



# Access to Volunteering

Shaping the experiences and opportunities for disabled people

A 'how to'  
resource  
manual for  
volunteering  
organisations



**Skill**

National Bureau  
for Students  
with Disabilities

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Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities is a voluntary organisation that promotes opportunities to empower young people and adults with any kind of disability to realise their potential through training, work based learning, employment and volunteering in the United Kingdom.

It does this by way of a free telephone information and helpline, running conferences, producing publications, conducting research and working in partnerships with disabled people, service providers and policy makers to influence key policy decisions.

I very much appreciate being asked to contribute a short foreword to what is a timely, immensely helpful, and accessible manual, coming as it does in the UK Year of Volunteering.

As someone with both a sensory and a physical impairment I start from the premise that life is about what I make it and what I can do to the best of my ability. As a life-long volunteer I am passionate about everyone being able to contribute as they wish and being valued as a volunteer. Being registered blind, I do not expect to drive but I do expect to be able to volunteer all of my experience and expertise.

This manual addresses all the issues relevant both to organisations already utilising volunteers with disability and those that wish to. It is set out logically and clearly and, very importantly, provides details of other resources. The manual can be used as much by individuals as organisations and contains some immensely useful scenarios.

What this manual does, above all, is to illustrate that barriers do exist but are always surmountable and that, with a positive and inclusive approach, one can volunteer.

When I was put on the Blind register I had to reassess work and life and, as often in my life, it was volunteering that made a difference. There are many more people like me. This manual will help them and benefit organisations. Now read on – and enjoy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Nussbaum', written in a cursive style.

Mike Nussbaum

Chair of the Board of Trustees of Volunteering England

## **Volunteering and disabled people**

There is a wildly held assumption amongst some sections of the volunteering community that disabled people wishing to give their time should be treated as one separate category, distinct from other volunteers. Further, that any potential disabled voluntary worker would only want to donate their services to a disability organisation, as it would be there that their main interest should lie. The premise being disabled people somehow make up a homogenous group, motivated by a single cause centred on their disability.

A look at wider society tells a different story where disabled people are active and visible in the arts, the media, sports, and in public office; where in education more and more disabled students are taking up the opportunities available in higher and further education institutions. The latter group is hugely significant because many are likely to enter into voluntary work as a route into employment. There are of course others who are motivated to take up voluntary work for other reasons.

The point being made here is that every potential disabled volunteer brings a different set of personal and professional qualities shaped by their own unique experiences. Of course many volunteering managers working within disability and non-disability organisations recognise this. The challenge is to spread and promote this positive work across the volunteering landscape.

## **About the research project**

In April 1999 Skill began what was to become a three-year pilot project involving some 50 volunteers in our London and Edinburgh offices. Forty seven per cent of volunteers that took part in the project had a disability and for many it offered their first real taste of voluntary work.

As a disability organisation there is an assumption, naturally, that where disabled volunteers are concerned we have all the answers. Not so! Running a volunteering project with individuals of mixed abilities was not easy and took months of forward planning and careful consideration. The outcome was the publication of the guide *Into Volunteering*, aimed at disabled people interested in voluntary work.

In 2003, following the success of the pilot, Skill applied for and received funding from City Parochial Foundation to carry out a two year project to look at access into volunteering for disabled people. In terms of volunteer intake we were aware that disabled people as a group were under represented as volunteers nationally. This had been confirmed in work carried out by Community Service Volunteers, Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme, 'Who's Helping Whom?' (2000) and the Institute of Volunteering Research, 'Volunteering For All?' (2004). However we decided to approach our research with an open mind!

One part of the project consisted of a five month mapping exercise involving 45 organisations based primarily in London, which included a 15 page questionnaire and face-to-face interviews (with 26 organisations).

The aim of the mapping exercise was to look at existing good practice amongst those organisations with experience of involving disabled volunteers and to identify the issues preventing (greater) access, particularly amongst those organisations with no tradition of involving volunteers with disabilities.

The initial reaction from some of the organisations contacted to participate in the map was one of deep suspicion. Were we monitoring their disabled volunteer intake,

or checking up on whether they were providing ‘the right support?’ Worse still, were we seeking to pass judgement over the absence of disabled volunteers? These reactions were not unexpected; after all we are an organisation that champions the rights of disabled people!

We were absolutely clear that we wanted to involve organisations within the public, private and voluntary sector. Our aim was also to get an even distribution of disability and non-disability groups in order that we could compare experiences.

Organisations from the Black Minority and Ethnic (BME) communities were also targeted as were those from the gay and lesbian, refugee and asylum seekers communities. We were also keen to attract a cross section of what could be termed mainstream organisations operating within a wider remit.

Our final population sample consisted of voluntary sector (89%), private sector (2%), public (9%), disability organisations (47%), non-disability organisations (53%), black minority and ethnic people (BME) (4%), gay and lesbian (7%) and refugee and asylum seekers (17%).

That we attracted considerably more numbers from the voluntary sector suggest that this was where most of the volunteering activity took place. However what was more important to us was that all organisations involved were keen on involving (more) disabled volunteers and of these 74% said they had or were already doing so.

This manual draws on the experiences of these organisations. It provides information and advice to help a range of practitioners. The tips enclosed are all tried and tested and should be useful to organisations

already working with disabled volunteers and those entering new territory!

### **Why the resource manual?**

There are a number of very useful resource manuals aimed at volunteer-involving organisations offering information and advice around almost every aspect of the volunteering experience and this body of work does not set out to dismiss or duplicate the existing material. What it seeks to do is acknowledge and build on the ideas from the exclusive perspective of an organisation wishing to involve (more) disabled volunteers. The manual is for practitioners working within disability and non-disability organisations and is an attempt to:

- share best practice
- help organisations develop effective recruitment and support strategies
- encourage greater involvement of disabled volunteers across a wider range of organisations
- challenge the barriers that limit the involvement of disabled volunteers.

### **How to use the resource manual**

Aimed at volunteering practitioners within the private, public and voluntary sectors, the manual provides a framework intended to help those already working with disabled volunteers to review current practice as well as ideas to help make better use of volunteers. For the absolute beginner it presents a useful starting point in which to base any volunteering programme involving disabled people. The manual is divided into five sections:

***We Don't Discriminate Here! A Brief Guide to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995*** provides a general

overview of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and introduces you to its role in current best practice regarding disabled volunteers.

***Disabled Volunteers Wanted!  
Developing a Recruitment Action Plan***

looks at ways in which organisations can target disabled volunteers and make their application and selection procedures more accessible.

***Help! Support Strategies for Volunteers, Staff and Organisations*** suggests ways in which the organisations can enhance its and the volunteer's experience by utilising in-house resources and external support mechanisms currently available.

***Not More Paperwork?! Preparing Policies and Procedures*** concentrates on the important administrative business of any

organisation and is aimed at organisations just starting out and those wishing to develop their existing policy documents.

***Appendices*** contains a list of relevant contacts mentioned within individual sections and information which can be easily followed up.

***Resources*** can be found at the end of each section. Some are provided only as a guideline, while others can be reproduced and adapted to suit the purposes of your own organisation.

The manual builds on some of the topics introduced in Skill's publication *Disability Equality in Volunteering*, which many readers may find useful to cross reference. See appendices for more details.

# **We Don't Discriminate Here!**

## **A Brief Guide to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995**

### **Introduction**

Although no specific question on disability discrimination was put to organisations involved in the research project there was no shortage of interpretation on the subject. Statements included 'all our volunteers are treated the same' or 'we don't see the person's disability but focus on their ability' or 'all our volunteering opportunities are open to everyone, including people with disabilities'. This idea of anti-discrimination based on a general notion of equality was both encouraging as it was insightful but it did raise one interesting question - just how much did organisations actually know about the status of disabled volunteers under the law?

This section outlines the basic elements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. It covers the definition of disability, the different types of discrimination, (highlighted with examples) and provides useful references practitioners can follow up for more information.

#### **Good practice and the involvement of disabled volunteers**

The starting point for good practice around the involvement of disabled volunteers should be an understanding of the social model of disability. The social model focuses on the barriers caused to disabled people by society rather than the limitations of an individual arising from their actual impairment. (This is commonly known as the medical model). It also requires understanding of the principles of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and in particular the principle of 'reasonable adjustments' and its practical application around the volunteering activity.

#### **The Disability Discrimination Act 1995**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Act) is one of the only comprehensive anti-discriminatory legislation in the UK and is generally accepted as a measure to reduce discrimination as opposed to giving disabled people civil rights.

#### **The scope of the Act**

The Act covers mainly education, employment and goods and services and imposes responsibilities on employers, service and education providers to uphold a standard of practice to disabled employees, students and customers. **Despite recommendations made during the passage of the 2004 Disability**

**Discrimination Bill, the Act still does not extend to disabled people in voluntary work.**

**Although the Act covers education, employment, and goods and services, this section concentrates on the employment provisions.**

### **Why is the Act important to organisations involving disabled volunteers?**

It is important because it sets the benchmark for the treatment of disabled people and is therefore the standard on which current good practice around the involvement of disabled volunteers should be based.

### **Who does the Act define as disabled?**

The Act says:

‘A person has a disability if he has a **physical or mental impairment**, which has a **substantial** and **long-term** adverse effect on his ability to carry out **normal day-to-day activities**.’

### **The term ‘physical impairment’ covers:**

- physical disabilities, such as a person who uses a wheelchair
- sensory impairment, ie sight and hearing loss
- conditions which are likely to get worse over time, such as cancer, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy and HIV
- conditions which together cause a substantial cumulative effect such as pain and fatigue
- severe disfigurement.

### **The term ‘mental impairment’ covers:**

- learning disabilities
- a mental illness that is ‘clinically recognised’ by a respected medical authority.

The term **‘substantial effect’** means the disability needs to have more than a minor or trivial effect on the individual.

The term **‘long-term adverse effect’** means a disability that has or is likely to last at least 12 months or for the rest of the person’s life.

The term **‘normal day-to-day activities’** refers to that carried out by most people on a regular basis. The test as to whether a person’s ability to carry out ‘a normal days activity’ depends on whether their impairment has an effect on their mobility; manual dexterity; physical co-ordination; continence; ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects; speech, hearing or eyesight; memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; perception of the risk of physical danger.

### **Conditions not covered by the Act:**

These include voyeurism; exhibitionism; non-medical body piercing; tendencies to set fires or steal; tendencies to physical or sexual abuse another person; addiction to or dependency on alcohol, nicotine, or any substance (except those that have been medically prescribed); seasonal allergies such as hayfever (except where it aggravates another condition).

### **How does the Act define discrimination?**

The Act identifies four ways in which a disabled person can be discriminated against in employment:

#### **1. Direct Discrimination**

A person is said to be discriminated against if their employer discriminates directly on the grounds of their disability.

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#### **Example:**

A woman applies for a job as a shop assistant at a local supermarket. She

informs her potential employer at the interview stage that she has epilepsy, which is well controlled with medication. The employer tells the applicant that she is unsuitable for the role as she would be a health and safety risk to staff and customers.

**She has been directly discriminated against compared to someone without epilepsy but with the same skills, knowledge and ability to do the job.**

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## 2. Failure to make reasonable adjustments

A disabled job applicant or employee is said to be discriminated against if an employer fails to make a reasonable adjustment places the disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to that of a non-disabled person. The principle of 'reasonable adjustments' covers:

- changes to work practices, policies and procedures eg reallocation of non-essential duties
- providing auxiliary aids and services eg induction loop
- overcoming a physical feature by removing it, altering it avoiding it or by providing an alternative method.

### A 'reasonable' adjustment may depend on:

- how practical it is to implement or carry out
- the financial cost and the extent of any disruption
- the extent of the employer's financial or other resources
- how effective the adjustment might prove in preventing the disadvantage
- the availability of financial or other help to make the adjustment
- the size and type of the business.

### A physical feature is described as:

- any area leading up to an exit or entrance of a building
  - any other physical barrier that might prevent access
  - any design or construction features on the premises
  - any fixtures, fittings, furnishings, furniture, equipment or material in or on the premises.
- 

### Example:

An employer decides to make changes to an important training manual, which all staff must refer to in order to carry out their work. Despite employing a visually impaired member of staff the employer fails to produce the manual in a suitable alternative format.

**The failure of the employer to provide the manual in a suitable format places the employee at a substantial disadvantage to his fellow employees.**

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## 3. Treating people less favourably

A person is said to be discriminated against if he or she is treated differently by their employer for reasons related to their disability or is treated less favourably than a non-disabled person is or would be in similar circumstances.

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### Example:

A young trainee with learning disabilities is not given the opportunity to attend an accredited college course like his non-disabled peers because it is assumed that he would not cope with the work involved. Instead he is sent on a less demanding non-accredited course.

**The trainee has been treated less favourably than his peers because the decision not to send him on the course is disability-related rather than on a**

**criterion which all trainees can be judged, such as ability.**

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## 4. Victimisation

This form of discrimination covers any disabled or non-disabled person that has begun, or intends to begin, legal action under the Act, has alleged that someone may be in breach of it or is aiding someone in a legal action.

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### Example:

Someone with a history of mental health illness feels that they have been unfairly passed over for promotion and takes his case to tribunal. A colleague gives evidence in his support and is later refused a job reference as a result.

**The employee is being victimised as he is being subjected to detrimental treatment as a result of his support for his/her disabled colleague.**

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## Other important features in the Act

### Harassment

This is said to occur if:

‘A person subjects a disabled person to harassment where, for a reason which relates to the disabled person’s disability, he engages in unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of:

- violating the disabled person’s dignity or
- creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.’

### Anticipatory duty

The Act requires service providers to anticipate ‘reasonable adjustments’ for current and future recipients and beneficiaries. This duty applies only to Part

3 (Goods and Services) and Part 4 (Education).

## Draft Disability Discrimination Bill 2003 (DDB)

There are some important new features likely to be introduced to the Act as a result of the DDB. The most relevant (for our purposes) is:

### Public Sector Duty (2006)

This will require all organisations within the public sector to actively promote equality of opportunity for disabled people (this may involve volunteers) and is designed to counter discrimination by institutions that fail to take into consideration the effects on disabled people when developing services, policies, procedures and practices. This may have implications on your organisation if you are funded by public sector organisations.

**Frequently Asked Questions****Where can I go for more information on the Disability Discrimination Act 1995?**

Visit the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) website where you can also find a wide range of issues relating to disability (see appendices for DRC contact details). You can also visit the Skill's website at [www.skill.org.uk](http://www.skill.org.uk)

**Where can I get practical advice about making physical adjustments to our organisation's premises?**

Get in touch with your Local Authority Access Officer or contact the National Register of Access Consultants at [www.nrac.org.uk](http://www.nrac.org.uk). You can also seek the advice of disability organisations or disabled people themselves!

**We have recently taken on our disabled volunteer as a paid member of staff and would like to know whether there are funds available to make some adjustments to our office computers so that they are more accessible to him?**

Jobcentre Plus operates a scheme called Access to Work, which helps disabled people entering work (or already in paid employment) to overcome work-related barriers. The scheme provides advice, information and grants towards the cost of improvements to the working environment. The disabled person and not the employer must make the application but this does not waive your responsibility under the Disability Discrimination Act. For more details on Access to Work visit [www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk).

**Our disabled volunteer is now a paid member of staff and has applied for a grant under the Access to Work scheme. However a previous application by another employee with a similar disability, seeking similar adjustments was turned down, will this have any effect on the current employee's application?**

No. Each application should be judged on its own merit just as each individual is affected in different ways by their disability in the workplace.

**Do disabled volunteers have any legal protection against discriminatory behaviour?**

A disabled volunteer could seek redress under the Race Relations Act 1976, if they felt they had been discriminated against on the grounds of race, or gender, under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975.

**Where can I get a list of examples of 'reasonable adjustments'?**

'Reasonable adjustments' will differ from one organisation to the next and depend on factors previously highlighted. For a list of examples see the resource page in this section for some ideas.

**Resource:** Examples of physical features

steps	parking areas	lighting and ventilation
gates	floor coverings	internal and external doors
signs	exterior surfaces	toilets and washing facilities
furniture	kerbs and paving	temporary or movable items
stairways	lifts and escalators	all entrances and exits

**Resource:** Examples of physical and reasonable adjustments

**Examples of Physical and Reasonable Adjustments:**

This list should read in conjunction with those shown above and is intended for guidance only.

**Environment**

- clear, concise and consistent signage around the workplace
- colour contrast, walls, floors, ceilings, doors frames, visual panels
- space to store bulky equipment
- good lighting
- orientation and mobility training
- designated room for resting or taking medication
- emergency evacuation procedures
- car parking space or travel arrangements
- area to exercise a guide dog
- widening doorways and aisles
- adjusting height of counters and handles
- internal and external level flooring
- keep floor and aisles clear of clutter and hazards

**Equipment**

- equipment for communication eg computer with speech synthesiser or textphone
- computer with specialist software eg voice recognition or specialist dyslexia software, spellcheck facility
- computer with specialist equipment eg screen filter to avoid glare
- Braille notetaker/embosser
- have auxiliary aids such as an induction loop

- access to e-mail facilities
- tape recorder
- keep pen and paper handy to write messages
- have a visual and audible alarm system
- fridge for medication

**Personal support**

- communicator eg sign language interpreter/lipspeaker/notetaker
- scribe/amanuensis/notetaker
- palantypist for speech to text reporting
- help with written work eg someone to assist in proof-reading or checking work
- personal assistant/support worker

**Access to information**

- information in Braille or large print or on audio tape or disk
- work/handouts on different coloured paper
- verbal explanations and transcripts of visual aids used in training
- information conveyed in more than one way, for example, verbally and in writing
- materials in literal language
- use plain English, symbols and pictures

**Resource:** Examples of reasonable adjustments around working practices:

- altering working hours
- allowing for extra training
- providing additional support
- providing additional supervision
- adapting reference manuals
- adapting recruitment literature.

# **Disabled Volunteers Wanted! Developing a Recruitment Action Plan**

## **Introduction**

One of the most illuminating conversations that took place during the course of the research project involved a volunteer co-ordinator recalling the reaction of some of her colleagues during a staff meeting where the subject of recruiting disabled volunteers came up for discussion. The coordinator said:

*‘They just couldn’t seem to grasp the idea of disabled people volunteering, or they saw it as an opportunity to off-load some of the least appealing tasks of their work.’*

After a series of disability awareness and disability equality training sessions the organisation did go on to successfully involve two disabled volunteers but their situation raised a very important point. You cannot just assume that everyone in your organisation will embrace the idea of involving any volunteers. Indeed any volunteering roles created in this way tend only to lead to a high volunteer turnover rate – every volunteer coordinators nightmare!

This section focuses on four simple steps with which your organisation can use to develop a strategy for recruiting disabled volunteers. It contains case studies taken from real experiences, although their names have been changed to respect their privacy, and a resource section at the back containing forms, which you may reproduce or adapt to suit your own purposes.

Involving the whole of your organisation in the decision to introduce disabled volunteers or to increase the number within an existing scheme is crucial to the success of any volunteering programme. There are a number of ways in which this could be achieved:

- **A consultation questionnaire:** this would need to be circulated to all stakeholders; including staff at all levels, management, committee members, your trustees and existing volunteers.

(See also: **Resource** Consultation Questionnaire).

- **Involving staff and (disabled) volunteers in identifying volunteering roles:** it is particularly important that potential volunteer supervisors and/or the person with whom the volunteer is intended to work closely with, be a part of identifying these voluntary roles, as this would help eliminate any long-term misunderstandings.

(See also: **Resource** Staff Request for Volunteer Assistance).

Deciding which roles your volunteers will perform needs to be thought through very carefully. The inclusion of voluntary workers within any organisation can rouse the suspicion of paid staff concerned about the security of their jobs. The ideal voluntary role should be one that:

- could not be performed by a paid member of staff
- has never been previously performed by a member of staff
- has a clear set of tasks and responsibilities distinct from paid staff
- complements existing staff roles
- serves a related purpose to the work of the organisation.

- **Involving staff in developing a volunteer role description:** once you have identified the roles to be carried out by volunteers it is generally considered good practice to draw up a description of the role which should ideally include:

**The title of the role:** having a title would help distinguish it from other roles. Also many disabled people use volunteering as a route into employment and want to be able to place something other than 'volunteer' on their CV!

**Tasks or activities to be performed:** it is important that the scope of the role is clear to both staff and volunteer as this lessens the likelihood of any contention where boundaries become blurred. Having a task description should also help the volunteer supervisor during supervision and reviews.

**Skills and knowledge:** guidelines around the type of person that would suit the role should make it easier to eliminate those that are totally unsuitable. It might not always be possible to meet all the qualities of your person specification and many organisations find they have to be flexible.

**Additional support requirements:** some organisations often worry about the inclusion of disabled volunteers because of what they see as extra work. Thinking ahead about the range of adjustments you can make to existing staff work practices and the equipment to be used as part of the volunteering activity would help reduce the fear factor.

(See also: **Section One Resource** Examples of Reasonable Adjustments).

(See also: **Resource:** Volunteer Role Description Form)

**Christine is a volunteering manager of a national charity, responsible for several hundred volunteers. When she took up her post in 2002 she was aware of the lack of disabled people involved as volunteers in any one of their UK projects.**

'I joined my current employers from a small project run predominately by people with disabilities for people with disabilities, so I was already used to having a disabled people's presence in the working environment. When I approached my managing director with the idea of involving more disabled people within our projects, he was very keen. However some senior staff members had reservations particularly about the feelings of our loyal base of non-disabled volunteers.'

Having seen the effects that managerial decisions imposed from the top down can have on staff morale I decided to carry out an extensive consultation questionnaire amongst all our staff and volunteers to find out about their attitudes to disabled people and about their feelings towards involving them as volunteers.

We had a really good response rate. Some volunteers and staff (in particular those working in volunteer supervisory roles) were really set against it and worried about the amount of support a disabled volunteer might add to their responsibilities. On the whole the feedback was very encouraging as most of their concerns were really based on the fear of the unknown and, in many respects, ignorance, and we decided to go ahead with the plan.'

**Before implementing the plan, Christine and her team visited a number of disability organisations to find out from disabled people how they would like to be involved as volunteers.**

'What I was determined not to happen was for a disabled volunteer to be introduced into a project and feel out of their depth, or worse, feel used and put on, so after talking to senior staff and experienced volunteers we identified a project we felt would provide the best support.'

We currently have three disabled volunteers at the organisation, not as many as I would like but as with everything you have to start small. We're still in the process of monitoring and evaluating at the moment but all indications are that it is working very well. The idea is to monitor and evaluate the project for a year before rolling it out over our other schemes.

From my experience, disabled people's participation as volunteers only becomes an issue, as with most things, when people feel they don't have a say. In truth I don't think we would have been half as successful if we hadn't carried out our consultation questionnaire; that was the key.'

It is generally accepted by academics and practitioners that disabled people as a group are under represented in volunteering; whereas they consist of around twenty per cent of the general UK population they make up just six per cent of all volunteers. As employers you may already target disabled employees to bolster numbers within your ranks. The same can be done with disabled volunteers. Here are some ways of targeting disabled volunteers:

- **The advert:** one of the most favoured recruitment methods. Adverts can be found posted on volunteer centre notice boards, newsletters or Internet websites. Here are some other suggestions:
  - disability press and publications
  - websites aimed at disabled people
  - mainstream disability organisations publication/websites
  - hospital waiting rooms, doctors surgeries and community day centres
  - housing associations' newsletters
  - local libraries and leisure centre notice boards.
  
- **Devising a flyer:** your flyer should provide a general overview of your volunteering programme and inform the volunteer in brief about the work of your organisation. Details of your diversity and equal opportunities policy ought to be included, also any particular access facilities for disabled volunteers. Flyers are very versatile and if placed or distributed in the right place they can be very effective. Here are some ideas:
  - local festivals and events
  - disabled people's clubs, including youth clubs
  - disabled people's residential homes and housing associations
  - Primary Care Trust reception areas
  - university and college disability offices

- Volunteer Centres with supported schemes for disabled people
- Jobcentre Disability Services Team.

(See also Resource: Sample Flyer).

### Sample Adverts

#### **A friendly voice on the other end of the telephone line can make all the difference to an isolated person.**

Support-Talk Line is a new charity set up to meet the emotional and practical needs of some of our community's most vulnerable people.

We are looking for volunteers to assist with making and receiving calls from local people.

No previous telephone work is required but you will need to have a pleasant and confident telephone manner, be an attentive listener and above all patient. Full training will be given.

We particularly welcome enquiries from disabled people. Please contact....

#### **Are you someone with free time to help out at our after school homework and activity project?**

We are particularly looking for people to work with disadvantaged children on their reading and writing skills.

You will need to have an above average level of language and literacy, be over 18 years of age and be willing to have a criminal records check.

Disabled people are currently under-represented as volunteers within our organisation and are strongly urged to apply.

For more information please contact...

- **Outreach work:** selling your volunteering project to disabled people can often mean taking it out into the community. For many disabled people accessing existing information may not always be possible. Others simply do not see volunteering as a viable option and may need extra encouragement. Here are some examples of ways to target certain groups of disabled volunteers:

#### **Refugees and asylum seekers:**

- local community centres that run ESOL or Basic Skills classes
- community groups
- refugee organisations (such as The Refugee Council and Refugee Action)
- hostels and other housing providers
- faith groups
- student groups, such as Student Action for Refugees (STAR) - a national network of students and young people
- advertise your outreach work in the refugee press and set up meetings.

#### **Students/young disabled people:**

- universities and colleges: disability officers and volunteer centres
- freshers' fairs

- disability organisations (many have family support groups)
  - social services (social workers)
  - youth press (such as *Young People Now*)
  - youth websites (search the Internet)
  - National Centre for Voluntary Youth Services;
  - STAR (Student Action for Refugees).
- **Open days:** this is an extension of outreach work. Once disability groups have been identified you could put aside an afternoon, day or week for people to experience what your organisation has to offer first hand. This can help to break down some of the misconceptions of volunteering.
- **Establishing partnerships:** linking up with local and mainstream disability organisations enables you to recruit directly. Using this method you will be able to access up-to-date information on how to support volunteers with specific impairments.

**(See also Appendices:** Disability Organisations Contacts).

**Tony works for a medium-sized charity in London, which supports over thirty families with disabled children. It has a base of ten loyal volunteers, two of whom are disabled and were specifically targeted for their roles.**

‘As a disability organisation working with young children we are really keen to promote positive role models and one way we thought that could be achieved was by involving disabled people as volunteers.

Because of the nature of our work [outreach] we have to be very careful about the people we recruit as volunteers, most of whom come through local colleges, universities, social services and word of mouth.

With our current disabled volunteers we approached our usual community contacts initially, but weren’t very successful, so we decided to get in touch with mainstream disability organisations. We found out where our local branches were and went down to speak to them. Some of them were not very helpful but one or two suggested meeting up with some of their clients and members at their various forum events.

Up until that point we really didn’t have much in the way of up to date publicity literature, so we decided to put together a small presentation about the organisation and the role of our volunteers. We received a huge amount of positive feedback and enquiries from people wanting to volunteer with us.

It would have been very easy to take on whoever expressed an interest but we had drawn up a person specification beforehand and knew what type of people we were looking for. There is a lot of training involved in the role, particularly around child protection and disability issues and these were things we emphasised during our presentations.

Out of all the enquiries there were only two people who we felt would be suitable for the role. They both went through the same application procedures as all our other volunteers, filling out an application form, going through an interview and induction. They have just completed their training and have been with us for almost six months.

It took us almost nine months from when we decided that we wanted to recruit disabled volunteers to finally taking them on. We were less concerned about how long it took to recruit and more on getting it right. We had to make sure that they were right for us, and that we met with their expectations.’

The application form is probably the most common way of obtaining information about a prospective volunteer. However many organisations exclude disabled volunteers from the application procedures, often unintentionally. Once the initial enquiry from a member of the public is made the usual practice is to either send the application form out in the post or give it to the person to take away and fill out at their leisure.

But just how many of those potential volunteers will struggle to complete the form? Those with poor literacy skills, dyslexia or English as a second language; people with poor hand mobility co-ordination or visually impaired people; these are just some examples. Your secondary consideration is how many of these groups having difficulty will return to the organisation seeking help with completing the application form? Chances are, not many. Most will simply lose interest and another potentially great volunteer will have been lost.

### **Here are a few steps you can take to meet the needs of these groups:**

- make sure all applicants are verbally informed (by telephone or in person) that your staff will be available to assist with completing the form and
- inform any intermediary agency, such as the local volunteer centre, of your policy on support
- make sure your policy of support is stated clearly on the application form and any other publicity literature.

Application forms adapted from that used for employee recruitment are often not the most appropriate to use for (disabled) volunteers. Whereas a question such as, what do you have to offer our organisation might be necessary on the staff recruitment

form it can exclude many disabled volunteers, in particular those with low self-confidence and self-esteem, who may well feel they have nothing to offer.

### **Here are a few ways of making your application form more accessible:**

- **Avoid using generic questions:** think about every question on the application form and whom it might exclude. Every question should serve the purpose it was intended and provide only information that will enable you to make a fair and unbiased recruitment decision.
- **Simple layout:** a form that is congested can be confusing. You may even consider using tick boxes to reduce the amount of writing the applicant has to do but this should be kept to a minimum so as to not over congest the form.
- **Include a section on additional support:** volunteers should be given the opportunity to provide information that might prevent them from participating fully and equally in any recruitment process.

### **Here are a few typical examples of additional needs requests:**

- help with completing the application form
- information about parking for disabled drivers
- reimbursement of travel costs to the interview
- the availability of communication support (eg BSL interpreters, notetakers, lipspeakers)
- bringing a personal assistant, key worker or supportive person along to the interview.
- **Include section on disclosure of disability:** some volunteers may not wish to disclose their disability so it is important that your application form and accompanying monitoring form provide

them with the opportunity to do so if they so wish. It might also include a short statement on why disclosures are welcome (ie to put in place any support systems).

- **Accessible formats:** the application form should be made available to the volunteer in a range of accessible formats. Examples of accessible formats include audiotape, Braille, disk, email and large print.

### **The Volunteer Application Pack**

Literature prepared purposely for volunteers

shows that voluntary workers are a valued part of the organisation and promotes a professional image. The pack should not necessarily contain a copy of your AGM or annual budget reports - whilst these are important most volunteers are only interested in information about the volunteering experience in a nutshell! The pack could contain your publicity flyer, a copy of the application form and a copy of the equal opportunities monitoring form.

(See also **Resource** Sample Application Form and **Resource** Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form).

## Case Study

### **Pauline manages a very busy medium-size community resource centre in London. A simple cost effective measure has enabled her to increase the number of active disabled volunteers involved in the volunteering scheme.**

'Our volunteering programme has really evolved over the past two years from one that was struggling to attract any type of volunteer to one that has regular enquiries.

In particular we have seen an increase in the numbers of disabled people wanting to volunteer with us. I think that has been largely due to the changes that we have had to make to our recruitment procedures.

At one stage anyone who made an enquiry about volunteering would be sent an application form together with some information about the project and a stamped addressed envelope. If we were lucky we'd probably get one or two applications back.

In order to cut back on the cost of postage we decided we'd invite all our volunteers in for interviews in the first instance and get them to fill out the application form whilst in the office.

What we soon realised was that there were so many people that needed help with completing the form, which may have accounted for why we were receiving very few back.

Through word of mouth people now know that help is available and they are more likely to apply, especially people with disabilities.'

For most potential volunteers the 'interview' is often the first face-to-face contact with the organisation and it can be a nerve-racking experience. This can often be compounded with concerns about how the subject of disability might be dealt with. There are some simple measures your organisation can take to minimise these fears. It could involve implementing measures around:

- **Informal chat:** some organisations prefer not to use the term 'interview', but choose to use the phrase 'informal chat'. This can help to put some people at ease.
- **Additional needs:** regardless of whether the potential volunteer has stated their extra needs on the application form it is better to check and confirm these needs prior to the interview.
- **Disclosure:** for those potential volunteers who have chosen not to disclose their disability, you should provide them with every opportunity before the actual interview. This may mean discussing their needs with a key worker or family member.
- **Accessible room:** if the interview is to be held in a third floor room with no access route by lift then it will bar potential volunteers with mobility impairments. It would be far better for the interview to be held in a ground floor level venue that is accessible to all.
- **Interview time extensions:** where a potential volunteer has a speech impairment or fatigue it might be necessary to extend the time length of the interview, so as to level the playing field.
- **Setting standard questions:** in order that all volunteers may perform as equals to the best of their abilities, your organisation could base the interviews around a set of basic questions.
- **Alternative methods:** where the potential volunteer cannot physically come to the interview and where the nature of the volunteering role calls for good telephone skills, for example, your organisation might consider a telephone interview instead.

- **Guaranteed interview scheme:** many people with the appropriate skills may not promote themselves well on the application form due to their disability but compensate by articulating well and thus would perform better at interview. A guaranteed interview scheme is designed to stop this type of volunteer falling through the net.

The aim of any good interviewer is to put the interviewee at ease. Here are some pointers about how this could be done at the initial stages of the interview:

#### **Reinforce the purpose of the interview, which should be for the:**

- potential volunteer to tell the organisation about themselves
- potential volunteer to find out more about the organisation's work and if they would like to get involved
- organisation to find out more information about the potential volunteer
- organisation to make a decision on whether they have a suitable role for the potential volunteer.

#### **Make clear from the outset that disability is not an issue by:**

- making clear that the person's ability to carry out the volunteering role competently is paramount
- only asking disability-related questions that are relevant to the volunteering role in question
- reassuring the individual that the selection of volunteers is not based on a person's impairment.

**Here are some disability-related questions that you can use or modify to suit your own purposes. All the questions focus on how you as an organisation can adapt the way you work around a person's impairment and to draw out the specific qualities required for the role.**

**Situation one:** A young woman with visual impairment and good IT skills applies for a role at a community centre, which includes working with computers.

**Question:** What type of computer do you normally use? (**Large screens**)

**Question:** Are you familiar with any alternative software packages? (**Sound output/screen reader packages**).

**Situation two:** A man with ME and experienced in working with the public is applying for a role working as a telephonist at a call centre. He explains that his condition often means he regularly has fatigue, which can cause poor concentration.

**Question:** Would shorter breaks during the day rather than one long break help you manage your tiredness?

**Alternatively** you could suggest he work during periods you know the call centre is less busy and reassure him that he can take a break when needed.

**Situation three:** A woman with excellent organisational skills applies for a volunteer publicity role within a health campaign charity. She explains she may need to take time off in order to manage her depression.

**Question:** The volunteering role doesn't actually require you to be in the office at all times. How would you feel about volunteering from home during the periods you don't feel well enough to come in?

**Alternatively** you could reassure her that the role is team orientated and build her

tasks into other volunteering roles, which would lessen the impact during her period of absence.

### **A Question on Disability Awareness (DA) and Disability Equality (DE)**

You will need to explain what both of these concepts mean in the context of volunteering. (For further information about DA and DE see Section Three Support).

- We encourage all our volunteers to take part in disability awareness and disability equality training, how do you feel about taking part? **Attitude.**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Are disabled asylum seekers allowed to volunteer?**

Yes. Asylum seekers are people awaiting a decision on their application for refugee status and have been allowed to volunteer since April 2000, even if their application has been denied and they are going through the appeals process. The Home Office will usually send asylum seekers a letter stating that they must not engage in paid or unpaid work but this does not include voluntary roles. Asylum seekers and their families are allowed to do unpaid work for a not-for-profit organisation and are also entitled to receive out-of-pocket expenses just like any other volunteers.

### **How do we obtain references from disabled volunteers who have never been employed?**

Most organisations ask potential volunteers for their last employer but may well have to adopt a flexible approach for those volunteers with no employment record. Latest figures (Labour Force Survey 2003) show that disabled people are twice as likely to be unemployed than non-disabled people. Consequently many may be unable to name a previous employer as a referee and this is also true for disabled volunteers from the refugee and asylum seekers communities. A list of alternatives should be listed on the application form so that people are not needlessly barred. Referees could include social workers, community workers, community leaders, residential home wardens, GPs or psychiatrists.

### **Where can I get more information and**

### **advice about working with disabled volunteers?**

Some Volunteer Centres have projects specifically aimed at disabled volunteers. To find a centre nearest to you contact Volunteering England ([www.volunteering.org.uk](http://www.volunteering.org.uk), see Appendices for contact details). You could also join an on-line volunteering forum typically aimed at managers who want to exchange ideas (see Appendices for list of websites and addresses).

### **Can people receiving incapacity benefit volunteer?**

Yes. The rule stating that individuals in receipt of incapacity benefit can only volunteer for 16 hours a week has been abolished and recipients can now volunteer for as many hours as they wish.

**Resource:** Consultation Questionnaire

**Thank you for completing this questionnaire. As part of our drive for greater diversity within our organisation we would like to involve disabled people as volunteers within our existing volunteering schemes. The questions shown below are designed to find out how we can best do this.**

**Any personal views expressed as part of this consultation exercise will not be made public and will be kept in the strictest of confidence. However all participants will be provided with details of the questionnaire findings.**

1. Are you a disabled person? Yes / No

2. Do you know of any disabled volunteers? Yes / No

If your answer is **yes**, what type of volunteering role do they carry out?

3. Do you think all disabled volunteers need support? Yes / No

4. What type of support do you think a disabled volunteer might need to carry out the types of roles in your project?



**Resource:** Staff Request for Volunteer Assistance

**STAFF REQUEST FORM FOR VOLUNTEER ASSISTANCE**

Date of Request: .....

Department: .....

Staff Contact: .....

Phone: .....

**Brief Description of Work to be Performed**

(What is the goal of each task?):

**Does the Voluntary role require any specific skills or qualifications?** (Please state)

Work location .....

**Please state hours preferred:**

State time: ..... or Flexible (Circle if applicable )

Length of Commitment Sought:

Fixed period: ..... Minimum of: .....

**Commencement of Volunteering placement:**

State Date .....

Upon Availability (please circle if applicable)

Number of Volunteers sought for this position: .....

Please return this form to the Volunteer Policy Officer

**Resource:** Volunteer Role Description Form

<b>VOLUNTEER ROLE DESCRIPTION</b>	
<b>TITLE OF ROLE:</b>	
<b>MAIN PURPOSE OF THE ROLE:</b>	
<b>TASKS:</b>	
Daily:	Weekly:
<b>SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE:</b>	
Essential:	Desirable:
<b>ADDITIONAL SUPPORT (ADJUSTMENT):</b>	
Equipment support:	Staff support:
<b>RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS:</b>	
<b>OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERS:</b>	

**Resource:** Volunteer Application Form

# Volunteer Application Form



Thank you for your interest in Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities.

Please read the information we have sent you and then fill in the form below and return it to Skill, Chapter House, 18-20 Crucifix Lane, London SE1 3JW.

## 1. Personal Details:

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

.....

Postcode: ..... Tel. No: .....

Email: .....

Where did you find out about volunteering with Skill? .....

## 2. When are you free?

Date available to start volunteering .....

Length to time available to volunteer ..... weeks/months

OR other (please explain eg until I get a job) .....

Please indicate the days and times you would be available to volunteer.

Days available	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Time available					

How many days per week would you be available to volunteer? .....

## 3. Skill will interview all potential volunteers who declare a disability.

Your Equal Opportunities form will be separated from this one and that information will not be used when we decide whether to interview you. If you want to declare a disability so it can be regarded as an extra qualification please give details here. It would be helpful if you can also provide details of any adaptations or equipment that you would like to help you volunteer.

## 4. Work or Voluntary Experience

Please tell us about the kind of work you have done before (paid or unpaid). This could be in an office environment, at your home, or in your spare time.

**5. Relevant Qualifications & Training**

Please tell us about your education or any courses or training you have done.

**6. Skills**

Please tell us about your experience in the following areas.

- Keyboard skills/computer packages (eg word processing, databases)
  
- Office skills (photocopying, faxing, filing etc.)
  
- Communication skills/working with people

Is there anything else you would like to tell us? For example, do you have any other skills or experience you have which you feel may be useful to Skill, such as research, languages or press work?

**7. What types of tasks are you interested in doing?****8. What you would like to achieve out of volunteering with Skill?**

We will be very grateful for your donation of time and energy, but what would you like in return?

9. We would like to use the information you have given us to monitor how effective our Volunteer Programme is. Kindly note that it may be stored on a computer, but it will not be disclosed to anyone outside of Skill. Please sign below if you are happy with this.

Sign ..... Date .....

**Resource:** Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

**Volunteer Centre Croydon Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form**

Volunteer Centre Croydon is committed to Equal Opportunities and welcomes volunteers regardless of age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, employment status, political belief, unrelated criminal conviction, disability or caring responsibility. Please help us ensure that the services we provide are being made accessible to all sections of the community.

**The following information will be used for statistical purposes only**

Date of birth	Gender:
---------------	---------

**Which age group are you in?**

Under 15		26-29		40-44		55-59	
15-18		30-34		45-49		60-64	
19-25		35-39		50-54		Over 65	

**What is your current employment status?**

Employed		Non Employed		Retired		Student	
Unemployed		Unable to Work		Houseperson		Refugee	

**Which ethnic group do you feel you belong in?**

White British	
White British (English)	Indian
White British (Scottish)	Pakistani
White British (Welsh)	Bangladeshi
White Irish	Other Asian background
Other White background	Black Caribbean
White & Black Caribbean	Black African
White & Black African	Other Black background
White & Asian	Chinese
Other Mixed background	Any other background

<b>Nationality</b>	
--------------------	--

**Do you have a health problem or disability?**

No		Yes (please specify)	
----	--	----------------------	--

**Driving. Only complete these questions if you drive.**

Insured for voluntary driving	
Own transport available	

**Resource:** Publicity flyer

## What do I do now?

### If you are interested in volunteering for Skill:

- We'd love to hear from you!
- Please call the Volunteer Policy Officer on the number shown below. She will arrange a convenient time for you to visit the office and discuss what opportunities are available.
- If you want to fill in the enclosed application form that would be helpful, but if you don't like forms please don't be put off. We can get any necessary details from you when you come in. If you prefer, you can send in a CV and a covering letter.

### If you don't want to volunteer right now:

Then please pass this leaflet to someone who might be interested... Or why not give us a call when you have some more time?

**For more information contact** The Volunteer Policy Officer,  
**Skill**, Chapter House, 18-20 Crucifix Lane, London SE1 3JW **Tel**  
 020 7450 0620 **Fax** 020 7450 0650 **Email** info@skill.org.uk  
**Information service** 0800 328 5050 (voice) 0800 068 2422 (text)  
**Website** www.skill.org.uk

**We look forward to hearing from you!**

## Got some spare time?

Interested in doing something useful with it?

### Do you want to:

- Learn new skills?
- Meet new people?
- Get out and do something different

### **Why not come and volunteer at Skill?**



### What is Skill?

Skill is a charity that promotes equality in education, training and employment for disabled people throughout the UK. It does this principally by operating a freephone helpline and website.

Skill also works behind the scenes informing and influencing policy makers.

**Want to help?**

There are opportunities to be involved in many areas of our work, depending on your interests and skills. There are options to be involved within our information service, or with fundraising, press work, research projects, administrative tasks – the list is endless.

**What’s in it for you?**

While you’re volunteering with us, you will receive:

- **Expenses** for lunch and travel, reimbursed on a daily basis
- **Training** in the area of work that interests you
- **References** for potential employers
- **Opportunities** to develop skills within a major national charity

**What’s in it for Skill?**

There is always more work to be done than can be accomplished by our permanent staff. Volunteers make a valuable contribution to our work and help us to achieve more with our limited resources.

**Where can I volunteer?**

Skill has offices in London, Edinburgh and Belfast. They are all accessible to wheelchair users.

If you are interested in helping Skill in your local area, or from your home or college, then please contact the London office.

**How much time will it take?**

You can volunteer for as little or as much time as you want. Some volunteers give us a few hours every month or so, others spend three days a week in the office. It’s up to you.

**Receiving benefits?**

Most people can volunteer without it affecting their benefits. If you have any concerns please talk to the Benefits Agency or call Skill (contact details overleaf).

**Equal Opportunities**

As an organisation seeking to represent the interests of people with disabilities and learning difficulties, Skill seeks to promote equality of opportunity and combat discrimination which people face because of: disability (whatever its cause or nature); ethnic origin; race; colour or nationality; gender; marital status; age; sexual orientation; spent criminal convictions; religious belief or ideology.

**Skill actively encourages individuals with disabilities to volunteer, and will interview all potential volunteers who declare a disability.**

We have a range of equipment available to facilitate volunteering from as many individuals as possible – please ask if there is anything you might find useful.

# Help!

## Support Strategies for Volunteers, Staff and Organisations

### Introduction

**How to provide appropriate support was perhaps the biggest fear of many organisations involved in the project and was an issue not just confined to non- disability organisations. Much of the dialogue around this subject focused on staff receiving ‘appropriate training’ or ‘how to access information’ on training. There was also much talk about ‘not setting the disabled volunteers or the organisation up to fail’.**

**Despite this there was evidence of both creative and practical measures used by organisations in order to involve their disabled volunteers; including a youth project that encouraged text messaging amongst its young volunteering team in order to communicate with a Deaf volunteer. As this example shows, providing support need not involve extra work or major changes to the everyday practices within your organisation. Indeed many of the concerns of some organisations stemmed from these very assumptions.**

In general the foundation of any support system should be based on an understanding that:

- disability affects people in different ways and consequently the support needs of one disabled person might not be the same for another
- the ability of a disabled person is not dependent on their disability
- the best person qualified to know about their needs is the disabled volunteer themselves

- most additional support needs involve very little or no cost at all.

This section looks at the range of support your organisations can provide disabled volunteers. It contains case studies of organisations and volunteer centres, training programmes used by practitioners and a resource section containing relevant forms, which you may reproduce or adapt to suit your own purposes.

### The induction

The aim of any induction programme should be to allay any fears a new volunteer might have about their new role. The volunteer needs to feel that they have made the right choice; enough to want to show up again, ready and eager to volunteer! For the organisation it is an opportunity, after the interview, to promote the public face of the volunteering programme.

### The purpose of Induction should be to provide the volunteer with:

- information about the work of the organisation, its policies and procedures, and its staff
- the opportunity to ask questions about the work of the organisation and their volunteering role
- the opportunity to decide on whether they wish to take on the role. It also provides the organisation with another opportunity to decide on the volunteer's suitability for the role
- an arena for volunteers to meet existing volunteers and staff.

Most inductions are dependent on the volunteering activity and size of the organisation. Therefore no prototype format can be devised that will best suit the needs of all disabled volunteers. Any induction should include an introduction into the work of the organisation and the volunteer role of the volunteer. It should also cover some core elements either by law or as a matter of good practice. These include:

- **Disability Awareness and Disability Equality training**
- **Equal Opportunities Policy**
- **Health and Safety, including**

**Risk Assessment:** must be carried out as part of your 'duty of care' under health

and safety. A risk assessment involves highlighting the 'hazard' (anything with the potential to cause harm) within the volunteering environment and identifying the people who may be at risk. Many organisations carry out this stage of the induction as a practical group exercise. However, you may need to think about conducting one-to-one individual assessments with some disabled volunteers.

(See also: **Resource** Specified Risk Assessment Template)

Whether the induction takes place over one day, involves one-to-one, group sessions, or is spread over a period of weeks, provided 'on the job' or as short 'tasters', what is important is that organisations makes it as accessible as possible. Here are some ideas you may want to think about when preparing your induction.

- **Accessible formats:** adapting literature to suit all volunteers' needs.
- **Accessibility of room:** is everyone able to get to the room where the induction is to be held? Does it have good lighting for people with visual impairments? How far away is it from the toilets?
- **Additional needs:** it is always good practice to check what additional needs your disabled volunteers will have even though this might have been established during the application and selection stage, as these may have changed. Additional needs may include paying for **travel expenses**.
- **Disclosure:** some volunteers may not have disclosed their disability so you need to provide them with opportunities to do so if they wish. This in turn will help with any additional needs.
- **Facilitator tools:** alternative methods may need to be used so that all

volunteers can access the information delivered. Using audio equipment would not suit the needs of a Deaf or hard of hearing person, using sign language or a transcript would be a better option.

- **Icebreakers:** you will need to think carefully if you are considering using icebreakers as part of the session. Some organisations use the exercise where a ball is thrown and caught by each participant who is then expected to give a short biography about themselves to the group. This exercise would need to be adapted to be more inclusive for a visually impaired person.
- **Pace and tone:** pitching the delivery of the induction to suit all abilities is essential. A slow pace can be just as exclusive as a fast pace!
- **Role play and scenarios:** these are a good way of getting a message across or exploring individual attitudes on subjects like disability, especially where people with different impairments will be working together (even disabled people have prejudices). You may have to think about space if the activity includes using movement, particularly where a wheelchair user is involved.
- **Involving active disabled volunteers:** it is always a good idea for any new volunteer to meet and find out about the experiences of active volunteers. The role of the active volunteer might include delivering some of the induction and/or getting involved in a question and answer session. Their involvement could even form the start of a **mentoring role**.
- **Involving external speakers:** inviting in a disabled person with specialist knowledge in a particular type of impairment can help to demystify any existing concerns.
- **Offering taster sessions:** if the role of

the volunteer has yet to be decided you might include an opportunity for the volunteer to try out different roles to find out what suits them best.

### **The Volunteer Induction Pack (VIP)**

All volunteers should be given a VIP, prior to, or on the day of, the induction. Alternative formats should be made available where possible. The pack might consist of the following:

- **A timetable:** it is good practice for every induction to run to a timetable which should break down how long each stage of the induction will last and who will take responsibility for delivering different parts.
- **A checklist:** this should be used to keep track of what has been covered and is very helpful if the induction is intended to take place over several days. Your organisation and the volunteer should keep a record of proceedings.
- **Organisation staff tree:** volunteers should be introduced to all staff, in particular your health and safety representative and the first aid person.
- **Volunteer policy (VP):** should outline why and how volunteers will be involved in the organisation, together with their rights and responsibilities. The policy should be explained (and read, preferably) to all volunteers as a group.
- **Volunteer agreement:** this should show the role description, the length and location of the volunteering activity, name of the volunteer's supervisor, how and when the agreement will be reviewed. If the volunteer agreement is expected to be signed it is good practice to state in writing that it is not intended as a contract. It should also be read to volunteers.

(**See also Resource:** Volunteer Agreement).

- **Volunteer handbook:** the handbook is the volunteer policy in miniature together with essential contacts and telephone numbers. It should be given to the volunteer before the day of the induction (ideally) and be available in alternative formats (particularly large print/email versions) where possible.

**(See also: Resource** Skill Volunteer Handbook (Skill Website) and **Section Four** Policies and Procedures).

**Training**

All volunteers are entitled to expect some form of training to enable them to carry out their roles competently and confidently. This could be offered as part of induction, 'on the job', in-house workshops or specialist courses. All of these can take time to arrange and organise, and where the services of external training providers are engaged, involve some expense. However, it should remain an essential part of your volunteering programme as it does have enormous benefits to the team as a whole.

**Training enables staff and volunteers to:**

- learn or develop new skills and knowledge
- pass skills to other volunteers and staff respectively
- take on other roles in the organisation
- widen their future options, around education, other training and employment.

**For your organisation, a well-trained volunteering team:**

- raises competency levels
- reduces dependency on external training providers
- sets standards for other organisations
- promotes good practice.

**Disability-related training**

The training policy of any organisation in many ways depends on the nature of its core activity and size. However organisations intent on involving disabled volunteers need to make disability-related training for both staff and volunteers a matter of good practice.

There are two main types of disability-related training and it is important that your organisation understands the difference between the two as this will enable you to decide on your specific needs.

- **Disability Awareness Training (DAT):** the aim of DAT is to provide participants (including people with different disabilities) with a greater understanding of the experiences of disabled people.
- **Disability Equality Training (DET):** the aim of DET is to get participants thinking about how volunteers, together with the organisation, can break down the barriers that society places on disabled people. It should also look at the role of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. This type of training is delivered by a disabled person.

Some disability organisations run in-house workshops facilitated by experienced practitioners and disabled volunteers and may provide external training to organisations (most will charge). Independent trainers can also be accessed through regional and national disability agencies. (Visit the DRC website for approved trainers.)

**Accessing other disability-related training**

There are a number of other ways organisations' can access training events and workshops on different issues around disability. Here is a list of some sources:

- disability press classified sections
- regional disability training bodies
- main disability organisations; for training around specific impairments
- local Councils for Voluntary Services
- local Volunteer Centres, particularly those with supported volunteering schemes.

**Reviewing (auditing) your training package**

Any training provided by your organisation should be reviewed for its accessibility to all volunteers. This should cover all your current provision from in-house to external training. The most effective way of ensuring that the process is focused would be to involve disabled volunteers. The outcome of any review process should be reflected in your organisations work practices, policies and procedures. The areas to look at as part of the review could include:

- **Role specific equipment:** you will need to think about whether all disabled volunteers are able to use existing equipment or procedures and if not what changes, if any, will you need to make.
- **Volunteer support:** whilst many disabled volunteers maybe able to carry out their volunteering independently, staff should be informed of the general support needs that a range of volunteers might require.
- **Training strategies:** all staff involved in the delivery of training ought to be made aware of the needs of a range of disabled volunteers so that they are able to adapt their training methods accordingly.
- **Physical access:** are all in-house and external venues and rooms, where training is expected to take place, accessible to all volunteers?

**(See also Section One: Resource: Examples of Reasonable Adjustments)**

**Reviews**

For many of the disabled people interviewed as part of the research project, volunteering was seen as a route into employment and the review was an essential part of this transition. Reviews were also seen as a way of fostering a healthy relationship with the organisation - not only did it help to make them feel valued but some commented that it also helped to develop and shape their voluntary role within the team.

However the review is just as much for the benefit of the organisation. As with supervision it works as a performance barometer for the volunteering programme as a whole. Positive feedback validates the mission of the organisation and can generate new ideas for future roles. Negative feedback can be just as useful in that it helps to identify areas in your volunteering project that needs changing.

By using the review your organisation will also be able to:

- discuss the general progress of the volunteer
- review the volunteer agreement and role description, in particular any existing support needs
- review existing adjustments made to volunteering practices
- identify further training and volunteering roles
- decide with the volunteer whether it is time for them to move on.

Things your organisation should consider before conducting a review:

- **Setting the review date:** this will depend largely on the length of time the volunteer is expected to spend with the organisation. Ideally the review should be at least three months from the volunteer's start date and then at least every third month thereafter. This would provide enough time in which progress can be reasonably assessed.

- **Additional support:** whilst you may feel you know the volunteer by the review stage it is still important to check with them about any extra support they might need.
- **Accessibility of room:** will it be accessible to the volunteer?
- **Flexibility:** some volunteers may need more time than others during the review so setting a time limit might work against some individuals.
- **Key questions:** to ensure that all volunteers receive equal treatment supervisors should use the same key questions with all volunteers. These should be given to the volunteer in advance.
- **Participants at the review:** only those people who know the volunteer well and can comment on his/her progress should attend the review so that an accurate account of their work can be obtained.
- **Recording the review:** all volunteers should receive a record of the details discussed at the review. These should be provided in a format accessible to the volunteer. (For example a volunteer with visual impairment with voice activated computer software may prefer email format.)

**Volunteer Exit Questionnaire**

Volunteers should be given the opportunity of providing feedback when their volunteering ends, regardless of whether it is planned or sudden. The questionnaire is often a good way of evaluating the programme as a whole and helps develop or change certain aspects of your organisation's work, particularly where departure is unexplained. The questionnaire could be built into the last stage of the review process or sent out with a stamped addressed envelope enclosed.

**(See also Resource:** Leaver's Questionnaire).

**Making changes to a disabled person's volunteering activity need not involve great expense. In most cases it requires just a little creative thinking. Here are some scenarios that you could face during a review and some possible ways of reaching a resolution.**

**Scenario:** Jane has depression and continuously arrives late on an early shift at a shop where she volunteers as an assistant cashier. When she does arrive she carries out her task to a high standard and cannot be faulted. The other staff members who work with her complain to the manager about her punctuality.

**A possible solution:** After speaking to the volunteer, the manager discovers that her depression is worst during the early hours of the day and subsequently allows her to work a later shift which suits both Jane and the organisation.

**Scenario:** Jeremy volunteers on a conservation project. He has arthritis and he is no longer able to carry out many of the laborious tasks.

**A possible solution:** After addressing the situation with his supervisor during a supervision meeting Jeremy is assigned a new role organising tours around the grounds of the project for local people.

**Scenario:** Gilberto volunteers as a receptionist at a community centre. He is an asylum seeker with a mild learning disability. Reports have been made to the centre manager about his attitude towards visitors to the centre.

**A possible solution:** The centre manager discovers Gilberto has problems with his asylum application and is worried about whether he will be able to continue his volunteering role. Gilberto is given the option of taking some 'time out' of volunteering or taking on another role that does not involve contact with the public.

**Scenario:** Ade has dyslexia, which he does not disclose to the organisation at the interview stage. During the induction he is unable to fully understand some of the policies that are covered and decides to inform the workshop leader about his disability.

**A possible solution:** As part of Ade's support package the supervisor is asked to spend extra time to go through written material with him.

**Alternatively:** his supervisor could prepare all relevant literature on coloured paper or on audio tape.

**Supervision of disabled volunteers**

Supervision, as one volunteering manager put it, is about 'looking after the welfare of your volunteers' but organisations often worry about taking on non-volunteer related problems, and many volunteers can be concerned about discussing private matters.

The purpose of any supervision should be to:

- find out how the volunteer feels about their day-to-day activities
- find out how the volunteer feels about their relationship with other volunteers and staff
- help staff identify and intervene where there are problems and decide on an immediate or future courses of action
- improve the quality of the individuals volunteering experience.

Supervision should be based around:

- negotiation
- clear boundaries
- confidentiality.

Dealing with non-volunteering or associated problems:

- refer volunteers to a relevant agency
- seek information and advice from a relevant agency.

**Types of supervision**

Supervision will tend to fall into two categories, structured and informal. Your organisation's preference may well depend on the nature of your volunteering scheme and on the preference of the volunteer.

**Here are some of the informal supervision methods identified during the research:**

- **Lend an understanding ear:** where volunteers had problems that were

affecting their volunteering most just wanted someone with who they could confide in on an ad hoc basis.

- **Adopting an open door policy:** some volunteer managers working with large volunteering teams cannot feasibly schedule meetings with every volunteer and therefore will place the onus on the volunteer to come to them with their problems. This method relies a great deal on establishing a trusting relationship from the very outset, as some volunteers may not feel confident enough to approach management.

Here are some examples of the formal supervision methods used by organisations involved in the research project:

- **One-to-one sessions:** some volunteers benefit greatly from knowing they can have quality time with staff to address their problems in confidence.
- **Group sessions:** those that work on the principle of 'a problem aired is a problem shared' can be a great source of support for some volunteers. Group dynamics can stimulate discussion around issues that might otherwise be left unresolved.
- **Volunteer meetings:** a regular forum to discuss general volunteering matters can serve as the foundation for addressing specific concerns during one-to-one sessions.
- **Mentoring:** experienced active volunteers can often use their experience to help new volunteers settle into their new roles.
- **Liaising with guardian/support worker:** where supervisors are concerned about problems that extend beyond volunteering, establishing a working relationship with someone who knows the volunteer well can be very effective.

- **Daily (audio) diaries:** where time constraints mean regular supervisions are not always possible, encouraging volunteers to keep a (audio) diary recording the day's events and associated problems so that they may be discussed at a later date can compensate. It can be useful for volunteers with poor memory retention.
- **Debrief sessions:** often take place where volunteers work a shift-like rota and allows the supervisor to identify problems as soon as they arise.

### **Support for volunteers leaving volunteering**

As already indicated volunteering is used as a means to an end for many disabled volunteers and progression from volunteering should be built into the supervision process. The minimum support might include access to IT facilities to complete application forms and providing references.

### **Supervision of staff**

A disgruntled volunteer supervisor is every organisation's nightmare! Where it impacts on the relationship with a volunteer, it can have a devastating effect.

Word spreads; recruitment becomes difficult; retention a struggle. The knock-on effect is a reduction in certain core services, and in some cases closure. Just as your volunteers need to feel supported, so does your supervisor. This could include:

- **One-to-one supervision:** regular meetings with a line manager will give the supervisor an opportunity to air any concerns about the role and provide time for a self assessment around their ability to carry out all or some of their tasks.
- **Acknowledgment and praise:** good work should be rewarded. It is often the occasional verbal appreciation that can prove the most effective.

**Becky Peates is the Volunteer Co-ordinator at The Positive Place in Deptford, London. The project works with local people living with HIV/AIDS. It provides peer-support, mentoring, courses, workshops, information and advice as well as complimentary therapy for its service users. Support is a core element of the volunteering programme and it is offered on many levels.**

‘Volunteers are involved in all aspects of its work, all the way up to trustee level, and volunteering is viewed as another service we offer to clients, although it is also open to non-disabled people.

Structured supervision is an important part of the project. We offer group and individual sessions. Our group sessions are run every four months, and give volunteers an opportunity to talk about their experiences during the course of their volunteering activity. During these meetings we try and encourage participants to think about ways of resolving any problems or issues.

Some of our voluntary positions involve one-to-one work. Peer support is an example, where we match up someone who has newly diagnosed HIV with a volunteer who has been through the same experience. The role might involve some outreach work in the community and because of the general nature of the role we offer individual supervision.

As part of our support package we also offer training. This will begin during the induction stage and cover health and safety, equal opportunities and confidentiality. Some training is subject to funds but where it is felt a volunteer would benefit from additional training to enable them to fulfil their role we will try to provide this. Training is organised on a quarterly basis and we always welcome suggestions from volunteers about the type of training they need and want.

As the volunteer co-ordinator I always make myself available to volunteers for a chat and in turn they are strongly encouraged to make suggestions on how things can be done better.’

**Support networks for organisations**

Many smaller organisations, interviewed as part of the research project, often felt isolated and 'out of the loop' when it came to accessing information around disabled volunteers. As with volunteers and staff, all organisations need effective support systems. Here are some suggestions:

- **Local volunteering forum:** many regions will have established forums where organisations are able to share ideas, advice and information. If there are none in your area, take the initiative and set one up!
- **Internet forums:** there are many disability-related internet sites where organisations can share their successes and problems on-line.
- **Disability organisations mailing list:** many of the main disability organisations will have newsletters and magazines aimed at practitioners where you can get up-to-date information and advice on a specific impairment.
- **Networking:** attending events and workshops on disability and volunteering will increase your knowledge and confidence in involving disabled volunteers. The volunteering press and websites should have up-to-date listings guides.
- **Funding:** organisations operating on a tight budget are often unable to provide specific equipment to support their volunteers. Some umbrella disability organisations may award grants to organisations involving volunteers with a specific impairment.
- **Contact your local Volunteer Centre:** many local centres run supported schemes that are specifically aimed at disabled people. Part of the service includes providing support to organisations.

### **Evaluation and monitoring your volunteering programme**

Organisations should constantly strive to improve their volunteering schemes by regularly evaluating and monitoring all aspects of their work. The process should include feedback from staff, volunteers and clients. There are a number of ways this can be done, some examples include:

- **Staff/volunteer/client evaluation:** this could be an on-going process whilst the volunteering activity is taking place or after a project has come to an end.
- **Monitoring:** all organisations should monitor disabled volunteer intake in much the same way as for disabled employees.

- **Audits on accessibility:** this should cover recruitment, training and support of volunteers.

The information gathered from the evaluation and monitoring process could then enable your organisation to:

- collect and collate information for funding purposes
- develop and change aspects of your work
- develop new volunteering roles
- identify gaps in recruitment, training and support of volunteers.

(**See also Appendices:** Disability Organisations' Contacts **Resource:** Staff Evaluation form, Volunteer Evaluation Form and Volunteer Monitoring Form).

## Case Study

### **Sally Ivens is the Disability Project Manager at Islington Volunteer Centre, which runs a supported volunteering scheme for people with disabilities. Providing support to local organisations is an essential part of their work.**

'Islington Volunteer Centre provides a range of support to help organisations benefit from the skills and talents that disabled volunteers have to offer. We work with organisations to help them identify and, wherever possible, dismantle barriers that could prevent disabled people from volunteering effectively.

Attitudinal barriers can be key. If staff lack knowledge and understanding of disability issues, this can lead to some reluctance to involve disabled volunteers effectively. Since many volunteers have hidden impairments, support needs are not always identified or met by volunteer-using organisations.

This can cause problems for all parties. We encourage staff to ask *all* potential volunteers about support needs, in the context of being committed to equal opportunities and being committed to making reasonable adjustments to volunteering practices wherever possible.

Volunteers will be much more likely to want to discuss support issues if they are asked about possible needs in a supportive way and in an equal opportunities context. If any needs are identified and acted upon at an early stage, volunteers should feel better supported, and this should lead to increased volunteer satisfaction and retention and a better experience for all concerned.

Staff may lack confidence, worry about asking about support needs, feel concerned about using language that may not be appropriate, saying something that may cause offence. At Islington Volunteer Centre we inform organisations of local disability equality training providers and encourage staff and co-volunteers to attend training wherever possible. We also provide information on disability etiquette and language so that staff feel better able to work with disabled volunteers with confidence and professionalism.

Communication can be another key barrier. We know that volunteer-related information must “speak” to disabled people as potential volunteers, so we review organisations’ recruitment materials and literature and encourage the use of positive messages that will attract disabled volunteers.

We suggest that organisations use images of disabled volunteers, make positive statements about equal opportunities and reasonable adjustments for disabled volunteers and offer support during any recruitment or selection process (eg help completing application forms, advertising the possibility of making information available in other formats on request).

Many organisations committed to equal opportunities do these things already but by not communicating this, they may unintentionally create a barrier which could prevent disabled people from applying to volunteer.

Advertising only a telephone number can be a communication barrier for Deaf volunteers or people with speech difficulties, so we always recommended that a minicom number, fax, email be advertised on all volunteer-related information.

The use of overly complicated English can be a communication barrier for people with a learning disability (not to mention people whose first language isn’t English), so we advise the use of plain English in communications.

Environmental barriers can be a problem for potential volunteers with mobility difficulties. Organisations are usually very keen to improve physical access, particularly in the light of changes to the Disability Discrimination Act. We provide information on access auditors and on simple changes that can be made to improve access.

Many changes are low cost, particularly if refurbishment of premises is taking place anyway. We encourage organisations to include adaptations in any funding applications. We recommend that organisations provide information on physical access/facilities as well as a map (directions) in any volunteer-related information given to potential volunteers.

Within all organisations, policies, processes and procedures may present unintentional barriers to disabled peoples’ access. We recommend that wherever possible, institutional barriers are dismantled through consulting with disabled volunteers, staff and organisations of and for disabled people.

We encourage organisations to think as flexibly as possible. All volunteers have needs, whether they relate to childcare, other caring responsibilities or individual access or support needs. A positive attitude and flexible approach from staff is often what is needed most to enable an effective voluntary placement for all concerned.’

**Retention of volunteers**

Some organisations will be familiar with the scenario of the seemingly 'happy' volunteer who one day fails to turn up as planned. All attempts by the volunteer manager to contact prove fruitless. This is swiftly followed by a realisation that the volunteer has probably left for good. So begins the long, often frustrating recruitment process.

More often than not when a volunteer feels unsupported and undervalued they tend to speak with their feet!

The retention of volunteers can be a major headache for volunteering managers. Often the success of a volunteering programme is measured by the length of time a volunteer remains 'in service.' Many of the volunteers interviewed as part of the project had donated their time for an average of two years. Some as many as ten years! The lesson here is that organisations that cultivate a culture of support are often repaid both in duration and quality of service.

**Here are some suggestions, highlighted in the project, of ways you can maintain a healthy retention rate:**

- **Volunteer involvement:** this could be in the creation of new and accessible volunteering opportunities and the decision making process (volunteer ideas and suggestions should be seen to be implemented, so that it is not seen as a merely an exercise!).
- **Maintaining open channels of communication:** where problems arise this can be dealt with quickly and efficiently.
- **Providing volunteering roles that can lead to future employment.**
- **Celebrating the presence of volunteers within the organisation:** this might be through setting up a newsletter or having an annual event built into the organisation's calendar.
- **Social activities:** this should be aimed at both volunteers and staff. Attention should be paid to the accessibility of any planned activity.
- **Flexible hours:** allowing 'time out' of volunteering can be important for some volunteers, and could form the ethos of your volunteering programme.
- **Compulsory disability-related training:** understanding the barriers faced by disabled volunteers will help your organisation deal more competently with issues as they arise. This will engender confidence amongst disabled volunteers and encourage them to stay longer.

**Disabled people involved in meaningful voluntary roles can make a difference to retention rates. Veronica Chambers is a Volunteer Coordinator with CSV Media where disabled volunteers have both a vocal and visual presence.**

'CSV Media is part of the national charity Community Service Volunteers which provides work based training in media and ICT skills to improve employability and increase diversity in the media. The CSV Media Clubhouse® in Ipswich is a digital multimedia centre combined with music and community arts facilities.

CSV Media Clubhouse® provides opportunities to members with disabilities through various media. Our radio station has a presenter with visual impairment. Through specialised training and support he is able to run a show weekly without assistance.

We run an in-house group called Feas-Ability to help ensure that the building develops as a model of access for all. One of our key volunteers who launched the Feas-Ability project has cerebral palsy and actively contributes to the day to day running of the building, by helping with administration and being our in-house photographer. His work has been displayed throughout galleries in Ipswich.

We have three regular volunteers who have hearing impairments; two who can only sign in Farsi, but due to our free webcam service they can sign to their friends and family back home. They have also been able to start learning British Sign Language through a British Sign Language website. Since using this service, they have been able to start conversing with a third member who signs in English, as well as being able to understand the written word.

The summer 2004 saw the launch of No Limits, a website for disabled young people in Suffolk. To help with the launch, CSV Media and No Limits shared a stage at Music In The Park, an annual music festival in Ipswich. Members of CSV Media Clubhouse volunteered at the event.

We actively encourage all our members to take an active part in their community and by working with people with disabilities we are able to reach out to even more groups.'

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **How do we support a volunteer with multiple impairments?**

Most people with multiple disabilities can self manage their impairments and therefore not need significantly higher support than if they had one impairment. If you have a specific volunteering opportunity in mind for the volunteer, you need to look at the skills required for that role. Establish exactly what the needs of the volunteer are and put together a support package to enable them to carry out the role competently. If you still need more guidance you could contact a relevant disability organisation with specialist knowledge.

You could also purchase Skill's publication **Disability Equality Volunteering**. Visit Skill's website [www.skill.org.uk](http://www.skill.org.uk) to purchase online.

### **How can I work successfully with volunteers with mental health illness?**

Like all disabilities, mental health illness can affect people in different ways. Therefore it is very important that volunteers are treated as an individual. Some people will find that the effects of their medication limits their volunteering to certain times in the day, and others may need periods away from volunteering. As with all your volunteers it is important to build a relationship with them and discuss how their mental health impacts on their role (ie what environments or tasks do they find stressful). Alternatively you could contact an organisation that specialises in mental health illness.

### **Where can I get training to support disabled volunteers?**

There are many organisations that provide training for the voluntary sector at differing costs. Your local Volunteer Centre and Council for Voluntary Services provide low cost training on working with volunteers in general, which tend to cover disabled people. (See appendices for other organisations that run training for voluntary organisations).

### **Where can I access a BSL interpreter for a volunteer asylum seeker?**

There are many agencies you can contact to book communication support workers, including CACDP, RNID, British Deaf Association. They should be able to provide you with a list of approved interpreters.

**Resource:** Volunteer Agreement 1

Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities

**Volunteer Agreement**

This agreement is intended to show the commitment we have to our volunteers. We want you to know that we

- appreciate the offer of your time, energy and skills
- will do the very best we can to make your volunteer experience here at Skill a productive, rewarding and enjoyable one.

**While you are volunteering at Skill, we will:**

- 1 Pay your travel and lunch expenses on a daily basis.
- 2 Provide you, to the best of our ability, with any equipment or training required for you to perform the tasks we ask of you.
- 3 Provide continual support and supervision and give you feedback on a regular basis.
- 4 Treat you with respect as an individual in accordance with our Equal Opportunities Policy.
- 5 Be receptive to any comments you make about your experience of volunteering with us.
- 6 Value your contribution to the organisation.
- 7 Adhere to the guidelines as laid out in the Volunteer Handbook.

Signed by Staff member ..... Date .....

**While you are volunteering with us, we ask you to:**

- 1 Perform your agreed duties, which are outlined overleaf, to the best of your abilities.
- 2 To come to us at the dates and times that have been agreed, and let us know as soon as possible if you are unable to come.
- 3 Adhere to the guidelines as laid out in the Volunteer Handbook.

**I understand:**

- the Volunteer Handbook and the above Agreement
- that I can refuse any tasks I do not want to do
- that I can stop volunteering at any time, but I will give as much notice as possible when I do this.

Signed by Volunteer ..... Date .....

**Resource:** Volunteer Agreement 2

Your role as a volunteer is .....

The ..... commits to the following:

- To provide thorough induction on the work of the ....., its staff, your volunteering role and the induction and/or training you need to meet the responsibilities of this role.
- 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 your volunteering role with us.
- To repay expenses as follows: travel to and from home to ..... and during your work using agreed modes of transport and to an agreed limit.
- To provide adequate training and feedback in support of providing a safe working environment.
- To provide adequate insurance cover for volunteers whilst undertaking voluntary work approved and authorised by us.
- To ensure that all volunteers are dealt with on a fair and equal basis.
- To try to resolve fairly any problems, grievances and difficulties you may have while you volunteer with us.

..... will be responsible for the support and supervision of volunteers.

I, ..... agree:

- To help ..... fulfil its aims.
- To perform my volunteering role to the best of my 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 time commitment and standards agreed to except in exceptional circumstances, and to give reasonable notice so other arrangements can be made.
- To provide referees as agreed who may be contacted, and to agree to a police check being carried out where necessary.

My agreed voluntary time commitment is:

Signed ..... Date .....

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 intends any employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future.

***This Volunteer Agreement is printed with the kind permission of the Volunteer Centre Croydon.***

**Resource:** Sample Specified Risk Assessment Form

**SPECIFIED RISK ASSESSMENT**

Date Assessed		Assessor		Assessment No.		Actioned		Monitored			
Event		Name		Activity		Inclusive Dates		Control Measures			
		Title									
		Signature									
Area Location		Person at Risk		WORST CASE OUTCOME		PROBABILITY RATING		Control Measures			
Hazard Identified				HIGH – Certain to cause death		4		Probably		4	
				MEDIUM – Probable to cause serious injury		3		Possibly		3	
				LOW – Possible to cause first aid injury		2		Unlikely		2	
				VERY LOW – Unlikely to cause injury/damage		1		Remotely		1	
				WORST CASE OUTCOME		0		PROBABILITY RATING		0	
Hazard Identified		Person at Risk		WORST CASE OUTCOME		PROBABILITY RATING		Control Measures			
				HIGH – Certain to cause death		4		Probably		4	
				MEDIUM – Probable to cause serious injury		3		Possibly		3	
				LOW – Possible to cause first aid injury		2		Unlikely		2	
				VERY LOW – Unlikely to cause injury/damage		1		Remotely		1	
				WORST CASE OUTCOME		0		PROBABILITY RATING		0	
Hazard Identified		Person at Risk		WORST CASE OUTCOME		PROBABILITY RATING		Control Measures			
				HIGH – Certain to cause death		4		Probably		4	
				MEDIUM – Probable to cause serious injury		3		Possibly		3	
				LOW – Possible to cause first aid injury		2		Unlikely		2	
				VERY LOW – Unlikely to cause injury/damage		1		Remotely		1	
				WORST CASE OUTCOME		0		PROBABILITY RATING		0	

**RETURN TO:**

**DEADLINE:**



**Resource:** Staff Evaluation Form

### STAFF EVALUATION OF VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

**As part of our commitment to develop a volunteering programme that benefits our volunteers, staff and the organisation as a whole, we would like you to complete this short questionnaire to help us evaluate their current involvement.**  
(Please contact the Volunteer Policy Officer if you require this form in an alternative format.)

1 Do you have any direct/indirect contact with any of the volunteers currently involved in the organisation?

Yes/No

If the answer is **no** please go to question 3

If the answer is **yes**, in what capacity?

2 What positive/negative impact do you feel having volunteers has made to the way you work?

3 What positive/negative impact do you feel having volunteers has made to the organisation's work as a whole?

4 If you have identified any negative impacts in either question 2 or 3, how can these be resolved ie through staff training or extra support?

5 What can we do to develop the quality of the roles that we currently offer volunteers?

6. Are there any roles that volunteers currently carry out you feel they should not do?

7 What additional roles would you like to see volunteers take on that they do not presently perform in the organisation?

8 How can we enhance the overall volunteering experience of volunteers at the organisation?

9 Are there any (other) comments you would like to make about the involvement of volunteers within the organisations?

Thank you for your co-operation

Please return this questionnaire to the Volunteer Policy Officer

**Resource:** Volunteer Evaluation Form

**VOLUNTEER EVALUATION OF VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMME**

**As part of our commitment to developing a volunteering programme that benefits all our volunteers we would like you to complete this short questionnaire to help us evaluate our current programme. Most of the questions are multiple choice, tick the answer that most applies to you. (If you require this form in an alternative format please contact the Volunteer Policy Officer.)**

1. How long have you been volunteering at Skill?.....

2. Can you describe your volunteering role (or title)?

3. Is the role you currently carry out at Skill:

- a. The same as when you first started volunteering at Skill
- b. A slightly different role from the one you first started volunteering at Skill
- c. A completely different role from the one you first started at Skill.

Other .....

4. If your answer to question 3 was **a.** are you still carrying out the same role because:

- a. It is what you enjoy doing
- b. There is no other role available
- c. You haven't been asked whether I want to move to another role
- d. You agreed to do it for a set period as part of your volunteer agreement

Other .....

5. If your answer to question 3 was either **b.** or **c.** is the change in your role because:

- a. You did not like (some parts) your previous role
- b. There was no staff available to supervise you in your previous role
- c. It came about as part of my volunteer agreement / review

Other .....

6. Are you performing a role that is relevant to any plans you have for the future ie education, training, employment? Yes/No

If your answer to question 6 is **no** is this because:

- a. You have no immediate plans for the future

Other .....

7. How would you describe the supervision here at Skill?

- a. Very good
- b. Good
- c. Could be better (go to question 8)
- d. I have not received any supervision (go to question 9)

8. If your answer to question 7 was '**could be better**' how could supervision be made better?

9. If your answer to question 7 was '**I have not received any supervision**' is this because:

- a. There has been no staff available to do your supervision
- b. You haven't been asked to attend supervision
- c. There has been no need for supervision as yet

Other .....

10. How would you describe the training that you have received here at Skill

- a. Very good
- b. Good
- c. Could be better
- d. I have not received any training

- 11.If you have a disability, have all your additional needs been met? (Please tick against the right response).
- a. Very well met
  - b. Adequately met
  - c. Not met

If your needs have not been met or adequately met what can we do to best meet them?

12.Are there any other comments you would like to make about the organisations volunteering programme?

Name of Volunteer (You do not have to add your name) .....

Thank you very much for completing the questionnaire

Please return this questionnaire to the Volunteer Policy Officer

# Not More Paperwork?!

## Preparing Policies and Procedures

### Introduction

**There are some managers who draw enormous comfort from having guidelines around every aspect of the volunteering activity. Certainly the sight of an office shelf straining under policy files may give an impression of industry but is not necessarily an indication of efficiency! This approach is set alongside those practitioners who despair against what is often perceived as intrusive paperwork. As one irate staff member remarked 'How can you expect to get anything done, if you have to refer to a written rule every time you need to make a decision!' What maybe all things to one person can be a bane to another but where policies and procedures are concerned there is no get-out clause!**

The main purposes of policies and procedures are to:

- Comply with existing or new legislation and European Union Directives
- Develop a consistent approach to work
- Give guidance to staff, volunteers and service users
- Promote work to other organisations

They should also be:

- Open and transparent
- Suited to the culture of the organisation
- Easily understood

- Accessible to all stakeholders
- Practical and enforceable
- Flexible

This section provides you with information about the policies and procedures that your organisation should have in place by law and those as a matter of good practice. It offers useful guidelines on how to prepare your essential policies, including a volunteer policy. There are also some examples of active policies included in the resource section.

## Insurance

It is within every organisation's interest to ensure that all their volunteers are covered under their insurance policy, as failure to do so could prove very costly. It is not enough to assume that volunteers are covered in your policy.

Any work 'authorised' or sanctioned by the organisation which results in damage to property or an injury caused by or to the volunteer could still result in liability even if all 'reasonable care' to reduce the risk had been taken.

There are a number of policies that an organisation might decide to take out. It is important that the insurance company is informed of the types of activity the volunteers will be carrying out and where. This should help you decide on the most appropriate type(s) of cover(s) you need.

### Here are examples of some insurance policies:

- **Public Liability Insurance:** protects the organisation against claims by the public for incidents involving death, illness, loss, injury or accident caused as a result of the organisation's negligence, and is also known as third party insurance.
- **Employer's Liability Insurance:** covers volunteers against accidents, disease or injury caused or made worse whilst carrying out volunteering activities or through the organisation's negligence.
- **Professional Liability Insurance:** protects organisations and individuals against claims for damages to anyone who has suffered as a result of inadequate or wrong advice. This is also known as professional indemnity, errors and omissions or malpractice.
- **Personal Accident Insurance:** provides payments to **named parties**, (which could include volunteers), in the event of injury or death whilst in the course of carrying out authorised work regardless of the organisation's legal activity. Some policies may exclude certain high risk activities. This policy is generally taken out as an option to the main policy cover.

Volunteering projects that involve volunteer drivers must ensure that there is appropriate coverage.

- **Motor Insurance:** all drivers should have insurance covering their liability for injury to another person(s). This includes passengers, animals or damage to property or other vehicles. Regardless of whether the vehicle driven is owned by the organisation or the driver, both will be responsible for providing their respective insurance cover.
- **Contingent Motor Insurance:** protects the organisation against a volunteer driver should they, for example, be involved in a road accident during the course of authorised voluntary work whilst driving their own vehicle.

### Health and Safety

All organisations have legal and ethical obligations towards their volunteers to ensure that they are not put in a situation that could place a risk to their health or safety. The core components of any health and safety policy are:

- **Duty of Care:** applies to all organisations regardless of size and income whether it has paid or unpaid staff. No person is placed at risk to personal injury. This 'duty of care' could cover activities such as, sponsored runs; loaning out equipment; social functions; or organising day trips.
- **Health and Safety Policy:** the **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974** requires organisations (with more than five employees) to put in writing a health and safety policy that explains how it intends to protect paid staff from risk. As 'persons not in their employ' (HSW Section 3), the Act does cover volunteers.
- **Risk Assessments:** the **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992** places a 'duty' on all organisations to carry out risk assessments around the activities it carries out in and around the working environment. It also requires that all health and safety policy training is clear and easily understood.
- **First Aid:** under the **Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981** employers have a 'duty' to carry out a first aid assessment and to make sure there is an adequate level of first aid provision in the workplace. The minimum standard of first aid is at least one first aid box, and an appointed person (with basic knowledge of first aid).

**NB** Voluntary organisations with no employees do not have to perform a first

aid assessment by law but it is good practice to do so.

- **Fire Assessments:** all organisations must by law (**Registration of Premises**) register with the local Fire Authority, Health and Safety Executive or local Environment Health Department.
- **The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulation 1994 (COSHH):** requires employers to assess the risk of substances hazardous to health.

**NB** Voluntary organisations with no employees do not by law have to perform a COSHH assessment but it is good practice to do so.

- **Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992:** covers the control of working practices around use of display screens such as computer screens. It sets out guidelines on work stations and how often breaks should be taken.
- **Manual Handling Operations Regulation 1992:** places a duty on organisations to provide specific training and guidance to people who perform manual handling as part of their work.
- **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995:** requires organisations to inform the authorities of any accidents which results in hospitalisation and applies equally to staff and volunteers.

**(See also Resource:** Health and Safety Policy and Health and Safety Template).

### Criminal Record Checks

As an organisation you can request criminal checks on any person aged 18 years and over who engage in unpaid work. Where the activity involves children or vulnerable adults you have a legal duty to carry out criminal records checks on anyone before they can carry out paid or unpaid work with vulnerable adults (under **The Police Act 1997 (Enhanced Criminal Records Certificates)** and children (under **The Protection of Children Act 1999**).

#### Definitions:

- **Vulnerable Adult:** a person aged 18 and over with a substantial learning or physical disability, a physical or mental illness, a substantial deterioration in physical or mental capacity due to advanced age, it also includes people addicted to drugs and alcohol. (**The Police Act 1997 Protection of Vulnerable Adults Regulation 2002**).
- **Children:** a person under the age of 18 years. (**The Children Act 1989**)
- **Volunteer:** 'a person engaged in an activity which involves spending time, unpaid (except for travel and other approved out-of-pocket expenses), doing something which aims to benefit some third party other than in addition to a close relative.' (**The Police Act 1997 Regulations 2002**)

All criminal records checks are carried out by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and are free of charge for all volunteers. They only cover the period from when the application is made, so it is important that you have other checks and balances to ensure that your 'duty of care' to clients, staff and volunteers is met.

There are three levels of checks:

- **Enhanced Disclosure:** this is required for volunteers expected to have substantial contact with children or vulnerable adults. It might include someone in a supervisory role or who has sole charge of the client group. The disclosure will include:
  - All 'spent' convictions protected under the **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**, which enables some criminal convictions to become 'spent', or ignored, after a 'rehabilitation period';
  - All cautions, reprimands and warnings;
  - Details of inclusion on the Protection of Children Act list (POCA) and the Protection of Vulnerable Adults list (POVA); these are kept by the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Health, respectively.
- **Standard Disclosure (also called a criminal records certificate):** this covers activity involving regular contact with children or vulnerable adults and those in positions where trust is paramount, such as those of a financial nature. The disclosure will also include information under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- **Basic Disclosure (to be introduced):** any member of the general public will be able to apply for these checks, which will be issued directly to the individual. They are expected to reveal all 'unspent' convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

**Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults**

If your organisation involves volunteers working with children, young people or vulnerable adults you should have policy guidelines in place in line with your legal duty to carry out criminal record checks. A good policy document should protect your client group, staff, and the volunteer (particularly if they are disabled, they may also be vulnerable). As a matter of good practice organisations need to acquaint themselves with the basic legislative framework and existing good practice guidelines.

**The Children Act 1989**

This Act provides the legal framework for the protection of children in the UK under the age of 18 years of age. It identifies four main categories of abuse, these are physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse,

**Safe from Harm (Home Office Code of Practice 1993)**

This sets out the principles and guidelines for safeguarding the welfare of children under the age of sixteen years in voluntary organisations in England and Wales. It details good management policies and practice in order to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children whilst in the care of the organisation. The code does not impose any new statutory duty but reinforces existing legislation and sets out key principles to help voluntary organisations to best fulfil their 'duty of care' for children and young people of whom they are responsible for.

**Working together to Safeguard Children 1999**

This is a government guidance document, which sets out how all agencies and professionals should work together to promote children's welfare and protect them from abuse and neglect.

**(See also: Criminal Records and Resources** Child Protection Policy and template for Child and Vulnerable Adult Policy).

### Data Protection

The recruitment process of almost all organisations will involve some form of information gathering about volunteers. This could range from basic contact details to more sensitive data such as criminal records or disabilities.

The purpose of the Data Protection Act (DPA) is to protect the rights of the individual against whom information is kept and not that of the organisation. It requires the organisation to take appropriate security measures against unauthorised access, alteration, disclosure, destruction, or accidental loss and applies to both computerised and manual files.

Any data your organisation collects should comply with the eight principles upon which the DPA is based. These are that data should be:

- accurate
  - secure
  - fairly and lawfully processed
  - processed for limited purposes
  - adequate, relevant and not excessive
  - not kept longer than necessary
  - processed in accordance with the data subjects rights
- not transferred to other countries without adequate protection.

Any breach of the law can result in a fine of up to £5,000.

Your policy may cover both staff and volunteers but where the latter is concerned it might be useful to include a short paragraph about their specific protection as reassurance. This could read something like:

*'Only information relevant to your participation as a volunteer is important to us. This includes the personal details supplied on your application form and the name of someone we can contact in case of an emergency. Should we need to collect additional information at a later stage, this will be treated in the same way as other personal data. Where we need to pass your details onto a third party ie for training purposes, this will not be done without your consent. Once your time with us has come to an end any information will be destroyed.'*

A sentence like this would be particularly useful to a volunteer with mental health illness or someone living with HIV.

**Equal Opportunities**

There are five pieces of legislation that you should include as part of your Equal Opportunities Policy as matter of good practice, these are:

- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

Essentially your organisation should ensure that no potential volunteer is excluded and therefore the scope of your EOP could

extend to several other categories. This could include age, marital status or any other criteria that you feel is relevant.

Some organisations find it useful to have a separate EOP for their volunteers so that there is a clear demarcation between paid staff and voluntary workers. The aims of either policy should be the same.

Importantly it must have a mechanism for resolving any issues that may arise.

**(See also Resource:** Equal Opportunities Policy).

### Why a volunteer policy?

The volunteer policy is not a legal requirement but a document of good practice. It provides overall guidance and direction to staff, volunteers and service users about how and why volunteers are to be involved in your organisation. Your volunteer policy:

- prevents decisions being made on an ad hoc basis so ensures fair and equal treatment of volunteers
- clarifies boundaries between staff and volunteers
- clarifies what is expected of volunteers and what volunteers can expect of your organisation.

The involvement of volunteers will probably have an impact on the whole of your organisation so it is important that everyone from the direct staff team to committee members, service users to existing volunteers are all consulted during the preparation of any new or revised policy. Your organisation will need to ask itself two questions.

- Why do we want to involve volunteers?
- How will we involve them in the organisation?

There is no set structure to a volunteer policy. Each organisation has a different set of dynamics and your policy should reflect this. It should however include some basic components:

### The introduction

Which should:

- give an overview of your organisation's work and mission statement (statement of intent)
- set out why you have sought to involve volunteers
- outline the aims and objectives of the policy.

### Volunteering opportunities

This should:

- define briefly the volunteering roles available
- set out the criteria for potential volunteers. For example, will you consider young people under 16?

### Recruitment Process

This section should detail how you intend to recruit your volunteers and should highlight your commitment to including any diverse groups within your community ie disabled people, refugee and asylum seekers or BME. You could also explain how you aim to make accessible, to all (and specific) volunteers, each stage of the recruitment process. These areas should include:

- advertising
- application process
- selection process
- references
- additional support.

**(See also: Section Two - Recruitment).**

### Criminal Records

If the volunteering activity involves work with children or vulnerable adults, your organisation has a legal duty to carry out criminal records checks on any person age 18 or over. There is no law against compulsory screening under any other circumstances. However you may need to make clear policy decisions on:

- why you are making the checks
- whether checks will be for all or certain roles
- whether volunteers who cannot sign the disclosure form such as physically disabled people will be exempt
- how volunteers with a criminal record will be treated
- what other additional checks you will make to ensure all volunteers are suitable for their roles.

**(See also: Criminal Records).**

**Expenses**

It is reasonable for volunteers to expect 'out of pocket' expenses such as travel or meals and most organisations will have budgeted for this. Many people would be unable to volunteer without this form of reimbursement.

**Induction and training**

Information about how volunteers will be initiated into their roles and the organisation as a whole is important. You may wish to highlight specific aspects such as:

- trial period
- volunteer agreement
- volunteer policy
- type of training in addition to Disability Awareness and Disability Equality Training (compulsory).

**(See also: Section Three - Support Strategies).**

**Support and Supervision**

Every volunteer needs or appreciates support into and during the volunteering experience and you will need to describe how this will be achieved. This might be through:

- regular reviews
- supervision
- volunteer feedback
- support in progression from volunteering.

**(See also: Section Three - Support Strategies).**

**Health and Safety**

All organisations have a 'duty of care' to ensure the health and safety of volunteers, as with paid staff, is not put at risk. This is a basic requirement of any policy.

**(See also: Health and Safety and Resource Health and Safety Policy)**

**Equal Opportunities**

As a matter of good practice any equal opportunities policy should apply to volunteers in the same way it applies to paid staff and a statement to this effect should be included in your policy.

**(See also: Equal Opportunities and Resource Equal Opportunities Policy).**

**Data Protection**

Personal details about the volunteer needs to be respected in much the same way as paid staff, and this needs to be made explicit in your policy.

**(See also: Data Protection).**

**Insurance**

Your 'duty of care' to volunteers should extend to having appropriate insurance protection that covers all volunteering activities, both on and off site.

**(See also: Insurance).**

**Grievance and disciplinary procedures**

Most organisations will probably have grievance and disciplinary procedures for paid staff. Separate procedures should be prepared for volunteers and employees as the status of both are entirely different - one is contractual with legal rights, the other voluntary with limited legal coverage. Clear examples of what constitutes a disciplinary offence or grievance should be shown and the steps in which you intend to take to resolve any issues.

This section of your policy may also include a statement on **Harassment**. You could adopt the definition provided under The Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

**(See also: Section One Disability Discrimination Act).**

## Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be explained in relation to the nature of the work you do in your organisation so that it becomes real. You need to set out what will happen if the confidentiality is breached.

**(See also: Resource Confidentiality Policy)**

## Code of Conduct

Sets out the standard of behaviour you expect all volunteers to uphold and could cover extending respect towards volunteers and staff to use of stationary and office equipment.

## IT Protection

As information technology becomes a feature of most organisations work you may want to include this as part of your policy document. Things you will need to consider include:

- how the email and internet system may be used and the restrictions
- what personal use of the email and internet system will be allowed and what will not
- what information will be considered offensive/and or unacceptable for email transmission
- what internet access will be considered offensive/and or unacceptable
- if email monitoring is to take place, when and why **[You should be aware that volunteers are entitled to a copy of any information about them gathered through any form of monitoring]**
- how information obtained from email monitoring will be stored and used
- how long email records are retained and the reasons for the retention of those records
- what sanctions you will impose if volunteers breach the policy.

## Accessibility

It is important that your policy is accessible to all potential volunteers. You need to ensure that it meets certain standards. Visit the Web Accessibility Initiative Website at [www.w3.org/WAI](http://www.w3.org/WAI)

**Frequently Asked Questions****How often should our volunteer policy be updated?**

A volunteer policy should be reviewed regularly. This might mean bi-annually for some projects and, for others, once a year. The main thing is it should take into account the changing circumstances of your project and reflect good practice development within the field of volunteering.

**We have recently decided to carry out criminal records checks on all our volunteers. How do we approach the question at interviews?**

You need to be honest about why you want to carry out checks.

Here are two ways you could approach the subject, firstly:

‘Your role as a volunteer may involve coming into contact with vulnerable adults (children) and because of this we have to carry out criminal record checks on all our volunteers by law...A criminal record shouldn’t automatically stop you from becoming a volunteer with our organisation...’

Is there anything you wish to tell us in advance that might affect you coming into contact with our client group...?’

You will need to complete a Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure Form, which we can help you complete if you want?’

Secondly,

‘Have any concerns or complaints ever been raised with you by anyone about the way in which you have carried out your work with service users in any working environment?’

If the answer is “Yes”:

“What were these concerns?”

And: “How were they resolved?”’

If issues of concern are raised, they may not automatically disqualify the applicant from appointment. However, any allegation of any form of abuse must be a cause for extreme concern and must be thoroughly checked with the relevant employing organisation.

(This is a compulsory interview question used by Scope.)

**We have just put together our first volunteering policy. Where can I go to get it checked?**

Volunteering England provides a policy review service. **(See Appendices: Volunteering Contacts)**

**Resource: Sample Health and Safety Policy of the Volunteer Centre Croydon**

## Sample Health and Safety Policy and Procedures

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, management committee members, users, and the general public.

### The Policy

This policy has been drawn up in response to and in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

The Executive Committee of *The Organisation* is aware that it has a responsibility to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to provide and maintain working conditions which are safe, healthy and comply with all statutory requirements and codes of practice for all staff, volunteers, management committee, users and the general public.

*The Organisation* will, so far as is reasonably practicable, pay particular attention to:

1. The provision and maintenance of equipment and systems of work that are safe and healthy
2. Involving and motivating staff and volunteers in health and safety matters
3. Controlling situations which may threaten life, health or property
4. The maintenance of a working environment that is safe, without risks to health and provides adequate facilities and arrangements for welfare at work

### The Procedure

1. The Executive Committee is responsible for safety in *The Organisation* and will monitor the policy; it will be reviewed annually. The

Executive Committee will ensure that sufficient resources are available to provide any health and safety equipment, personal protective equipment, training where appropriate in manual handling, and the provision of eye tests for those who habitually use display screen equipment. Information and training for staff and volunteers will be provided, as far as is reasonably practicable, to achieve and maintain a high standard of safety.

2. The safety officer is the Director whose responsibilities cover maintenance of safety records; investigation of accidents; providing accident statistics; and keeping a watching brief on changing safety legislation. He or she reports directly to the Executive Committee. The safety officer, with a view to prevention of future occurrences, will carry out full investigations of accidents.
3. The *Director/Line Manager* has responsibility to provide leadership and to promote responsible attitudes towards health and safety. *Managers* will ensure that all staff and volunteers are given induction training into health and safety procedures. All new staff and volunteers will be shown the location of first aid boxes, fire exit doors, and fire fighting equipment. Managers will ensure good housekeeping standards. They will review periodically all new and existing equipment with reference to mechanical and operational safety, and carry out regular safety checks and audits.

4. All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to do everything they can to prevent injury to themselves, their colleagues and others affected by their actions or omissions at work. They are expected to follow *The Organisation* procedures in particular, to report any incidents that have or may have led to injury or damage. All staff and volunteers should ensure that they use any equipment provided in accordance with training that they have received. They should report any serious or imminent danger and any shortcomings that they see in the protection arrangements, to their manager.

### **Accidents**

In the event of an accident all staff and volunteers must report full details to their *line manager*. Accidents will be reported to the inspecting authority as and when necessary. The line manager and safety officer will investigate all accidents. The safety officer will ensure that necessary action is taken to prevent recurrence.

### **First Aid**

During induction all staff and volunteers will be shown the location of the nearest First Aid box. First Aid boxes will be placed in appropriate places and clearly signposted. First Aid Training will be provided for named staff on an annual basis. Names of first Aiders will be posted on notice boards.

### **Fire**

Fire exits must be kept clear from obstruction. Fire doors must be kept shut at all times. Fire regulations are displayed in working areas.

### **Electrical Equipment**

Electrical equipment is normally safe,

provided it is properly installed and regularly inspected. Remember that water and liquids are conductors of electricity and their associations with faults caused by, for example, damaged cables, flexes, plugs and sockets, the overloading of circuits and fuses would make the shock more severe. Therefore:

**Never** touch electrical equipment with wet hands; or move any portable equipment without disconnecting it from the mains; or make electrical repairs or do other electrical work unless authorisation has been given.

**Keep** electrical supply cables and flexes away from wet areas, or from where they will be damaged.

**Always** switch off all equipment when not required, unless continuous operation is necessary. All defective equipment must be reported. A qualified electrician will check all electrical equipment annually.

### **Risk Assessments**

Risk Assessments are carried out annually in order to remove hazards or minimise the risk to an acceptable level.

### **VDU users**

An assessment will be made of each workstation to ensure that there is adequate light, seating, screen protection, foot rests and support for typing.

### **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)**

Hazardous substances will be identified and, if possible safer alternatives will be found. If this is not possible, then substances will be labelled and stored safely.

**Manual Handling**

1. Do not lift objects which pose undue strain
2. Always check the load before moving it
3. Avoid the need for handling wherever possible
4. Always use appropriate aids
5. Do not attempt to lift alone if two people are more appropriate

Training will be provided for staff and volunteers.

**Monitoring and Reviewing**

*The Organisation* is committed to ensuring safe working conditions for all staff and volunteers. *The Safety Officer* is responsible for monitoring these procedures on a regular bases and the Executive Committee will review this policy annually.

***This sample Health and Safety Policy and Procedures was printed with the kind permission of the Volunteer Centre Croydon.***

**Resource: Equal Opportunities Policy of the Youth Justice Board**

## Equal opportunities

### **Introduction**

Projects must commit to the principle of equality of opportunity, both in its capacity as an employer and as a provider of services to others. The project should promote equality of opportunity and make all efforts to prevent discrimination or other unfair treatment against any of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependents, age, disability or offending background. Projects must be opposed to discriminatory attitudes, and is committed to translating this into all aspects of its everyday work.

Projects should recognise that specific and positive programmes of action are necessary to ensure that the aims of its equal opportunities policy are achieved.

### **Equal Opportunities in Staff Recruitment and Advancement**

The mentoring project should be committed to developing and maintaining working environments and practices that ensure equality of opportunity in both the recruitment and advancement of staff. Discriminatory attitudes of behaviour, whether sexist, racist or of other kinds are unacceptable at any time. Commitment to equal opportunities is a requirement for all staff.

Recruitment procedures should be applied equally to internal and external applicants. The procedures and practices are monitored constantly as a management priority to ensure their proper operation, as laid down in the guidelines. All staff responsible for

recruitment should participate in training to ensure their understanding and implementation of these procedures.

### **Equal Opportunities in the Provision of Services**

The mentoring project should be committed to providing services which are relevant, attractive and accessible to all those who might wish to use them. Staff are required to be fully aware of their responsibilities in this respect and to ensure that systems of recruitment or referral to a service does not operate to exclude or discourage participation, and that our initiatives and projects are welcoming and attractive to all potential participants.

These aims should be a priority in the provision of staff training and the allocation of resources.

Where protection of vulnerable individuals is concerned if, as a result of a police check, a potential volunteer is indicated to be unsuitable, the organisation should decline the services of that volunteer, irrespective of the above statements. Should the check have later been found to be incorrect, the organisation should reconsider using the volunteer should they still wish to be involved

Monitoring of all services is to be carried out in order to identify any inequalities in content or participation, and to determine the steps needed to rectify them. This includes attention to publicity, environment, referral processes and the links with outside organisations and individuals involved in the

provision of services. Every effort is made to ensure that, in maintaining these links, our policies and priorities are not compromised.

### **Responsibilities for the Equal Opportunities Policy**

The Equal Opportunities Policy is the responsibility of every member of staff. Its application is also required from people who work with a mentoring project in providing the work that the project does, and it cannot be modified or altered by or for any particular part of the organisation. Those who hold management, supervisory or other senior positions in the Organisation have additional and particular responsibilities to ensure the effectiveness of its application and the commitment of all staff and others to it.

### **Equal Opportunities Policy**

It is the responsibility of every member of staff to apply the Equal Opportunities policy. Its application is also required from people who work with a mentoring project. Those who hold management, supervisory or other senior roles within the organisation have additional responsibilities to ensure the effectiveness of the policy and the commitment of all staff to it.

Ethnic monitoring should be carried out during recruitment of staff and reports presented on the composition of staff within the organisation.

Failure to follow the Equal Opportunities Policy should result in disciplinary action.

***This Equal Opportunities Policy was printed with the kind permission of the Youth Justice Board***

**Resource: Equal Opportunities Policy Statement of Skill****Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities****Equal Opportunities: policy statement**

As an organisation seeking to represent the interests of people with disabilities and learning difficulties, Skill recognises the discrimination people can face in society and therefore the need for a full, effective and working equal opportunities policy. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and may include victimisation and harassment. A policy for equal opportunity recognises and values people and their individual characteristics empowering each individual to seek, experience and fulfil their potential.

Skill will therefore seek to promote equality of opportunity and combat all forms of individual and structural discrimination which people face because of:

- disability (whatever its cause or nature)
- ethnic origin, race, colour or nationality
- gender
- marital status
- age
- sexual orientation
- spent criminal convictions
- religious belief or ideology
- homelessness status

In carrying out its work Skill will make reasonable adjustments to address individual needs. In addition, Skill will seek to ensure that:

- when recruiting staff and volunteers people will be assessed against the agreed person specification criteria alone. People with disabilities will be considered as having an additional qualification as it provides direct experience of the circumstances Skill is seeking to help.
- it provides equal opportunities for training, career development and promotion for all employees. Furthermore, employees who become disabled will be considered for rehabilitation facilities, including disability leave, and be retained in suitable employment wherever possible.
- procedures to govern Skill and develop its policies will seek a wide range of representation and involvement, reflecting the experience and concerns of the whole community in all its aspects.
- all its services and activities, including language used in documentation and contact with other bodies, will reflect and promote these equal opportunity policies.
- venues for meetings etc will be chosen with the needs of **all** participants in mind.
- regular reviews and evaluation of the policy and improvements in practice will take place.

The Chair and Chief Executive will be jointly responsible to Skill Council for implementing and reporting on monitoring and evaluation of the policy.

**Resource: Child Protection Policy of the Youth Justice Board**

## Child Protection Policy

1. Child Protection Policy recognises that in the organisation's work with children, the safety and protection of those children is paramount and has priority over all other interests.
2. This Child Protection Policy is informed by the 'Safe From Harm' code of practice (Home Office 1993). We seek to ensure that children are protected and kept safe from harm while they are with staff and volunteers within the organisation.

### Implementation

In order to implement the Policy Statement, the mentoring project must ensure that:

- All staff (full-time, part-time and sessional) and volunteers having access to/working with children have criminal record checks;
- All staff and volunteers having access to/working with children are required to supply references;
- All staff and volunteers having access to/working with children receive training in child protection issues;
- All volunteers are instructed to report the disclosure or discovery of abuse direct to paid staff;
- All staff are informed of local statutory arrangements in respect of the disclosure or discovery of abuse;
- All staff and volunteers are given both supervision and support in their work with children;
- All project premises that children may visit provide a safe environment.
- Projects should commit to review policy and good practice at regular intervals.

Any questions or concerns should be addressed to the member of staff with responsibility for implementing this policy within the project.

### Child Protection - Guidelines for Volunteers & Project staff Purpose

The purpose of child protection is to ensure that appropriate action is taken when a young person up to the age of 18 years is suspected by mentors or workers of being abused, being at risk from parents, guardians, carers, adult visitors to the home and other responsible adults.

Similar action should also be taken in the case of a young person suspected of being abused by another young person, including within a young person's own relationships, abuse between siblings etc.

### Individual roles within the child protection process

Project Managers are responsible for implementing child protection policy locally. Managers have a responsibility to meet regularly with a volunteer/worker dealing with issues of child abuse to provide support and guidance until such time as the incident is resolved or has been passed to Social Services.

In some instances, projects may have a 'Designated Person' who is the day to day contact point for any staff or volunteers who have concerns relating to child protection. The Designated Person (DP) should report on a regular basis to the Project Manager.

The Project Manager and the Child Protection Co-ordinator from Social

Services, where appropriate, have a responsibility to ensure that appropriate referrals are made and to liaise with other agencies. They will seek to involve a volunteer/worker who is supporting a young person in all stages of the procedure, including interviews and case conferences, in accordance with the needs of the young person.

### **Talking with young people**

The volunteer/worker may be the first person the young person has discussed the abuse with. The volunteer/workers response to the young person at this stage is crucial.

It is important to tell the young person that you will do something about it. The young person should be assured that the volunteer/worker would support them in getting information and help to stop the abuse.

Young people rarely lie about abuse, particularly sexual abuse. They may try to conceal the truth in order to protect adults, particularly where they have been told that something awful may happen to those adults if they tell. They may be confused on details like when and where, but the main point of the story is usually accurate. Young people have been known to try to tell adults of their abuse over a long period of time and been disbelieved or fobbed off.

Volunteers/workers should tell the young person that they believe what they have said. It is appropriate to express regret at the abuse – “I’m sorry that this had been/is happening to you.” It is important to emphasise to the young person that they have done nothing wrong; the abuser is at fault. It is also helpful to praise the

young person’s courage in speaking out.

This discussion should take place at the young person’s own pace; they should not be ‘cross-examined’.

Young people may have to relate their experiences to other professionals and it is important that they do not have to do this more than necessary.

### **Confidentiality**

Volunteers/workers should never indicate to a young person that they would keep secrets. A feature of sexual abuse in particular is the secrecy that exists between perpetrator and young person. Volunteers/workers can find themselves pulled into this relationship in a destructive way. Consequently, volunteers/workers should discuss such cases fully with the Project Manager or DP and not work in isolation.

Approaches from young people along the lines of – “if I tell you something you won’t tell anyone else will you?” - should be met with a firm but gentle explanation: “I can’t promise that some things you might tell me I won’t decide to share with someone else. What I can promise is not to do that without you knowing”. Young people may then choose not to tell but usually they are looking for someone to help them to break out of their secret, not join them in it. For young people who do not tell, the volunteer/ worker should make sure the young person knows of organisations that may operate in confidence (eg Childline, Incest Survivors Groups).

Perpetrators are often abusing other young people at the same time and although the volunteer/worker may not be in contact with these young people their

safety is also of concern and this needs to be taken into account in determining a course of action.

### **Recordings**

The volunteer/worker should make notes of what a person who has been abused has said. Care should be taken to do this in a way that does not block the young person from talking; they could for instance be agreed with the young person at the end of the session.

The notes, which a volunteer/worker may keep, can be used as a basis for supporting the volunteer/worker during a difficult process.

These notes should be kept safely: for volunteers, this should be a safe place in their homes; workers should keep notes in a locked cabinet in their office. These notes are not admissible as evidence and should only be shared with other agencies or individuals with the full agreement of the young person. At the end of the work there should be a joint decision about the destruction or further safe keeping of such notes.

Where a case is referred to Social Services, the volunteer/worker and/or Project Manager may submit a written report of what has happened, drawing on the volunteers/workers notes.

### **Categories of Abuse**

The procedures outlined cover physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect:

#### **(i) Physical abuse**

##### *Identification*

The first task should be to check out the incident or injuries which have aroused the volunteers/workers' concern. This may be done by speaking with the young person.

##### *Satisfactory Explanations*

If the volunteer/worker is satisfied with explanations, a note should be made of the incident and the Project Manager or DP contacted. This is to ensure that volunteers/workers/DP/Project Managers are alerted to a pattern of repeated incidents or injuries, each with an apparently satisfactory explanation.

##### *Unsatisfactory Explanations*

If the volunteer/worker is still worried about the young person, s/he should contact the Project Manager/DP to discuss their concerns.

Appropriate action may include:

- considering the need for emergency medical treatment
- the Project Manager checking the Child Protection Register
- consulting District Adolescent Team (SS) contact
- involving the Social Services in obtaining help for the young person
- monitoring the young person against future risk.

##### *Serious Incidents*

It is obvious that serious injuries will need immediate medical treatment and volunteers/workers should ensure that this happens. A record should be made of the incident by the volunteer/worker and stored as above.

When a referral has been made to the Social Services Department:

- every co-operation should be given to Social Workers in any arrangements they may wish to make for the young person eg a medical examination
- a full report should be sent to the Project Manager.

**(ii) Child sexual abuse***Identification*

Child sexual abuse usually comes to light in a different way to physical abuse or neglect. Volunteers/workers may become concerned about the change in young person's behaviour or personality. The most usual route is that the young person confides in a volunteer/worker. This is usually described by other agencies as "disclosure".

*Appropriate Action*

The volunteers/workers role is not to discuss the detail of the case with the young person, or with their parent/carer, but to listen, reassure and support the young person in taking action.

The volunteer/worker must not ask leading questions or interrogate the young person, because it is important not to 'contaminate evidence'. Also if a referral is made to other agencies (Police, Social Services) the young person will be interviewed and it is important not to subject them to unnecessary questioning.

Volunteers/workers who have any concerns about a young person who may be experiencing sexual abuse must share those concerns with the Project Manager/DP.

Such appropriate action could include:

- monitoring the young persons behaviour (where no disclosure has been made)
- taking advice from Social Services Department
- contacting the SSD following disclosure
- checking the Child Protection register.

It is important that the volunteer/worker states clearly what might happen when the young person talks to Social Services/the Police. The volunteer/worker

should also make it clear that s/he cannot tell the Police what has happened, and that the young person will have to do that, but the volunteer/worker will be present to give support.

**(iii) Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is present in all abuse, but can also stand-alone.

It is defined as; 'the actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a young person caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment'.

The role of the volunteer/worker is to recognise and record indicators of abuse, consult with the Project Manager/DP about appropriate action and refer where appropriate.

**(iv) Neglect**

For neglect to be considered, to apply it needs to be persistent or severe resulting in a 'significant impairment of the young persons 'health or development'.

The role of the volunteer/worker is to recognise and record indicators of abuse, consult with their DP about appropriate action, and refer where appropriate.

**Child Protection – Procedures for Project Managers/Designated Persons**

- Project Managers should assess all allegations promptly and carefully and consider the need for immediate action.
- All allegations should be pursued and recorded regardless of the availability of the alleged perpetrator to co-operate with the investigation.

- If Project Managers are unsure that concerns are valid they should take advice from Social Services.
- Where the Project Manager decides there are grounds for concern about an individual, social services and the police should be informed immediately.
- The individual under suspicion must be notified of the cause for concern. However the timing of the notification and any action will be decided at the strategy discussion convened by social services and/or the police.
- The timing of notifications of suspicions to other relevant agencies will be decided by the strategy discussion.
- Full documentation should be kept. It should be treated as confidential and held securely.

***This Child Protection Policy was printed with the kind permission of the Youth Justice Board.***

**Resource: Vulnerable Adults and Young People Protection Policy of Skill****Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities**

## Vulnerable adult and young people protection policy

**Contents**

- Aim and remit of policy
- Definition of a vulnerable adult/young person
- Skill Values
- Definition of types of abuse
- Dealing with disclosure
- Reporting procedures
- Recording Information

**Aim**

The aim of this policy is:

- to safeguard the welfare of all the vulnerable adults and young people with whom Skill comes into contact
- acknowledge and support the work of staff and volunteers

**Remit**

- This policy applies to all Skill staff and volunteers who are engaged in work with vulnerable adults/young people in any setting. It is designed to safeguard both the vulnerable adult/young person and the worker (paid or volunteer).
- All Skill staff and volunteers who will, in the course of their work have substantial access to vulnerable adults/young people will undergo formal recruitment procedures. This will include application forms, interview and the taking up of two references. Steps will also be taken to find out if a worker has a relevant criminal record or other information is known which indicates they may pose a risk to young people or vulnerable adults.

- All staff and volunteers are managed through a line management system. No volunteer will be placed in voluntary work without a named member of staff being responsible for supervision, support and training. During their work with Skill, all staff and volunteers will take part in induction and refresher training on the protection of vulnerable adults/young people, and become familiar with the organisation's internal policy and procedures.

**Definition**

For the purposes of this policy a child is a person under 18 years of age, and a young person is a person aged 13-17.

Definition of a vulnerable adult.

Any person aged 18 or over who:

- 1) is, or may be, in need of community care services or is resident in a continuing care facility by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who
- 2) is, or may be, unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect himself or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

*(Law Commission report 1995)*

In Skill, we expect to work with adults (over 18) in further education and higher education, and young people who are preparing for transition from secondary to further education and from further to higher education. The age range in our work is therefore 13 years plus.

**Skill Values**

Skill values in working with young people and vulnerable adults.

- Skill values its staff and volunteers and involves them in decisions and invests in their training
- Skill seeks to involve disabled people in all levels and areas of its work, seeks to support them in their contribution and seeks new ways to do this
- Skill recognises the rights of the vulnerable adult/young person to be accorded respect and dignity and to be given access to knowledge and information which they can understand to help them make informed choices
- Skill supports the right to have alleged, suspected or confirmed cases of abuse investigated urgently and to be supported appropriately in doing so
- Skill values diversity and is committed to equal opportunities in all it does.

**Definitions of types of Abuse**

All abuse falls within one or more of the following categories:

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Financial/material Abuse

**Dealing with disclosure**

When working with a vulnerable adult or young person, you may become aware of the actual or likely occurrence of abuse or be concerned about abuse in various ways:

- The vulnerable adult/young person may tell you (disclosure).
- The vulnerable adult/young person may

show signs of physical injury for which there is no satisfactory explanation.

- The behaviour of the vulnerable adult/young person may indicate that it is likely that s/he is being abused.
- Something in the way one of the other workers relates to the vulnerable adult/young person makes you feel uncomfortable in some way.
- Your awareness of or suspicion about abuse may come about as a result of something disclosed to you by a third party (parent/carer/worker) who suspects or has been told of the abuse.

Having suffered abuse, the vulnerable adult/young person is unlikely to discuss the subject spontaneously. It may have taken them some time to work up to disclosing what has happened to them. It is important, therefore, that the person to whom they disclose this information acts in a professional and appropriate manner.

If a disclosure is made by a vulnerable adult/young person, the staff member should:

- find a quiet place to talk, free from interruption
- stay calm and reassuring
- listen, but do not press for information
- say that s/he is glad that the vulnerable adult/young person has told him/her.
- stress that the abuse was not the fault of the vulnerable adult/young person.
- explain that the information disclosed will have to be passed on, and to whom.
- NOT attempt to deal further with the matter on his/her own.

**Reporting procedures**

Any person who has knowledge or a

reasonable suspicion that a vulnerable adult/young person is, or is at risk of being abused should report it. It is important never to do nothing and to assume that someone else will do something. No member of staff should deal with an incident or allegation of abuse alone. Advice and consultation with the appropriate line manager must always be sought.

Volunteers working on a project eg Student Advocacy Project will report their concerns directly to the Student Advocacy Worker, who will immediately report to the organisation's Designated Protection Officer, Barbara Waters, Skill, Chief Executive.

In the case of a member of staff having concerns about possible abuse, s/he will report these at the earliest opportunity, and within a period of not more than 24 hours to the Designated Protection Officer.

In the absence of the Designated

Protection Officer, the reports will be made to any available Skill Director. In the absence of either of these two individuals, the matter shall be reported to the Chair of Skill.

At this point, the relevant Social Services or Local Education Authority office or shall be informed of the matter causing concern. All information, (verbal or written) will be treated in the strictest confidence and on a "need to know" only basis.

### **Recording Information**

It is important that accurate records are kept about any vulnerable adult/young person protection concern. Staff must record information as soon as possible and no more than 24 hours after any issue concerning actual or suspected abuse. Records should be an accurate and comprehensive account of factual information.

The information should be recorded on a 'Reporting suspected or alleged abuse' form. **(See Appendix A).**

## Volunteering Organisations

### Volunteering England

National volunteer development agency for England: for information on volunteering issues, workshops and events; plus links to all local volunteer centres. Also provides grants.

Regents Wharf	Tel:	0845 305 6979
8 All Saints	Fax:	020 7520 8910
London	Website:	<a href="http://www.volunteering.org.uk">www.volunteering.org.uk</a>
N1 9RL		

New Oxford House	Tel:	0845 305 6979
16 Waterloo Street	Fax:	0121 633 4043
Birmingham B2 5UG		

### Volunteer Development Agency

Provides support, training and information on volunteering and volunteer management in Northern Ireland.

4th Floor	Tel:	028 9023 6100
58 Howard Street	Fax:	028 9023 7570
Belfast	Email:	<a href="mailto:info@volunteering-ni-org">info@volunteering-ni-org</a>
BT1 6PG	Website:	<a href="http://www.volunteering-ni.org">www.volunteering-ni.org</a>

### Wales Council for Voluntary Action

For information on volunteering in Wales, also provides grants.

Head Office	Tel:	029 2043 1700
Baltic House	Fax:	029 2043 1706
Mount Stuart Square	Textphone:	029 2043 1702
Cardiff	Email:	<a href="mailto:enquiries@wcva.org.uk">enquiries@wcva.org.uk</a>
CF10 9FH		

Call Centre:	Tel:	0870 607 1666
Email: <a href="mailto:enquiries@wcva.org.uk">enquiries@wcva.org.uk</a>	Website:	<a href="http://www.wcva.org.uk/">www.wcva.org.uk/</a>

### Volunteer Development Scotland

For information and advice on volunteer recruitment and management. Also provides information about funding.

Stirling Enterprise Park	Tel:	01786 479593
Stirling	Fax:	01786 449285
FK7 7RP	Email:	<a href="mailto:information@vds.org.uk">information@vds.org.uk</a>
	Website:	<a href="http://www.vds.org.uk">www.vds.org.uk</a>

**National Association of Councils for Voluntary Services (NACVS)**

NACVS is a membership organisation with a network of over 300 Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS) throughout England, providing information, advice, support and networking opportunities.

NACVS	Tel:	0114 278 6636
177 Arundel Street	Fax:	0114 278 7004
Sheffield	Textphone:	0114 278 7025
S1 2NU	Email:	nacvs@nacvs.org.uk
	Website:	www.nacvs.org.uk

**For your local Council for Voluntary Services visit the website**

**London Voluntary Service Council**

Provides up to date information on management and funding.

356 Holloway Road	Tel:	020 7700 8107
London	Fax:	020 7700 8108
N7 6PA	Minicom:	020 7700 8163
	Email:	lvsc@lvsc.org

**Voluntary Sector National Training Organisation (Voluntary Sector Skills)**

Provides regular updates on learning and skills issues affecting voluntary organisations.

**Voluntary Sector Skills in England**

Regent's Wharf	Tel:	020 7713 6161
8 All Saint's Street	Fax:	020 7713 6300
London	Email:	vsnto@ncvo-vol.org.uk
N1 9RL	Website:	www.voluntarysectorskills.org.uk

**Voluntary Sector Skills in Scotland**

SCVO	Tel:	0131 556 3882
Mansfield Traquair Centre	Fax:	0131 556 0279
15 Mansfield Place	Email:	celia.carson@scvo.org.uk
Edinburgh	Website:	www.scvo.org.uk
EH3 6BB		

**Voluntary Sector Skills in Wales**

WCVA, Baltic House	Tel:	029 2043 1700
Mount Stuart Square	Fax:	029 2043 1701
Cardiff Bay	Email:	klthomas@wcva.org.uk
CF10 5FH		

To join their free database visit the website

**Do-it**

Holds a national database of volunteering opportunities in the UK. Organisations can post their volunteering vacancies free of charge.

do-it.org.uk	Tel:	020 7226 8008
3rd Floor,	Fax:	020 7226 8118
2-3 Upper Street	Website:	www.do-it.org.uk
Islington		
London		
N1 0PH		

**TimeBank**

A national campaign inspiring and connecting people to share and give time.

3rd Floor	Tel:	0845 601 4008
Downstream Building	Website:	www.timebank.org.uk
1 London Bridge		
London		
SE1 9BG		

## Specialist advice

### **Ability Net**

Provides advice and information on computer equipment

### **AbilityNet Central England**

PO Box 94

Warwick

Warwickshire

CV34 5WS

Freephone: 0800 269545

Fax: 01926 407425

Email: [enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk)

Website: [www.abilitynet.org.uk](http://www.abilitynet.org.uk)  
[www.cae.org.uk](http://www.cae.org.uk)

### **Centre for Accessible Environment**

Provides advice and information on the accessibility of buildings for disabled people.

70 South Lambeth Road

London

SW8 1RL

Tel/Textphone: 020 7840 0125

Fax: 020 7840 5811

Email: [info@cae.org.uk](mailto:info@cae.org.uk)

### **Health and Safety Executive**

Information and Advice

For your nearest Health and Safety Executive Office visit [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

Infoline 08701 545 500

### **Web Accessibility Initiative**

Information and Advice

[www.w3.org/WAI/](http://www.w3.org/WAI/)

## Interest Groups

### Disability Organisations

#### Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities

Chapter House	Tel:	020 7450 0620
18-20 Crucifix Lane	Fax:	020 7450 0650
London	Text Phone:	0800 068 2422
SE1 3JW	Email:	skill@skill.org.uk
	Website:	www.skill.org.uk

#### Skill Scotland

Norton Park	Tel:	0131 475 2348
57 Albion Road	Fax:	0131 475 2397
Edinburgh	Email:	admin@skillscotland.org.uk
EH7 5QY		

#### Skill Northern Ireland

Unit 2	Tel:	028 9028 7000
Jennymount Court	Fax:	028 9028 7002
North Derby Street	Email:	admin@skillni.org.uk
Belfast		
BT15 3HN		

#### Skill Wales

C27	Tel:	01443 654317
Student Services Department	Email:	rpass@glam.ac.uk
University of Glamorgan		
Pontypridd		
Mid Glamorgan CF37 1DL		

**Please refer to Skill's information booklet *Organisations offering advice or services to disabled people* for a full list of organisations' available by post or on the website [www.skill.org.uk](http://www.skill.org.uk).**

**General Disability Organisations****Disability Rights Commission (DRC)**

An independent body working towards the elimination of discrimination against - and equalising opportunities for disabled people.

DRC Helpline	Tel:	08457 622 633
FREEPOST	Fax:	08457 788 788
MID02164	Textphone:	08457 622 644
Stratford-upon-Avon	Website:	<a href="http://www.drc-gb.org">www.drc-gb.org</a>
CV37 9BR		

**Internet based only:****D.I.S.S.**

Disability Information Services.	Website:	<a href="http://www.diss.org.uk">www.diss.org.uk</a>
B2 5UG		

**Refugee and Asylum Seekers****Refugee Council**

Provides information and advice and about refugees and asylum seekers.

Head Office London	Tel:	020 7346 6700
240-250 Ferndale Road	Fax:	020 7346 6778
London	Website:	<a href="http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk">www.refugeecouncil.org.uk</a>
SW9 8BB		

For regional branches visit the website.

**Refugee Action**

Provides practical advice and assistance for newly arrived asylum seekers and refugee in the UK.

Head Office	Tel:	020 7654 7700
The Old Fire Station	Fax:	020 7401 3699
150 Waterloo Road	Website:	<a href="http://www.refugee-action.org.uk">www.refugee-action.org.uk</a>
London		
SE1 8SB		

For regional branches visit the website.

## Youth Organisations

### National Council for Voluntary Youth Organisations (NCVYS)

NCVYS is the independent voice of the voluntary youth sector in England.

### The National Council for Voluntary Youth Services

Second Floor	Tel: 020 7253 1010
Solecast House	Fax: 020 7253 1012
13-27 Brunswick Place	Email: <a href="mailto:mail@ncvys.org.uk">mail@ncvys.org.uk</a>
London	Website: <a href="http://www.ncvys.org.uk">www.ncvys.org.uk</a>
N1 6DX	

### YouthNet

Internet website that provides information to enable young people to make informed choices; a part of [do-it.org.uk](http://do-it.org.uk).

YouthNet UK Ltd	Tel: 020 7226 8008
3rd Floor	Fax: 020 7226 8118
2-3 Upper Street	Email: <a href="mailto:info@youthnet.org.uk">info@youthnet.org.uk</a>
Islington	Website: <a href="http://www.youthnet.org.uk">www.youthnet.org.uk</a>
London	
N1 0PH	

### Connexions

Government support service for all young people aged 13 to 19 in England that aims to provide integrated advice, guidance and access to personal development opportunities.

Department for Education and Skills	
Supporting Children and Young People Group	
W408	
Moorfoot	
Sheffield	Website: <a href="http://www.connexions.gov.uk">www.connexions.gov.uk</a>
S1 4PQ	

For general enquiries, visit the DfES website at [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk) or email: [info@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info@dfes.gsi.gov.uk)

### Student Action for Refugees (STAR)

3 Bondway	Tel: 020 7820 3006
London	Email: <a href="mailto:info@star-network.org.uk">info@star-network.org.uk</a>
SW8 1SJ	Website: <a href="http://www.star-network.org.uk">www.star-network.org.uk</a>

## Funding

Here are a list of organisations and agencies that award grants and, or can provide information and advice on grant provision:

### Big Lottery Fund

[www.lotterygoodcauses.org.uk](http://www.lotterygoodcauses.org.uk)  
0845 275 0000

### Central government funding

For other central government funding visit [www.governmentfunding.org.uk](http://www.governmentfunding.org.uk): for more information about all government funding for the voluntary and community sector.

[www.charitiesdirect.com](http://www.charitiesdirect.com)  
[www.fundraising.co.uk](http://www.fundraising.co.uk)

### Comic Relief

6th floor, 89 Albert Embankment  
London  
SE1 7TP

Tel: 020 7820 5555  
Textphone: 020 7820 5579  
Email: [red@comicrelief.org.uk](mailto:red@comicrelief.org.uk)  
Website: [www.comicrelief.org.uk](http://www.comicrelief.org.uk)

### Charities Aid Foundation (CAF)

Financial services resource to charities and individuals.

CAF  
25 Kings Hill Avenue  
Kings Hill  
West Malling  
Kent  
ME19 4TA

Tel: 01732 520000  
Fax: 01732 520001  
Email: [enquiries@cafonline.org](mailto:enquiries@cafonline.org)

### Directory Of Social Change (DSC)

Provides information on training.

London office:  
Directory of Social Change  
24 Stephenson Way  
London  
NW1 2DP

Tel: 020 7391 4800  
Fax: 020 7391 4808  
Website: [www.trustfunding.org.uk](http://www.trustfunding.org.uk)

Liverpool office:

Directory of Social Change  
Federation House  
Hope Street  
Liverpool  
L1 9BW

Tel: 0151 708 0117  
Fax: 0151 708 0139

### **Institute of Fundraising**

Promotes good practice and training around fundraising.

### **London Development Agency**

The Information Department  
The London Development Agency  
Devon House  
58-60 St Katharine's Way  
London  
E1 1JX

Tel: 020 7680 2000  
Fax: 020 7680 2040  
Email: [info@lda.gov.uk](mailto:info@lda.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.lda.gov.uk](http://www.lda.gov.uk)

### **Volunteering England (VE)**

(for contact details volunteering contacts)

VE are a national agent for the **Opportunities for Volunteering Scheme**, (Department of Health initiative), aimed at encouraging volunteering in the fields of health and social care. They also provide information on training.

For advice on how to plan and make a funding application contact:

**Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS):** [www.nacvs.org.uk](http://www.nacvs.org.uk)

**Rural Community Councils:** [www.countryside.gov.uk/market-towns](http://www.countryside.gov.uk/market-towns)

**Skill Publications:**

***A Guide to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995*** (revised Autumn 2004) – aimed at educational institutions, it provides a straight forward explanation of the law and helpful suggestions of good practices.

***Enhancing Quality of Life Resource Pack*** – this resource pack is for staff in different types of organisations working with or wishing to work with people with profound and complex learning difficulties.

***Disability Equality in Volunteering*** – aimed at organisations this resource manual addresses some of the most common questions about disabled volunteers.

***Into Volunteering*** – this guide is aimed at disabled people who are interested in volunteering and want to know more. (Contains profiles of disabled volunteers).

***Into Teaching*** – a guide for disabled people thinking about entering the teaching profession. It includes advice about the application process, support and funding.

***Into Work Experience*** – a concise guide for people considering work experience. It includes practical suggestions, advice, finding and starting a work placement.

***Making the Case:*** DVD and CD Rom Set – a training resource which offers an all in one package for learning providers to run a 2 hour staff training session exploring the implications of the Disability Discrimination Act Part 4.

**Information Booklets**

Skill produces 30 information booklets covering a range of issues from applying to further education to how studying affects benefits entitlements to disclosing disability when looking for work. These can be obtained from the website at [www.skill.org.uk](http://www.skill.org.uk) or by contacting Skill.

**Other Publications****Volunteering-related:**

Voluntary Sector – monthly: National Council for Voluntary Organisations

Voluntary Voice - bi-monthly: London Voluntary Service Council

Volunteering Magazine - Volunteering England

**Disability-related:**

Able (formerly Disability View magazine) - bi-monthly magazine  
[www.ablemagazine.co.uk](http://www.ablemagazine.co.uk)

Disability Now - monthly publication,  
publisher: Scope

Disability Update - monthly publication,  
publisher: Glad

RADAR Bulletin - monthly publication,  
publisher: RADAR



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