

Managing Volunteers

Welfare

Talking about the welfare of your volunteers is reasonably new in terms of safeguarding.

Welfare in this context covers the responsibility of the Force to ensure that everything that can be done to ensure the wellbeing, safety and security of their staff, volunteers and cadets.

Good practice requires you to consider the legal aspects of welfare i.e. what is your legal duty to comply with for example 'duty of care'. According to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), organisations have a 'Duty of Care' requirement to protect the health, safety and well-being of anyone that deals with the organisation; including volunteers, customers, suppliers or even the general public.

See "Volunteering and the Law" - <https://blogs.ncvo.org.uk/2018/02/06/new-updated-member-content-volunteering-and-the-law/>

Support and Supervision

All your volunteers will need support and supervision, but the form that this takes will largely depend on the role, the volunteer in question and the capacity you have. For example, volunteers at a one-off event may need less support than someone who volunteers several times a week.

Buddying systems and volunteer meetings can be a good way of providing peer support in smaller organisations. Buddying (either alongside another volunteer or paid member of staff) not only helps support the volunteer, but also means there are at least two people present in any situation. Meetings will provide volunteers with an opportunity to discuss their work and daily life within an organisation. More formal supervision meetings may not be appropriate for all models of volunteer involvement, but for many volunteers it can be a good way of ensuring that they get a chance to give and receive feedback on a regular basis.

Whatever approach you choose, you should ensure there is a way for volunteers to have a safe space to come and discuss work concerns, at any time. By doing so, you can identify potentially problematic behaviour at the earliest opportunity and address it appropriately.

- Supervision should depend to a large extent on the roles that volunteers do.
- It is good practice to have some form of regular supervision in place for staff and volunteers alike. It may be that you choose to call these support sessions something other than supervision if that is more comfortable or appropriate. Regular means something proportionate for example, if the volunteer is working a few hours a week, they will not need weekly supervision. A volunteer working 3 days a week may need monthly supervision.
- Supervision is put in place at regular or agreed to intervals, to ensure you can assess general competence, the development of relationships with co-workers and beneficiaries in determining the frequency consider the following:
 - Number of hours that the volunteer gives
 - The nature and demands of the role
 - How long the volunteer has been involved
- You should ensure that all volunteers who work similar hours in similar roles have the same, supervision arrangements.
- Volunteers may not see the need for supervision, particularly if it involves an extra commitment outside of their usual volunteering hours.
- It is good practice to explain that it is two way and as much for their benefit as the organisations'. Help them to see it as their personal time to give feedback and receive input not as you checking up on them. Remember that some volunteers may be extremely competent in their other role
- Try to arrange sessions at times when they would usually volunteer.
- A supervision session should be focussed on achieving the following:
 - An improved understanding of the tasks and issues involved in volunteering for each part of the group or organisation
 - A perception of how things are going
 - To hear the volunteers views and ideas of the development of the group or organisation

For the volunteer to gain:

- Direction from you, management committee or Force
 - Feedback on their work
 - Support and advice
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- It is good practice to let the volunteer in their session, talk about what they think needs changing. The questions you could ask to support this process of self- evaluation are:
 - What has gone well or what do you like about what you did?
 - What would you do differently next time?
 - What support do you need from me or others?