



Volunteers and employment

This factsheet provides information on the considerations that you should make if you are taking on a volunteer and advice on managing your volunteers.

Volunteers are not under any obligation to support your organisation, unlike employees or workers. Volunteers do not have a contract of employment and are not paid for their contribution.

Legal considerations

Volunteers do not have the same legal rights as employees or workers. Organisations still need to take care in the recruitment and selection of volunteers. If volunteers may have regular contact with children or vulnerable adults, a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure must be sought.

Organisations have a duty of care to in terms of the health and safety of their volunteers.

It is important to clarify the status of a volunteer right from the start as this can lead to confusion with 'worker status'. It may be useful to have a volunteer agreement that outlines the organisation's and volunteers' expectations.

Managing volunteers

A volunteer policy may be useful to clarify the purpose of volunteers and how they will work along existing employees. It should also outline how volunteers will be reimbursed for incurred expenses.

Organisations should have a separate and accessible grievance and disciplinary policy for volunteers.

Training to volunteers should only be provided if it is relevant to the volunteer's role and the opportunity for training should be open to all volunteers.

It is important to have a clear policy on recruiting volunteers as paid employees. There are a number of equal opportunity issues around internal advertisement in terms of a representative workforce. External advertisement should be considered to allow equal opportunity for all to apply for a vacancy.

**This information is taken from the publication *The Good Employment Guide (2005)*.
Find out more at www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/publications**

To find out more information on volunteers, visit the following websites:

1) askNCVO: NCVO provides free information, signposting and services for trustees, staff and volunteers
www.askncvo.org.uk

2) Volunteering England: Provide a number of resources relating to the management of volunteers and the law
www.volunteeringengland.org.uk