



YOUNG VOLUNTEERS TOOLKIT

This toolkit was originally created by Ellie Lundy and developed as part of the Young Volunteers Project for Community First. We are grateful for permission to use it and continue their work to break the barriers that charities and non-for-profit organisations have with placing young people aged 13-17 into volunteering opportunities.

Disclaimer: This information is freely given on behalf of Rother Voluntary Action (RVA), however RVA does not accept any responsibility or liability for any of the information given and used. The information is provided is to solely act as a guide for organisations accepting young volunteers. If further guidance is needed, please contact an external organisation.

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WHY SHOULD YOU HAVE YOUNG VOLUNTEERS?

Volunteering is a 'habit'. By offering volunteering opportunities to those under 18, organisations are helping young people develop this habit for life, creating socially responsible, community focussed generations of young people.

In a study of the impact of volunteering during Covid-19 by Hampshire County Council (16/07/2020 - Baker & Baker) it was found that new volunteers had felt a great connection to their community through volunteering and this was a key determinant in sense of worth. Giving young people the chance to volunteer gives them the opportunity to build that sense of connection and self-worth.

It is also key for training and skilling-up younger people for both education and employment. Volunteering has always been invaluable in teaching both work and life skills, providing a wide range of tools from something to put on a CV to confidence building and a sense of belonging.

Covid-19 has also led to a change in the way that people are working and volunteering, for example many more volunteer roles are now virtual/online. What group is more likely than most to embrace the use of technology and to be able to genuinely help organisations to improve their digital offer than younger volunteers? Virtual volunteering also addresses the traditional problem of needing to travel to undertake a role, a challenge for any prospective volunteers and a cost to organisations.

There has also been a rise in Micro-volunteering opportunities, small, time-limited pieces of work ideally suited to younger people looking to complete DofE, National Citizen Service or school-based volunteering goals.

Young people bring a unique and fresh perspective to organisations alongside energy, new skills, enthusiasm and commitment that can often turn into a long-term volunteer involvement.

CHILD EMPLOYMENT AND THE LAW

When considering having young people as volunteers it is important to know and understand what the law around child employment is.

What is the difference between a 'young person' and a 'child'?

- A young person is anyone under the age of 18
- A child is anyone who has not yet reached the official minimum school leaving age (MSLA). Pupils will reach the MSLA in the school year in which they turn 16.

The law around employing children and young people

While there are legal restrictions on employing young people, they do not apply to volunteers. It is however sensible to comply with the legislation (Section 18 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 and the school leaving age guidance), even if you are not bound by it, and to remember that young people have other demands on their time outside volunteering, such as homework, socialising and so on.

So, although it isn't law you should consider the following points:

- Children must be aged 13 or over (This does not apply to volunteering opportunities, however any volunteering opportunities should not place unfair demands on the individual and should only involve suitable tasks and roles.)
- Must not be employed before 7am or after 7pm at any time
- Must not be employed for more than 2 hours on any school day or Sunday
- Can only work 1 hour before the start of school
- May only work a maximum of 12 hours per week in term time
- Must have a break of at least 1 hour after four hours work
- Must have at least 2 weeks free from employment during the school holidays

Employer's Liability Insurance

You will need to provide young volunteers with employers' liability insurance (covering your liability for injury or disease suffered by volunteers, during their placement).

- Check your insurance policies, make sure that children/young people would be covered if they were undertaking a volunteering activity.
- Check whether there are any things you must do to ensure this, and **do** them.

If your insurance policy doesn't cover this, it is worth contacting an insurance broker to see whether they can identify any suitable policies that they could recommend. This can help you get the right coverage for the best price.

Volunteers under 16

Staff working with 16 to 17 year old volunteers **need** a DBS check.

Those aged 16 and 17 who will be working with other young people, under the age of 18, will also **need** their own DBS check. This can be challenging as young people do not always have the correct documentation needed such as a utility bill in their name. They may require extra assistance when applying for one. *[Please contact RVA for more information]*

In the case of **Regulated Activity** with under 16s, **staff will need** an Enhanced DBS check. Consult the [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk) for more information on what constitutes Regulated Activity, but with regards to volunteer management “teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising a child who is under the age of 16 in relation to their employment” for “more than 3 days in any 30-day period” is a regulated activity.

For example, consider these two roles for a 14- and 15-year-old volunteers:

- One-hour long training ahead of a one-off volunteer opportunity supporting a community festival - Enhanced DBS not required for volunteer manager
- Ad-hoc and formal training and supervision for a two-days a week volunteer opportunity at a charity shop - Enhanced DBS and Children’s Barred List Required

Under 16s cannot have a DBS check carried out on them and may need more supervision and support.

Under 16s are prohibited from making house-to-house collections for charities.

You should always get the consent of the parent/guardian for under 16s before they start volunteering.

It is also good practice to obtain permission from the parent/guardian for 16- to 17-year-olds. It is important to get contact details of a parent or guardian for volunteers in case of emergencies.

CREATING A ROLE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

When creating the opportunity for a young person, it is important to make sure that it is suitable for them and appropriate for their age. Below are some ways that you can make a good, suitable and safe role for a young person.

Individual or group volunteering

When considering whether an opportunity could be undertaken by children or young people you will need to think about what they would be doing. The circumstance they are working under may affect whether the activity is suitable. Below are some of the possible options:

With their family:

You could create opportunities for children and young people to get involved alongside their parents. You will still need to ensure that the activity is suitable and that parents are briefed about any risks, but parents then remain responsible for their children.

Group-working with an external established group:

You could create an event or opportunity and then invite other established groups to take part (this could be schools, scout/guide/church/Duke of Edinburgh/youth club). You would then need to work with the group leader to ensure that they have appropriate supervision and insurance in place. You would still need to risk assess the activity and ensure that it is suitable for the group in question. Your organisation would be responsible for ensuring the activity was safe and for briefing staff. The other group would be responsible for supervising the children/ young people.

Creating your own group:

This means that you take full responsibility for creating and promoting the activity supervising children and young people on site. Your staff would need to be responsible for the children and young people while undertaking the activity and would be acting in loco parentis.

Individual opportunities:

These would be opportunities where the young volunteer operates on their own within your team, rather than as a specific group activity, and may involve working alongside other adult volunteers as well as other members of staff in your team. While there will be oversight in place, as for any volunteer, they may not be as closely supervised as they would be in group situations. We recommend that this is only usually suitable for young people aged 14 and over.

Named supervisor

A named supervisor would be responsible for the young volunteer:

- You should consider whether tasks listed in the volunteer role description are appropriate for the young person to carry out individually. Check against the 'prohibited employment' list: do any of these areas raise any concerns?
- The Children and Young Persons Act 1933 offers guidance on the child employment age restrictions.
- Young volunteers shouldn't be left alone with members of the public or other staff members who are not DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked. How will you safeguard the young volunteer in the context of your wider staff team and other volunteers? You should consider creating a safeguarding policy for your organisation to show how that will be managed.
- A DBS is free for any volunteering staff, so do not rule out having a volunteer as a supervisor.

Age suitability

What age is the role suitable for?

- What skills and experience are needed? Could the young volunteer be supported to develop these?
- Is the opportunity going to be interesting and engaging for the young volunteer, what is their likely attention span? What can you do to support this?
- Are there ways that you can adapt roles to make them suitable for young volunteers? E.g. offer some 'taster' volunteer sessions.

Unsuitable roles

You should not engage young volunteers in a role which:

- Is beyond their physical or psychological capacity
- Exposes them to substances chronically harmful to human health
- Exposes them to radiation
- Involves a risk of accidents which they are unlikely to recognise because of, e.g. their lack of experience or training or sufficient attention to safety
- Involves a risk to their health from extreme heat, noise or vibration
- Children under 16 years of age cannot take part in house-to-house fundraising collections without an adult.

When creating a role description you should consider the following:

- What will the volunteer be doing? (Are the tasks appropriate for a young person to carry out?)
- Why will they be doing it? (Is the role actually required? Will the young volunteer have a chance to see authentic results of his/her volunteering? Will the young volunteer have a sense of achievement because of carrying out the role?)
- Expected time commitment. (Will the volunteering take place between 7am and 7pm, how many hours a day?)
- Place where the volunteer will carry out his/her activities. (Is the place appropriate/safe for the young person to volunteer?)
- What skills and experience would the volunteer need to have already? (List things like 'enthusiastic' or 'likes to operate as part of a team', rather than professional skills that a young person would not have had a chance to gain. Can you train a young person to be able to carry out this role?)
- What training will the volunteer be required to undertake? (Have you got necessary DBS checks to carry out the training?)
- Who will the volunteer be working with? (Alone with the supervisor, or alongside other volunteers/paid staff? Have you got the necessary safeguarding measures in place?)
- Who is the volunteer manager/named contact person for the volunteer? (Have they had a recent DBS check, and do they have the skill set required to work with young people?)
- What support and supervision will be offered? (Can you provide continuous supervision to the young volunteer?)
- What are the benefits to the volunteer? (List things that would be attractive to the young person, e.g. 'great fun', 'looks great on your CV', 'help out in the sports club – coach someone/transfer your skills', 'improving IT skills', 'meet new friends', 'be part of a fantastic team'.)
- What are the benefits to the client group/community? (What are the benefits to the wider community of having a young person volunteering, e.g. personal development opportunity for young people, opportunity to participate in volunteering resulting in becoming better citizens.)
- What expenses will you reimburse for? (You should be able to reimburse for out-of-pocket travel costs between volunteer home and volunteering place and other reasonable expenses as agreed by you)

YOUNG PEOPLE POLICIES

[Creating a young person volunteer policy](#)

It's important to make sure that either your current policies have appropriate guidance for young people or to have a separate policy altogether for them.

[See [Guidance on writing a volunteer policy](#)- please feel free to use it as a reference.]

It is also essential to have an updated health and safety policy regarding young volunteers.

Reasons why you need a new policy for young volunteers:

- Having a code of conduct that sets out how you expect young volunteers and the adults working with them to behave
- Making sure young volunteers know who they can talk to if they have a concern and that they should feel safe to do so
- Making sure that young volunteers aren't left along with an adult unless as part of a designated supported role
- You will need to check your employer's liability insurance to make sure it covers young volunteers, especially if they are under the age of 16.
- You must get written agreement from young volunteers who want to be involved with your organisation. This should set out what they will be doing and the organisation's expectations of them. The young person should sign this document.

[Health and Safety policy](#)

All voluntary and community groups, including those run entirely by volunteers, have a common-law duty of care to volunteers. Organisations involving volunteers should have an up-to-date health and safety policy. Health and Safety legislation, responsibilities and requirements must be observed and made known to all staff and volunteers through an induction process.

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, an employer has a responsibility to ensure that young people employed by them are not exposed to risk due to:

- lack of experience
- being unaware of existing or potential risks and/or
- lack of maturity

An employer must consider:

- The layout of the workplace
- The physical, biological and chemical agents they will be exposed to
- How they will handle work equipment
- How the work and processes are organised
- The extent of health and safety training needed
- Risks from particular agents, processes and work

Employers need to consider whether the work the young person will do:

- Is beyond their physical or psychological capacity
- This doesn't have to be complicated, it could be as simple as checking if a young person is capable of safely lifting weights and of remembering and following instructions.
- Involves harmful exposure to substances that are toxic, can cause cancer, can damage or harm an unborn child, or can chronically affect human health in any other way
- Be aware of substances a young person might come into contact within their work, consider exposure levels and ensure legal limits are met.
- Involves harmful exposure to radiation
- Ensure a young person's exposure to radiation is restricted and does not exceed the allowed dose limit.
- Involves risk of accidents that cannot reasonably be recognised or avoided by young people due to their insufficient attention to safety or lack of experience or training
- A young person might be unfamiliar with 'obvious' risks. An employer should consider the need for tailored training/closer supervision.
- Has a risk to health from extreme cold, heat, noise or vibration
- In most cases, young people will not be at any greater risk than adults and for workplaces that include these hazards it is likely there will already be control measures in place.

A child must never carry out such work involving these risks, whether they are permanently employed or under training such as work experience.

A young person, who is not a child, can carry out work involving these risks if:

- the work is necessary for their training
- the work is properly supervised by a competent person
- the risks are reduced to the lowest level, so far as reasonably practicable.

Employers must let the parents or guardians of any child know the possible risks and the measures put in place to control them. This can be done in whatever way is simplest and suitable, including verbally.

RISK ASSESSMENT

If you don't already have a risk assessment in place you will need one! You will also need to have a new risk assessment for young people as there are different risks associated with them. It should be readily available for young people and their parents or guardians to view.

[See [blank risk assessment attached](#) - please feel free to use it to identify the risks a young person might have.]

Reasons why you need a separate risk assessment for young volunteers:

- There is the potential risk for exploitation of the young volunteers
- The possible emotional impact of tasks
- The additional impact of pressures young people may be experiencing in their lives - example during exams

Points to focus on while carrying out the risk assessment are:

- To assess risks to all young people under 18 years of age, before they start volunteering
- Consider the layout of the workplace and the site where they will volunteer
- Consider the nature of any physical, biological, and chemical agents they will be exposed to, for how long and to what extent
- Assess what types of work equipment will be used and how this will be handled
- To ensure your risk assessment considers their psychological or physical immaturity, inexperience, and lack of awareness of existing or potential risks
- To introduce control measures to eliminate or minimise the risks, so far as is reasonably practicable
- To identify what age group you feel the role is suitable for, and the level of oversight/ supervision that is required.

You should also:

- Let the parents/guardians know the key findings of the risk assessment and the control measures you have introduced before the child/young person starts volunteering
- Take account of the risk assessment when deciding whether the young volunteer should be prohibited from certain activities
- Involve young volunteers in the process of identifying any health and safety risks and in developing solutions. Young people may bring a fresh perspective to problem-solving
- Review the risk assessment if the nature of the volunteering changes or you believe it is no longer valid.

If a significant risk remains in spite of your best efforts to do what is reasonably practicable to control it, you must not engage the young person in this volunteering role.

SUPERVISION

Any young volunteers should have someone who oversees their work. They should be around while the young volunteer is undertaking the activity and is available for them to go to for advice, information or support. They should always be aware of the work the young volunteer is doing and be able to intervene in case of any issues.

[See supervision template attached - please feel free to use it to carry out a supervision meeting with young people]

The person who will supervise and train volunteers under 18 years of age requires a successful DBS clearance. If you are supporting a young person/people whilst volunteering, it would be a good practice to have experience of working with young people and training in this area. Good supervision is paramount for the young person and this then reflects on the volunteering opportunity; time needs to be built into the day to provide supervision.

The level of oversight/supervision required is very much dependent on a young person's maturity rather than age, some 14-year-olds present much younger than others. However, it is good practice to have 2 adults overseeing/supervising at all times:

- The supervision must be undertaken by a person who has a successful DBS clearance
- The supervision must be regular and day to day e.g. it must not tail off after a few weeks; it must be consistent on every occasion when the volunteering takes place
- The supervision must be 'reasonable' in all circumstances to ensure the protection of children.

Organisations must consider whether they can implement a consistent level of supervision at all times to ensure that it would not impact on the safety and protection of children and young people in the care of the organisation.

PARENTAL PERMISSION

Why do you need parental permission?

This will help to ensure that the volunteer's parent/ guardian understands what your organisation does, what the young person will be doing, when and where they will be working and consents to this:

- You should get agreement from their parents, depending on the volunteer's age and the activities they will be doing.
- You may also need separate consent for specific activities, for example overnight trips.
- You should get consent from parents or carers for volunteers aged under 16 and ask them to sign a written consent form.
- Make sure that parents or carers are aware of your safeguarding policy and procedures. 16- and 17-year-olds
- In most cases parents have a legal responsibility for their child up to the age of 18. However, for young people aged 16 and 17 you should consider whether it is appropriate to obtain parental consent depending on the volunteering activity and the young person's circumstances. If you decide you don't need consent then you should consider whether you should still inform parents that the young person is volunteering.
- Although a young person may have agreed to their involvement, there may be specific activities that they feel uncomfortable taking part in and you should discuss with them what alternative arrangements would be appropriate.
- If the volunteer will be working away from the premises where they normally volunteer, then additional permission should be sought.
- It is also a good practice to obtain emergency contact information for anyone undertaking a volunteering activity.
- When using photos of young volunteers for publicity purposes you need to obtain their permission and, if they are under 16, the permission of their parent/ guardian to use them.
- If a young person is over 16 and is living independently of parents or social services they are able to provide their own consent.

[See the parental permission form , photo consent form and emergency contact form attached - please feel free to use them.]

EXPENSES

A huge barrier with having young people volunteer is the cost. We hope that you will take that into consideration and pay all reasonable costs to the young person including travel to and from the opportunity. We also hope that you will take into consideration providing lunch if the young person is working over 4 hours - for example at an event.

It is a really good idea to think about how accessible you can make your volunteering for young people and one of the ways to do this is to ensure that you are able to pay a volunteer's expenses to ensure that they are not out of pocket for giving their time to you.

Key points to consider:

- Only reimburse volunteers for expenses actually incurred in the course of their volunteering
- Ensure that you keep good records of expense payments

Reasonable expenses include:

- Travel to and from the place of volunteering
- Travel undertaken in the course of volunteering
- Childcare (crèche or child minding) or other caring expenses
- Food and refreshments while volunteering
- Postage, telephone calls etc. paid for by the volunteer
- Materials to do voluntary work (e.g. paper, pens etc.) paid for by volunteer
- Cost of equipment, protective clothing etc.
- Attendance at training events and courses relevant to their volunteering

Travel

If you are creating an opportunity for a child/ young person you should consider the location and time of the opportunity, and how they will travel to and from the activity.

An opportunity that finishes after dark in a location away from public transport may make it hard for young volunteers to take part. Your organisation should assess any risks associated with traveling to and from the opportunity and put measures in place to reduce these, e.g. arranging for the group to walk together, ensuring that any taxi companies used are reputable and exploring whether they have drivers with DBS clearance.

INDUCTION AND TRAINING

Induction and training are as important for volunteers as for paid staff. This means providing them with the same health and safety protection:

- Provide young volunteers with the opportunity to access training to enhance their knowledge and/or gain qualification, also provide them with opportunities to use their skills. Organisations can ask other agencies to support training and this is often at no cost.
- Young people need training most when they start volunteering; they need it to increase their capabilities and competencies to a level where they can volunteer without putting themselves and others at risk. It is not enough to make training available.
- You should make sure it is undertaken and check that key messages have been understood.
- Young people will also need training and instruction on the hazards and risks present in the workplace and on the preventive and control measures put in place to protect their health and safety. This training should include a basic introduction to health and safety, for example including first aid, fire and evacuation procedures, safeguarding – who to go to if concerns arise, professional relationships, equal opportunities and emergency procedures.
- Young volunteers are likely to need more supervision than adults. You will find that effective supervision will help you assess whether the young person has the necessary capacity and competence for the role.
- Importance of training and proper supervision of young people is essential because of their relative immaturity and unfamiliarity with the working environment.
- Young volunteers should not be left unattended.
- It is safer if young volunteers are supervised by two or more adults.

Providing appropriate equipment

If you have children or young people volunteering, you will need to provide appropriate equipment for their size and strength- e.g. if they are undertaking a gardening project you may need small sized protective gloves and smaller or lighter spades.

Briefing your team

- When working with young volunteers at least one person should be always present who has a successful DBS clearance.
- Young people shouldn't be left alone with members of the public or other staff who are not DBS checked.
- In order to ensure all staff have a clear understanding of safeguarding procedures and professional boundaries it is good practice to provide training/ information for staff before they undertake supporting young volunteers.

- Who is going to take full responsibility for the young people and ensure full training and support is given to the young people and staff?
- Who is going to deliver training and when?
- Who is the contact for safeguarding issues?
- What is included in training – safeguarding, rights and responsibilities, professional boundaries, health and safety, communication, dealing with difficult situations?
- An organisation needs to ensure young people have a contact number, so they can inform you if they cannot make a session and likewise you need emergency contact numbers for the young people

[See Team fact sheet attached. Please feel free to use it for members of the team when working with young volunteers.]

SUPPORT

Young volunteers may require additional support to be able to carry out their role in a safe and effective way. An important point to remember is that everyone is an individual and some young people may not yet be very mature and may be unfamiliar with the working environment. Some volunteers will need a lot of support, where others may be more confident and not require this additional level of attention. Consider buddying new young volunteers up with experienced volunteers.

Support does not have to have a formal character; it can be a friendly chat over a cup of coffee. Having an open-door policy can prove to be a great support tool for young volunteers, with them being able to approach you whenever they feel they need your advice.

Holding one-to-one meetings can provide a great opportunity for an open two-way conversation that gives volunteers a chance to provide and receive feedback about their volunteering work.

Respect young volunteers, show them gratitude for their efforts, show them that they are needed, and provide them with an opportunity to contribute with their ideas. Showing young people gratitude does not need to be at a cost, good supervision and saying thank you makes a difference, however small celebrations and awards evenings aid recognition and bring volunteers together:

- Regular, pre-arranged one-to-one support sessions
- Informal day-to-day support, e.g. checking in with volunteer at the end of each session
- Telephone support
- Review/development/evaluation sessions at fixed points during the year. Personal development plans
- Action plans
- Volunteer Journals
- Accreditation or Awards – for example the RVA Volunteer Awards,
- Getting in touch at key points, e.g. after a potentially stressful session or a big event
- Group support – getting volunteers together to share ideas and experiences
- Peer support – using experienced, long-standing volunteers to support new volunteers.
- Buddy Support – contact any referring agency that could provide initial support to your young volunteer
- Training – all volunteers should have the training necessary to equip them with the skills and knowledge they need to carry out their tasks safely and effectively.
- Volunteers' voice – consideration should be given to systems for enabling volunteers to voice their ideas and opinions about the work of the organisation.
- Other staff – staff not directly responsible for volunteers should be prepared to assist volunteers and staff training in working with volunteers should be provided if necessary.

DOCUMENTS

Below you will find some guidance on writing policies and risk assessments etc aimed at young volunteers. There are also some blank forms you are welcome to use for your organisation.

[Guidance on Writing a Volunteer Policy](#)

Section A

This section outlines the principles on which your involvement of volunteers is based.

1. **Principles** - Start your policy with an explanation of what your organisation does, and why it involves volunteers in its work. This helps to put both the policy and the volunteer programme into context. It is also useful to include a statement of intent, setting out the principles that will inform your involvement of volunteers – for example, this is where you state that you will not use volunteers to replace paid staff and also to state that your organisation complies with the Data Protection Act in respect of keeping records on volunteers.
2. **Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers** - Include some or all the following:
“In involving volunteers we recognise the right of volunteers to:
 - know what is expected of them and to be given clear information and induction
 - have clearly specified lines of support and supervision
 - respect confidentiality and privacy
 - be shown appreciation
 - have safe working conditions
 - be insured
 - know what their rights and responsibilities are
 - be paid expenses
 - holidays and breaks
 - be trained and receive ongoing opportunities for learning and development
 - be free from discrimination
 - experience personal development through their participation as volunteers
 - ask for a reference
 - be consulted on decisions that will affect what they do;
 - withdraw from voluntary work
3. Volunteers have the responsibility carry out their tasks in a way which corresponds to the aims and values of this organisation:-
 - volunteer within agreed guidelines and remits
 - respect confidentiality
 - respect other volunteers, service users and staff
 - respect the human rights of others
 - carry out their tasks with a regard for others health and safety
 - attend training and support sessions where appropriate.

Section B

This section gives more specific policy statements.

1. **Recruitment and Selection** - It's a good idea to include a couple of sentences about your recruitment process in the policy. Some points you may wish to include are:
 - A statement regarding your organisations' commitment to equal opportunities when recruiting and selecting volunteers.
 - How will you advertise for volunteers?
Will you use application forms?
 - How will you interview volunteers?
Will you request references?
 - How will you deal with people you feel are not right for the volunteer role they are interested in?
 - If your organisation works with children, young people or other vulnerable clients, what procedures are in place for screening potential volunteers (i.e. disclosures and self-declaration forms). State at what point in the recruitment process the disclosure check will be requested, how the level of disclosure requested is determined and that this will be stated on the task description and the procedure for completing and returning self-declaration forms. You can then refer to the other policies you have in place to deal with disclosures.
2. **Induction and Training** - Include statements on induction training and any trial period that your organisation operates. Also state that volunteers will have equal access to training to enable them to develop their capabilities and personal competence appropriate to their volunteering role.
3. **Expenses** are extremely important to volunteers and are also important to your organisation in helping to attract a diverse volunteer 'workforce'.
Reimbursing volunteers' expenses means that volunteering is accessible to all, regardless of income.
Including information about the reimbursement of expenses in your policy makes it clear that your organisation values its volunteers and is actively making sure that barriers do not exist to volunteer involvement. However, it is important that volunteers are paid out of pocket expenses only, or your organisation could fall foul of national minimum wage legislation and your volunteers may be open to investigation by the Inland Revenue and/or Benefits Agency.
Let volunteers know that reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.
You should give details of which expenses are paid and to what value.
4. **Supervision and Support** - the kind of support that you provide for volunteers will depend on the type of work they are involved in. However, in most cases volunteers should have a named supervisor and regular supervision meetings to discuss any problems or issues that may arise. You can also refer to any group support sessions that are available.

5. **Volunteer Voice** - It is advisable to encourage volunteers to express their views on matters concerning the organisation and to facilitate this process you may wish to nominate a volunteer representative to sit on the management committee to liaise between the volunteers and the committee. You may wish to state in the policy that other volunteers will also be encouraged to stand for the management committee.

6. **Insurance** is a very important issue, but one that many organisations forget about in relation to volunteers. Including a sentence about how volunteers are insured is an easy way of making sure that everyone who encounters your organisation can see that volunteers are covered. Volunteers should be insured under either public or employer's liability cover.

7. **Equal opportunities and diversity** - While volunteers are generally not covered by equal opportunities legislation, it is clearly good practice to include them in your equal opportunities and/or diversity policy.
Ideally all your policies will have a commitment to equal opportunities and diversity at their heart. Restating your commitment to offering equal opportunity to volunteers from different backgrounds within your Volunteer Policy shows that you take the issue seriously and should indicate that all your organisation's other policies have been written with inclusivity in mind.

8. **Health and Safety** - Organisations have a duty of care to avoid exposing volunteers to risks to their health and safety. Your organisation should have a health and safety policy in place, with volunteers being made aware of the policy and practical safety issues as part of their induction.
Including basic information about the policy in your Volunteer Policy is a good way of reminding people about it and signposting them to the health and safety policy proper.

9. **Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures**
 - What will you do if a volunteer has a grievance with your organisation?
 - Or if a volunteer has acted in an inappropriate manner?
 - Including information about grievance and disciplinary procedures shows that you have a well-planned strategy around involving volunteers and have thought ahead about how you would deal with any problems.
 - Make sure that you have clear procedures in place to deal with complaints by or about volunteers.
 - It's a good idea to have separate procedures from those for paid staff, both to ensure that they are as understandable and user friendly as possible, and to keep some distinctiveness between staff and volunteers.

10. **Confidentiality** - Volunteers should be bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff.
Including information about this in your policy may well be helpful in calming some of the fears that staff or people working with your organisation may have about volunteers being 'unprofessional'.

11. **Local Volunteering Sector/Networking** - To demonstrate that your organisation's commitment to volunteering extends to the wider volunteering community, you may wish to include a statement on how you will develop relationships with the local volunteering sector, particularly in relation to the way you work with your local Volunteer Centre.
12. **Review of Policy** - Once you have developed your Volunteer Policy it needs to be reviewed regularly for relevance and revised as needed.
Gaps in policy will continually surface as factors in the volunteering environment, the organisation, the community, and the law change.
The process of review can be beneficial as it provides the opportunity to involve a range of volunteers, staff and management committee at policy level.
13. **Responsibility for Implementation** - Overall responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and review of the policy and procedures usually lies with the Chair of the Management Committee or Board of Directors and, on a day-to-day basis, with the senior staff/volunteers.

Young volunteer agreement

Having a young volunteer agreement can help cross any barriers between the young person and their role. It should be clearly laid out and explain expectations, and it should be signed by the young person. Below is an example of this:

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

Volunteers are an important and valued part of *[organisation name]*. We hope that you enjoy volunteering with us and feel a full part of our team.

This agreement tells you what you can expect from us, and what we hope from you. We aim to be flexible, so please let us know if you would like to make any changes and we will do our best to accommodate them.

We, *[organisation name]*, will do our best:

- To introduce you to how the organisation works and your role in it and to provide any training you need. The initial training agreed is *[insert details]*.
- To provide regular meetings with a main point of contact so that you can tell us if you are happy with how your tasks are organised and get feedback from us. Your manager's/supervisor's name is *[insert details]*.
- To respect your skills, dignity, and individual wishes and to do our best to meet them.
- To reimburse your travel and meal costs up to our current maximum*.
- To consult with you and keep you informed of possible changes.
- To insure you against injury you suffer or cause due to negligence*.
- To provide a safe workplace*.
- To apply our equal opportunities policy.
- To apply our complaints procedure if there is any problem.
- To provide you with a reference (character or professional) to help you in the future.

I, *[insert name of volunteer]*, agree to do my best:

- To work reliably to the best of my ability, and to give as much warning as possible whenever I cannot work when expected.
- To follow *[organisation name]*'s rules and procedures, including health and safety, equal opportunities, and confidentiality.

*More details on these issues are provided in the Induction handbook.

Note: this agreement is in honour only and is not intended to be a legally binding contract of employment.

Volunteer Name:

Date signed:

Supervisor's Name:

Date signed:

Volunteer Support and Supervision Form

This form can be used during a support meeting, to help engage the young person. This is just a guide and you must let the meetings take their own flow.

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION FORM

Volunteer Name:.....

Name of supervisor:.....

Date of meeting:.....

How has your volunteering with us been going, since we last met?

Is there anything you would like to discuss about your volunteering in this session?

Action points:

-
-
-
-
-

Any comments:

Volunteer signature:

Date signed:

Supervisor signature:

Date signed:

Young volunteers consent form - Parental Permission and photo consent

It is important to get the young person and parents to sign a consent form. It should clearly set out what is expected from the young person and their parents.

YOUNG VOLUNTEERS CONSENT FORM

Name of the organisation:

Volunteers Start Date:

Personal details

Young person's name:

Date of birth:

Address and postcode:

.....

.....

Parents' and carers' permission

- I give permission for my son or daughter to take part in the volunteering above, including all the activities involved.
- I have ascertained what activities are involved and this permission extends to all activities involved in this event.
- I understand that although staff or leaders in charge of the activities will take all reasonable care of the party members, they cannot necessarily be held responsible for any loss, damage or injury my son or daughter suffers as a result of their volunteering activity.

Your name:

Signature:

Relationship to the young person:

Address and postcode (if different from the young person's):

.....

.....

Contact number: Day

Evening:

Mobile:

Emergency Contact Form

If there is an emergency and we are not able to contact you, please give the details of someone else we can contact and sign below.

Name:

Contact number:

If your son or daughter becomes ill or has an accident requiring emergency hospital treatment, please authorise the organisation named above, or someone acting on their behalf, to sign any hospital written consent form needed if contact with you cannot be obtained and the doctor has recommended that such treatment is in the child's best interests.

Your signature:

Date:

Medical details

This information will be kept confidential among the staff and/or volunteers in charge of the activity your child is participating in. You are not obliged to give this information, but it is your responsibility to disclose any information that relates to your child's health and we are not responsible if we have not been informed of a health related matter.

Has your son or daughter ever had, or do they still suffer from, any of the following?

- | | |
|---|--------|
| ● Asthma or bronchitis | Yes No |
| ● Heart condition, fits, fainting or blackouts | Yes No |
| ● Severe headaches or migraine | Yes No |
| ● Anxiety or depression | Yes No |
| ● Diabetes | Yes No |
| ● Epilepsy | Yes No |
| ● Allergies to any known drugs | Yes No |
| ● Any other allergies, such as food | Yes No |
| ● Please list any allergies: | |
| ● Contact with any infectious illness in the last three weeks | Yes No |
| ● Other illness or disability not named above | Yes No |
| ● Receiving any medical treatment | Yes No |
| ● If you answer 'Yes' to any of these, please give full details | |

Name and address of the young person's doctor:

.....
.....

Contact number:.....

Dietary requirements:

Does your son or daughter have any specific dietary needs, such as vegetarian, low cholesterol, gluten-free or halal? If 'Yes' please give details.

Further information

Our organisation regularly takes photos and videos of visitors for publicity. Before taking images of children under the age of 16, we need their parents' or carers' permission. May we use images of your son or daughter for publicity (including in brochures) or on our website?

Parent's/Carer's Signature:

Date signed:

We consider young people taking part in this event to be responsible for their own actions. By signing this form, you accept that your son or daughter will follow the rules of the event and the organisation.

Young person's signature:

Date signed:

Parent's/Carer's Signature:

Date signed:.....

Health and Safety Checklist

This is a really easy way to manage and make sure you have everything you feel is important and necessary to keep both the young person and the organisation safe. It can be adapted to your needs.

This is just a guideline. It can also be shown to parents/carers or young people who might have any concerns to their health or safety whilst volunteering with your organisation.

HEALTH AND SAFETY CHECKLIST

Name of organisation:

Event date:

Location:

General Legal Requirements

Please complete this form before an event takes place. If the activity is ongoing, this checklist should be used on a regular basis to ensure that insurance and other policies are checked and updated.

If you check 'No' to any of the below, it is your legal responsibility to action this as soon as possible and before any activity or event takes place.

Do you have current and adequate insurance cover for the following areas which extends to cover the people (i.e. children and young people) taking part in the event and the event (i.e. type of event)?

- ☐ Employers Liability Insurance
- ☐ Public Liability Insurance
- ☐ Motor Vehicle Insurance

If you employ people, you are required by law to have a health and safety policy, which must be written if you employ five or more people. It is recommended that all organisations, those with employees or run on a voluntary basis, have written and displayed their health and safety policy and have completed risk assessments for each event or on an ongoing basis for regular activities.

- ☐ Health and Safety at work Policy

Arrangements for putting the policy into place:

- ☐ Staff Induction
- ☐ Volunteer Induction
- ☐ Regular and updated training
- ☐ Information sessions
- ☐ Have a 'Health and Safety Law - what you should know' poster displayed
- ☐ Provided a health and safety leaflet for each person at each location
- ☐ If necessary, are you registered with the appropriate enforcing agency e.g. the local authority if you are providing food

- ☐ A person trained in Health and Safety
- ☐ Do you have arrangements for providing employees and volunteers with an induction to, and updated training on, health and safety?
- ☐ Have you made the people taking part aware of who the employee/volunteer health and safety representative is, and their role and responsibilities?

Accidents and emergencies

- ☐ Do you have procedures and staff in place to deal with any accidents or emergencies?
- ☐ Do you have adequate and appropriate equipment and facilities for first aid? Have you appointed someone to take charge of first aid arrangements?
- ☐ Do you record accidents in an accident book?
- ☐ Are you familiar with the requirements for reporting accidents set out in the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations of 1995 (RIDDOR)?
- ☐ Do you have a current fire certificate for the premises?

Personal protective equipment and welfare

- ☐ Will you make sure that the volunteers taking part are provided with appropriate personal protective equipment and clothing of the correct size? Will you make sure that the volunteers taking part are trained to use all necessary personal protective equipment and clothing?
- ☐ Do you have accessible and appropriate toilets and washing facilities, including soap and drying facilities?

Risk assessment

- ☐ Have you assessed the risks to the health and safety of your employees and others affected by your work, including arrangements for the safety and protection of people taking part while in your organisation and at each location?
- ☐ Do you have arrangements in place to review and, if necessary, adjust risk assessments if someone taking part has a disability or a learning or language difficulty, or is inexperienced?
- ☐ Have you taken all appropriate steps to put the findings of your risk assessments into practice?

Health and Safety responsibility:

Please provide contact details of the person in your organisation who responsible for health and safety

Name:

Address:

Contact number:

Email:

Supervision

- ☐ Will you arrange to give the volunteers taking part appropriate information, instruction and supervision?
- ☐ Will you appoint someone to have overall responsibility for supervising the volunteers taking part?
- ☐ Will supervisory standards take account of the experience of the volunteers taking part and the dangers associated with the tasks carried out?
- ☐ Will the supervisor be aware of their health and safety responsibilities towards the volunteers taking part?

Training

- ☐ Will you arrange to give the volunteers taking part appropriate health and safety training?
- ☐ Will each volunteers taking part receive health and safety training to cover all the activities they will be undertaking as part of the activity?
- ☐ Will each volunteer taking part be made aware of their responsibilities concerning health and safety?

Declaration

I confirm that the information I have given on this form is correct. I promise to tell *[insert contact name]* immediately about any changes.

Name:

Signature:

Role in the organisation:

Date signed:

Team fact sheet

This can be used for when you are briefing your team about young volunteers. This is good practise to safeguard your current staff/volunteers and the young people they could encounter.

Again, this is just a guide, and it can be adapted with anything that is relevant to your team.

TEAM FACT SHEET

Having A Young Volunteer In Your Team

Young volunteers need to be supported age-appropriately and depending on age, different levels of support will be required.

What follows is a suggested list of good practice guidelines.

Professional boundaries:

- Never give a young person your home address or telephone number;
- Do not loan money to young people or borrow it from them
- Do not use inappropriate language (including jokes) in front of young people (and challenge them if they do to you!)
- Do not smoke in front of young people
- Report any substance use to a senior worker immediately (even if you suspect it); young people under the influence should not be attending sessions
- Do not offer lifts to young people (unless you have agreed this with a senior worker and have handed in the necessary documentation)
- Do not call the young people names or make jokes that could offend them
- Try not to undermine parents, teachers etc – there are two sides to every story!
- Report any concerns (including abuse, drugs and alcohol, risky behaviour and anti-social behaviour) to the senior worker
- Do not give or receive gifts/cards etc. (speak to senior worker if necessary)
- Never contact a young person on Facebook, Instagram, through their email or via their contact number

Volunteers have rights and responsibilities

Volunteer Rights:

- To be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses as agreed
- Not to be asked to do anything that compromises your beliefs or makes you feel uncomfortable
- To be supported and have regular supervision
- To be included in team/planning meetings
- To be able to speak to the lead worker if you have any problems
- To have an induction
- To be listened to and valued.

Volunteer Responsibilities:

- To be reliable and offer a minimum commitment of 12 months
- To arrive on time and let your volunteer manager know if you are going to be late
- To let your volunteer manager know 24 hours in advance if you cannot make the session
- To be part of a team and involved in planning, delivering and evaluating sessions
- To report any concerns about other volunteer, or member of staff to your volunteer manager
- To behave responsibly and safely at all times
- To complete relevant paperwork
- To follow guidance around health and safety and Child Protection

Risk Assessment

All personnel conducting risk assessments must do so in accordance with the hazard management procedure HM1 Risk Assessment and the guidance provided on this form. This guidance is also provided to assist personnel with the interpretation of risk assessments.

Column 1 contains all hazards identified by the risk assessor and any other personnel involved in conducting the risk assessment.

Column 2 lists the number of known previous incidents as a result of this hazard. This can be useful in identifying trends.

Column 3 identifies all groups of personnel who could be exposed to the hazard and how they may be harmed by such exposure.

Column 4 lists the control measures already in place to reduce the likelihood / consequences of the hazard causing harm.

Column 5 is the levels of risk remaining despite the control measures that are currently implemented.

The risk matrix below should be used to assist in calculating and interpreting the level of risk. The level of risk is calculated by investigating the likelihood of a hazard realising its potential and the severity of the consequences. By using the matrix a risk level can then be identified. Risk levels will be Low (L), Medium (M), High (H) or Very High (VH).

Risk Matrix

Matrix to be used to calculate levels of risk.

Low (1-4) – Trivial risk with no further action required

Medium (5-9) – Acceptable risk but look for areas of improvement

High (10-16) – Tolerable risk but improve control measures if possible

Very High (17-25) – Stop operations and make immediate improvements

Column 6 is used for the identification of further control measures required to reduce the level of risk further. Further controls must be investigated unless the level of risk is assessed as being minimised by the existing control measures. The hierarchy of control is used to identify appropriate control measures. A typical hierarchy of control would look at;

- Elimination of the hazard, avoid risk altogether Replace the dangerous with less dangerous
- Enclosure / isolation of a hazard or person conducting task Engineering controls (guards, equipment design, etc)
- Safe systems of Work (reduce exposure time; reduce number of people exposed etc) PPE
- Information and training

Column 7 identifies the person responsible for the implementation of additional control measures and a date for the implementation to be complete.

Column 8 Is the residual risk rating after implementation of additional control measures.

Young Person Risk Assessment

Scope: This risk assessment has been conducted to assess the levels of risk associated with a young person volunteering at [ORGANISATION NAME]. The Young Person Risk Assessment is in addition to the workplace Risk Assessment and all other control measures in place.				Risk Assessors: FIRST NAME LAST NAME Assessment Date: DD/MM/YYYY Review Date: Ongoing			
(1) What could go wrong? (Hazard)	(2) Previous incidents	(3) Who could be harmed and how?	(4) Existing controls	(5) Risk L/M/H/ VH	(6) New controls / actions (Consider eliminating first)	(7) Action by/completion date	(8) Residual Risk L/M/H/VH
Example... Transmission / infection of Covid 19		Young people, staff, volunteers and service users	A Comprehensive Covid 19 Risk Assessment has been carried out to ensure the service can	M	Young People like all staff and Volunteers are required to Lateral Follow Test. Testing to be conducted prior to	NAME DATE	L
Example.... Verbal abuse and / or		Young people	[Organisation name] has a comprehensive Safeguarding Policy.	L	Young People will not work / volunteer without supervision Supervising staff will	NAME DATE	L

[Insert additional rows as needed]

REFERENCES

This toolkit could have not been written without the information gathered from the following sources.

- Health and Safety Executive - Volunteering and Social Action

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/voluntary/>

- NSPCC Learning - Young Volunteers and safeguarding;

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/working-with-young-volunteers#heading-top>

- Volunteer Edinburgh - Guidance for organisations to support young volunteers

[https://www.volunteeredinburgh.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Guidance for organisations to support young volunteers.pdf?5f61941924bd1](https://www.volunteeredinburgh.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Guidance_for_organisations_to_support_young_volunteers.pdf?5f61941924bd1)

- Volunteering Kingston - Involving Young Volunteers

<https://www.volunteeringkingston.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Involving-young-volunteers.pdf>