



VOLUNTEER POLICY FOR THE ALLIANCE

Background

A Volunteer Policy is the foundation on which the organisation's involvement of volunteers is based. It helps define the role of volunteers and how they can expect to be treated. Alongside these aims, it also shows the organisation's commitment to volunteers and how volunteers will be treated with fairness and consistency in their contact with the charity.

Volunteer Policy

"The Pre-school Learning Alliance was created to meet the needs of children and parents across England. The charity was built by volunteers and their importance is a central theme running through the whole organisation. The Alliance encourages the teamwork of volunteers and employees so that we can offer children the best services possible. Volunteers contribute their unique talents, skills and knowledge of our communities and have become powerful advocates for the charity. The involvement of volunteers from diverse communities ensures that the charity is responsive to the needs of our multi-cultural society. In these ways the Alliance demonstrates its unique relationship with volunteers and this statement enshrines our commitment to their growth and development".

Investors in Standards Status

Volunteering for England have created ten National Standards to guide how organisations can optimise the use of volunteers and ensure good practice. The Alliance has based much of its work on the Standards and developed individual position statements against each Standard.

1. **Mutual Benefits** The Standard - Indicator No. 1

There is an expressed commitment to the involvement of volunteers, and recognition throughout the organisation that volunteering is a two-way process which benefits volunteers and the organisation.

Position statement

The Alliance believes in the importance of volunteers as a significant part of its human resources. As a consequence, volunteers will not be exploited but valued as a resource which offers benefits to the charity. In return will have opportunities to obtain something of value to themselves through friendships and personal development.

2. Support and Development The Standard - Indicator No. 2

The organisation commits appropriate resources to working with volunteers, such as money, management, staff time and materials.

Position statement

As part of the charity's human resources, volunteers will enjoy appropriate levels of support and development to enable them to fulfil their role. The charity will therefore consider the allocation of time, money and materials as necessary to deliver this policy. This will lead to a clear code of conduct for the organisation and the volunteer.

3. Diversity The Standard - Indicator No 3

The organisation is open to involving volunteers who reflect the diversity of the local communities, in accordance with the organisation's stated aims, and operates procedures to facilitate this.

Position Statement

The beneficiaries of the Alliance work reflect the rich mix of society in modern Britain. Our human resources need to reflect this diversity so that we can represent the communities we serve.

4. Clarity of Role The Standard - Indicator No 4

The organisation develops appropriate roles for volunteers in line with its aims and objectives and which are of value to the volunteers and create an environment where they can develop.

Position Statement

Volunteers were the originators of the Alliance and remain central to our work. However, the need of the organisation may change in the light of external influences and therefore the role of volunteers should reflect those changes and ensure that volunteers are informed of what is expected of them.

5. Protection The Standard - Indicator No. 5

The organisation is committed to ensuring that, as far as possible, volunteers are protected from physical, financial and emotional harm arising from volunteering.

Position Statement

In looking after our human resources, the Alliance will put in place policies and procedures that ensure our volunteers are not put at risk while undertaking their duties for the Charity.

6. Recruitment The Standard - Indicator No 6

The organisation is committed to using fair, efficient and consistent recruitment procedures for all potential volunteers.

Position Statement

When recruiting volunteers, the Alliance will ensure that they have information about the opportunities open to them, and access to the policies and procedures with which the charity will comply.

7. References The Standard - Indicator No 7

The organisation takes a considered approach to taking up references and official checks which is consistent and equitable for all volunteers, bearing in mind the nature of the work.

Position Statement

Children are vulnerable and need to be kept safe. All volunteers will need to demonstrate to the Alliance that they are fit for the role that they are undertaking. For some roles this would require undertaking the taking up of references and the receipt of a relevant CRB check.

8. Induction The Standard - Indicator No 8

Clear procedures are put into action for introducing new volunteers to the organisation, its work, policies, practices and relevant personnel.

Position Statement

All volunteers will receive opportunities to undertake appropriate induction to enable a better understanding of the organisation and its working.

9. Recognition The Standard - Indicator No 9

Everybody in the organisation is aware of the need to give volunteers recognition.

Position Statement

The Alliance will seek and take opportunities to recognise the valuable contribution made to the charity by its volunteers.

10. Individual Needs The Standard - Indicator No 10

The organisation takes account of the varying support needs of volunteers

Position Statement

National Standards form a minimum code of practice that all volunteers should expect from the Alliance. However, the charity also recognises that everyone is unique and that support needs will vary from individual to individual

Next Steps

At the last National Council meeting we agreed that the Alliance would use the National Standards to work with sub-committees to determine the progress we have made so far. As a consequence we have created a self-evaluation tool, based on the Standards that will be used with sub-committees to assess the work outstanding to fully implement the Volunteer Policy.

This self –evaluation tool will be launched at the National Council (2005) and its findings will inform the work plan for the year ahead.