

# Volunteer Policy

Updated review date: Jan 2007  
Review date: Jan – March 2010



## Introduction

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Voluntary Action Westminster (VAW) recognises that there are situations in which volunteers' help can make an appropriate and significant contribution to the work and service objectives of the organisation. This document, the VAW volunteer policy, defines the term and sets out the principles, practices and procedures which VAW will follow in the appointment, management and supervision of volunteers.

## Definition

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Volunteers may be described as individuals who put their experience, knowledge and skills at the disposal of an organisation, free of charge, with the primary aim of helping the organisation to achieve its service objectives and or with the primary aim of bringing some benefit to the local community. In this sense, volunteers are to be distinguished from students, other work placements, and secondees, where the primary aim is usually for the student or secondee to obtain certain work experience or to carry out work or research in certain areas.

## Principles

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In appointing volunteers VAW will adhere to the following principles:

- Volunteers will not be used to do the work of paid staff during an industrial dispute
- Current VAW employees will not be engaged as volunteers at the organisation.

## Recruitment of volunteers

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VAW aims to encourage diversity and positively welcomes volunteers regardless of race, religion, sexuality, gender, age or disability.

Any potential volunteers should be issued with the following paperwork if they express an interest at volunteering.

- A volunteer application form
- A volunteer agreement
- An induction pack

- Any other relevant information.

Depending on the role, the interested party will then be invited to an informal interview where they will discuss the role and requirements. References will normally be requested after the interview. Successful volunteers will be asked to provide two proofs of identity and may be required to complete a CRB check.

## Supervision/Management

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Prior to commencing their placement at VAW, each successful volunteer shall be formally allocated to a particular employee who will manage and supervise the volunteer throughout the duration of her/his placement at VAW. The manager's responsibilities will include ensuring that the volunteer receives the following:

- An induction to VAW;
- Regular supervision and support sessions as required by their role
- Positive feedback on their contribution
- Adequate office accommodation, equipment and services to perform their tasks effectively.

## Equal opportunities

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Voluntary Action Westminster recognises that the activity of volunteering can provide a volunteer with experiences and opportunities for self and career development. In accordance with VAW's equal opportunity policy, volunteer placements at VAW will be therefore be open to individuals irrespective of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age or marital status. In addition, the specification must set out the equal opportunity dimension and any specific equality requirements of the role. Where, during the panel meeting (see above) a prospective volunteer demonstrates hostility to, or a clear lack of support for equal opportunity policy, s/he will be deemed automatically to be unsuitable for a volunteer position at VAW.

## Termination

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Where appropriate, the role and placement of the volunteer may be terminated by the Chief Officer or his appointed deputy at one week's notice, or immediately, where behaviour equivalent to gross misconduct has occurred. In all cases the volunteer will be entitled to an explanation of the decision and action taken. The Chief Officer will report any such terminations to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

## Discipline and grievance

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Volunteers will not be subject to VAW's disciplinary procedures. Correspondingly, volunteers will not have access to VAW's grievance procedures. However, volunteers will be entitled to use VAW's complaints procedure. Where appropriate, the complaint will be investigated fully by the Chief Officer or her/his representative.

## Expenses

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Volunteers should not be out of pocket through their involvement with VAW. All volunteers are entitled to their volunteer-related travel expenses refunded and £3 for lunch if present at VAW for a full day and £2 if present at VAW for half a day. Volunteers are asked to provide receipts for all expenses incurred.

## Insurance

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Volunteers will be covered by VAW's employer's public liability, professional indemnity where appropriate, and personal accident insurance.

## Training and involvement

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Where a volunteer is based at Voluntary Action Westminster on a day to day basis s/he will be expected to be involved and included in general staff activities, such as staff meetings, training, and to have general access to VAW offices.

## Personal Records:

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Records of volunteers will be kept, including application forms, references, and supervision notes. References will be supplied for volunteers who have been with VAW for more than 6 months or 25 days. References will be supplied for up to one year. Volunteers can request an open testimonial during this time.