

Code of Practice on Volunteering

1. INTRODUCTION

The Wiltshire Compact is a set of principles within which the statutory, voluntary and community sectors agree to work.

This Code is one of the four Codes that describe how the Compact will work in practice. It is based on the national Code that was developed by Central Government together with the voluntary and community sector.

This Code aims to enable more people to become involved in the varied forms of volunteering that are a vital part of active citizenship and to offer them the necessary support.

The Code is a shared vision of how the public sector in Wiltshire and the voluntary and community sector can support and promote voluntary action.

It aims to:

- raise the profile of volunteering and actively promote it as a community activity;
- value the vast contribution that volunteers make to the local community and beyond;
- acknowledge the variety of volunteering opportunities;
- enable and support more people to get involved in volunteering;
- recognise that public and voluntary organisations and community sectors can provide excellent training, support and development for volunteers to go into work, either paid or unpaid;
- encourage better practice in the management of volunteers;
- remove the barriers to volunteering.

2. IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community. Volunteering takes many forms and is undertaken freely and by choice, without financial gain and is underpinned by four key principles:

- **Choice** - Volunteering is a choice made freely by each individual;
- **Diversity** - Open to all, no matter what their background, age, race, sexual orientation, faith or ability;
- **Give and take** - Volunteers offer their contribution unwaged but should gain in other ways;
- **Recognition** - Clear recognition of the value of the contribution made by volunteers to an organisation, community or economy.

- ensuring an identified person is responsible for co-ordinating volunteer involvement and for monitoring and reporting on it;
- encouraging the development of employer-supported volunteering schemes within our organisations, including employment practices that allow time off for volunteering;
- All volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults must work within the law and organisations must acquire Criminal Record Bureau clearance.

8. VOLUNTEERING INFRASTRUCTURE

The volunteering infrastructure is the physical facilities, structures, systems, relationships, people, knowledge and skills that exist to support, develop, co-ordinate, represent and promote front line organisations to enable them to deliver their aims more effectively.

The volunteering infrastructure has a unique role in supporting the volunteers, volunteer-involving organisations, the wider voluntary and community, Public and private sectors as well as delivering volunteering initiatives and programmes.

Both public and the voluntary and community sectors agree that funding should be invested to create and maintain a modern dynamic volunteering infrastructure.

A 'Volunteering Hub' will be created in Wiltshire to develop the functions that will assist public and umbrella organisations to ensure local support.

It will cover six core elements:

- **brokerage** – information on volunteering opportunities, advice and support to potential volunteers which match their motivations to specific opportunities;
- **marketing volunteering** – stimulate and encourage interest in volunteer activity;
- **good practice development** – promoting good practice in working with volunteers and all volunteer-involving organisations. Growing through good practice will develop and deliver training, which can accredit volunteers, enable volunteers in their roles, enable volunteer managers and support the work of umbrella organisations;
- **develop volunteer opportunities** – working in close partnership with statutory, voluntary, community, private and faith groups to develop imaginative opportunities (both formal and informal) for potential volunteers;
- **policy response and campaigning** – devising and leading on volunteer policy development that encourages social policy to be volunteer friendly and volunteer-literate.

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USEFUL INFORMATION

'Promoting Partnerships'
protocol held on Wiltshire
County Council's website
www.wiltshire.gov.uk

Extensive communication
toolkits and case
studies available at
www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk

Advice on compact agreements:
www.thecompact.org.uk

Freedom of Information Act
www.hms.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000036.htm

The Wiltshire Compact Code of
Practice on Equality and
Diversity

The Wiltshire Compact Code of
Practice on Funding and
Procurement

The Wiltshire Compact Code of
Practice on Communication and
Consultation

WREC Wiltshire Racial Equality
Council www.wiltsrec.org.uk

Equal Opportunities Commis-
sion www.eoc.org.uk

Disability Discrimination Act
www.disability.gov.uk

Disability Rights Commission
www.drc-gb.org.uk



3. OUR COMMITMENT

The public and voluntary and community sectors are committed to work together to ensure they:

- expand the public perception of volunteering by improving the profile, status and range of volunteer activities;
- make visible the contributions volunteers make;
- ensure volunteers are brought into policy-making consultation processes;
- challenge barriers to volunteering, these may include barriers caused by institutions, geography or attitudes;
- acknowledge the distinctiveness of volunteering by promoting volunteer's equality of treatment;
- develop, support and maintain a modern and dynamic volunteering infrastructure.

4. THE SCOPE OF THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR

- helping to provide a service as a volunteer within a voluntary organisation, community group, international development organisation, the public sector or not-for-profit sector;
- running an organisation or group as a trustee, board or committee member, serving as a non executive member of a public body or participating in civic governance
- helping to raise funds for an organisation;
- Improving the quality of life for people in a neighbourhood or community of interest, providing a community service or campaigning for a public

causes:

- befriending and mentoring;
- encouraging employer-supported community involvement;
- helping to develop public policy through involvement in consultation processes and campaigning;
- sport and physical recreation;
- encouraging volunteering through faith congregations or communities.

This is not an exhaustive list and may be revised from time to time.

5. VALUING VOLUNTEERS

The contribution made by volunteers can often go unacknowledged. Volunteers make significant contributions to life and making positive changes in Wiltshire. Together, the public and the voluntary and community sectors will ensure that volunteer time is recognised as a significant contribution and of value. The contribution made by volunteers needs to be measured, recognised and celebrated.

This will be done by:

- recognising that volunteering builds skills and experience, enables people to give back to their community of interest, enhances employability and creates employment. It promotes social inclusion, and contributes to the building of community networks and participation. High levels of volunteering are therefore indicators of healthy and active communities;
- developing, promoting and celebrating volunteering as an expression of active citizenship;
- promoting visibly the value of volunteer contributions;
- ensuring volunteers are thanked for the contribution they make and are aware of the importance / benefit their contribution makes to the group or organisation;

- involving volunteers when developing new policies and ideas;
- assisting potential volunteers to find volunteering opportunities that fit their needs, interests and abilities and recognising these may change over time;
- encouraging the development of employer-supported volunteering schemes within public sector and private organisations, including employment practices that allow time off for volunteering;
- seeking to widen the opportunities for volunteering and develop a diverse volunteer base;
- actively promoting volunteering as an opportunity for all including transient groups.

6. BARRIERS

There are many barriers to volunteering, particularly in a rural county like Wiltshire. The public and the voluntary and community sectors will work together to:

- audit new policies, strategies, guidance and procedures for their impact on volunteers and volunteering and take appropriate action, and work to limit the barriers presented by existing policies and practices;
- work, where applicable, to reduce conflict and confusion between volunteering and training for employment, especially for young people;
- promote good practice in the recruitment and management of volunteers including recommendations to remove barriers due to attitudes;
- acknowledge the cost of running volunteer-based organisations;
- make clear when volunteers can be compensated for any out of pocket

expenses:

- ensure that there is a clearly identified infrastructure hub offering high quality support;
- work to identify and dismantle barriers to volunteering and community involvement;
- increase staff awareness of volunteer contributions to organisational and social policy objectives;
- ensure volunteers are not exploited, expected to undertake tasks that are not appropriate or recruited to fill the place of paid staff.

7. THE VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE

The relationship between volunteers and the group or organisation for which they work is different from paid employees. Public and voluntary and community sectors will develop policies that recognise these differences in the motivation of volunteers and the contribution they make so that it is reflected in the way they are managed. The volunteering experience and contribution is unique.

This will be done by:

- ensuring good practice in volunteer management;
- ensuring volunteers have the same entitlements as paid staff – clarity of role and responsibilities, induction, supervision, support, training and development opportunities etc;
- ensuring volunteers are included within volunteer-involving organisations and policies and procedures are in place;
- encouraging volunteer-involving organisations to ensure that both time and resources to support and train volunteers are in place which makes volunteering a valuable experience for the volunteer;

