat volunteers in accordance with its equal opportunities policy.

Volunteers would agree to follow the rules and procedures of the organisation, and meet time commitments, giving adequate notice if this is not possible.

Any hint of obligation (for instance volunteers agreeing to volunteer for the next six months) runs the risk of the document being seen as contractual. It is better to talk of hopes and expectations, with the understanding that volunteers are free to come and go as they wish, and that there are no obligations placed upon them.

It is also a good idea to put some form of disclaimer into the document, to the effect that the agreement is in honour only, and is not intended to be a legally binding contract of employment. However, it should be remembered that such a disclaimer is likely to be disregarded if the document is clearly contractual in its wording or intentions.

We also advise against asking volunteers to sign volunteer agreements, as this can also appear contractual.

### Sample agreements

These sample volunteer agreements are a starting point to help you draft an agreement that suits your organisation. We hope you will discuss and consult on the sample agreements and feel free to adapt them to suit your needs. The first agreement is more formal and detailed than the second one.

A volunteer agreement helps both the organisation and its volunteers by making expectations clear. Both agreements incorporate current thinking on what is good practice in managing volunteers. They also address the unlikely possibility of volunteers being considered employees in the eyes of the law.

A volunteer agreement is usually part of a set of documents, which includes a volunteer policy and volunteer role description. Advice on drawing up such documents is available from the [online Good Practice Bank](#) or by contacting the [Information Service](#) at Volunteering England.

## **Sample 1:**

### Volunteer Agreement

This Volunteer Agreement describes the arrangement between [name of organisation] and you. We wish to assure you of our appreciation of your volunteering with us and will do the best we can to make your volunteer experience with us enjoyable and rewarding.

#### Part 1: the organisation

Your role as a volunteer is [state nature and components of the volunteering role] and starts on [date]. This volunteering role is designed to [state how the volunteering role benefits the organisation].

You can expect [Name of organisation]:

#### 1. Induction and training

- To provide a thorough induction on the work of [voluntary organisation], its staff, your volunteering role and the induction and/or training you need to meet the responsibilities of this role. The Volunteer Handbook provides full details of the organisation.

#### 2. Supervision, support and flexibility

- To explain the standards we expect for our services and to encourage and support you to achieve and maintain them;
- To provide a named person who will meet with you regularly to discuss your volunteering and any successes and problems;
- To do our best to help you develop your volunteering role with us.

#### 3. Expenses

- To reimburse these expenses following the procedures in the Volunteer Handbook:
  - Travel to and from home to [the place of volunteering] and during your work: see the Volunteer Handbook for rules on methods of travel and car mileage allowances
  - Meal expenses to a maximum of £[ ]. (Expenses should be incurred through volunteering so to be eligible you should volunteer around meal times or for at least [ ] hours a day).
  - Specialist clothing or equipment where this is required and provided by you.
  - Actual cost of crèche, childminding fees or other dependant costs incurred by you in order to be able to volunteer.
- Please keep all your receipts to give to us when we reimburse your expenses.

#### 4. Health and safety

- To provide adequate training and feedback in support of our health and safety policy, a copy of which is in the Volunteer Handbook.
5. Insurance
- To provide adequate insurance cover for volunteers whilst carrying out their volunteering roles which have been approved and authorised by us
6. Equal opportunities
- To ensure that all volunteers are dealt with in accordance with our equal opportunities policy, a copy of which is set out in the Volunteer Handbook.
7. Problems
- To try to resolve fairly any problems, complaints and difficulties you may have while you volunteer with us;
  - In the event of an unresolved problem, to offer an opportunity to discuss the issues in accordance with the procedures set out in the Volunteer Handbook.

## Part 2: the volunteer

We expect you:

- To help [name of organisation] fulfil its [describe role/function/services which the volunteer will be helping with];
- To perform your volunteering role to the best of your ability;
- To follow the organisation's procedures and standards, including health and safety and equal opportunities, in relation to its staff, volunteers and clients;
- To maintain the confidential information of the organisation and of its clients;
- To meet the time commitments and standards which have been mutually agreed to and to give reasonable notice so other arrangements can be made when this is not possible;
- To provide referees as agreed who may be contacted, and to agree to a Criminal Records Bureau check being carried out where necessary.

This agreement is binding in honour only, is not intended to be a legally binding contract between us and may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. Neither of us intend any employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future.

## Sample 2:

### Volunteer Agreement

Volunteers are an important and valued part of [organisation name]. We hope that you enjoy volunteering with us and feel a full part of our team.

This agreement tells you what you can expect from us, and what we hope from you. We aim to be flexible, so please let us know if you would like to make any changes and we will do our best to accommodate them.

We, [organisation name], will do our best:

- to introduce you to how the organisation works and your role in it and to provide any training you need. The initial training agreed is [     ].
- to provide regular meetings with a main point of contact so that you can tell us if you are happy with how your tasks are organised and get feedback from us. Your manager's/supervisor's name is [     ].
- to respect your skills, dignity and individual wishes and to do our best to meet them.
- to reimburse your travel and meal costs up to our current maximum\*.
- to consult with you and keep you informed of possible changes.
- to insure you against injury you suffer or cause due to negligence\*.
- to provide a safe workplace\*.
- to apply our equal opportunities policy.
- to apply our complaints procedure if there is any problem.

I, [name of volunteer], agree to do my best:

- to work reliably to the best of my ability, and to give as much warning as possible whenever I cannot work when expected
- to follow [organisation name]'s rules and procedures, including health and safety, equal opportunities and confidentiality.

\*More details on these issues are provided in the volunteer handbook.

Note: this agreement is in honour only and is not intended to be a legally binding contract of employment.

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For more information, please contact:

Volunteering England Information Service

[Information@volunteeringengland.org](mailto:Information@volunteeringengland.org)

Freephone/textphone: 0800 028 3304 (M-F, 9.30 – 5.30)

[www.volunteering.org.uk/](http://www.volunteering.org.uk/)

Volunteering England

Regent's Wharf

8 All Saints Street

London N1 9RL

- [Access all of Volunteering England's Information Sheets](#)

- For more information on managing volunteers, please visit

[The Good Practice Bank](#)

**Our thanks to Volunteering England, author of this information sheet**

