Time2Volunteer is passionate about promoting best practice around recruiting and managing volunteers. Our Partners have adopted the following Volunteering Principles and Charter to reflect a consistent approach to volunteer management.

We want to ensure that all organisations and groups endorsed by Time2Volunteer are investing in and supporting their volunteers to a great standard.

As such, we ask that to be endorsed and have your opportunities appear on Time2Volunteer, you have read and adhere to the following Time2Volunteer Volunteering Principles & Charter:

**Introduction**

Volunteering is the giving of time freely and without pressure for the benefit of others with no financial gain. Volunteers are a valuable resource, and their involvement can bring a wide range of benefits for any organisation. Volunteers add capacity, quality and often a valuable unique dimension. Volunteering however does not happen by accident; it needs planning, resources, and on-going support.

**Aims**

* To encourage potential volunteers to step forward and empower and enable organisations to welcome them.
* To ensure that the involvement of volunteers in our area is delivered consistently, fairly and in line with legal frameworks and best practice.
* To individually and collectively strive for volunteering excellence.

 **Guiding Principles**

The following guiding principles have been developed to support the achievement of these aims.

* To deliver a volunteering offer that provides rich and varied opportunities and experiences for all individual volunteering aspirations and goals.
* Recognition that the act of volunteering is personal to the individual and each has different motivations to volunteer.
* To take time to understand these motivations from an individual perspective with a view to harnessing them, as opposed to merely matching against an organisational need.
* To recognise a successful volunteering experience is dependent on a good match between the individual and the role, and that not all roles will be suitable for every volunteer but there is usually a suitable role for almost everyone.
* To not limit individual potential to a specific role, programme, or geography or by unnecessary or repetitive restrictions or hurdles; but to be agile and responsive to interest and motivations.
* To acknowledge that volunteers in any programme are not an exclusive group and should move freely, but to also not assume that this volunteer time is there for the movement and taking by others.
* To recognise that supporting and developing volunteers is as important as breadth and fulfillment of roles.
* To recognise and celebrate volunteering, and be mindful that ‘reward’ and ‘rewarding experiences’ mean different things to different people and should be delivered within best practice frameworks.
* To also acknowledge that people do not necessarily associate an act with volunteering and so it goes beyond ‘formal’ volunteering.
* To ensure volunteering is diverse and accessible, and actively encouraged by all ages and backgrounds.

**Legal & Best Practice Framework**

As a partnership we are committed to ensuring that we lead by example and promote best practice in volunteering, and ensure that we and the organisations who we support, follow the following best practice and legal obligations as a minimum:

* Volunteering should always be a matter of free choice and it must never exploit the volunteer.
* All volunteers should be informed about their rights and responsibilities.
* It is important to recognise that managing volunteers is different from managing staff. There is no contractual relationship between volunteers and the organisation. Instead the relationship is based on mutually agreed expectations about the role.
* Organisations should ensure volunteers work in an environment which respects and includes everyone and is free from discrimination, harassment and unequal treatment.
* Volunteers must not directly replace paid staff and should not be used to undermine current or future paid roles.
* Volunteers will not be included in any counts of staffing levels.
* Volunteers should not carry out duties formerly carried out by paid workers nor should they be used to disguise the effects of non-filled vacancies or cuts in services, nor undertake the work of paid workers during industrial disputes.
* Volunteers should not be used to reduce contract costs nor be a replacement for paid workers in competitive tenders or procurement processes.
* Volunteers should not be used to bypass minimum wage legislation nor generate profit for owners.
* Volunteers should receive a coherent role/task description (not to be referred to or confused with a job description) that provides a clear understanding of the aims and objectives of the role.
* Volunteers should receive no financial reward for their time however out of pocket expenses should be covered, and these should be excluded from any form of taxation.
* No one should be prevented from volunteering due to their income.
* Volunteers are entitled to refuse tasks that go against their beliefs and/or convictions.
* Volunteers should be provided with the appropriate training, tools, equipment and materials to enable them to carry out their role and related tasks.
* All volunteer involving organisations have a duty of care to volunteers and must ensure volunteers are protected from physical, financial and emotional harm while volunteering.
* Volunteers can expect to carry out their duties in safe, secure and healthy environments with appropriate break periods, and to be protected by appropriate insurance cover.
* There should be established systems whereby resolution to any problems or complaints between volunteers, organisation and paid staff, may be addressed.
* There should be mutual expectations around the commitment of the volunteer to their role and the organisation to their volunteers in providing them with the appropriate level of support.
* Effective structures should be put in place to support, train and develop volunteers and their collaboration with paid workers.

Whilst it is not expected that all organisations who utilise volunteers undertake the Investors in Volunteers Quality Standard; but by being mindful of the framework will guide you towards delivering best practice:

* Indicator 1: Vision for volunteering - Volunteering is embedded within the overall vision, values, culture and aims of the organisation and its impact is recognised and communicated. Organisations understand why they involve volunteers.
* Indicator 2: Planning for volunteers - People, policies and procedures have been put in place to ensure volunteering is well-managed.
* Indicator 3: Volunteer Inclusion - There is a positive approach to inclusion, equity and diversity and a proactive approach to making volunteering accessible.
* Indicator 4: Recruiting and welcoming volunteers - It is easy for people to find out about opportunities, explore whether they are right for them, and get involved.
* Indicator 5: Supporting volunteers - Volunteers feel supported at all times, that they are a part of the organisation and that their contribution makes a difference.
* Indicator 6: Valuing and developing volunteers - Volunteers are valued and there are opportunities for volunteers to develop and grow through their experience.

**Expectations of Volunteers**

Whilst volunteers are giving their time freely, and there should never be anything implied that constitutes or could be perceived as a contractual relationship; it is reasonable to request and expect volunteers to conduct themselves within legal and ethical guidelines and in accordance with the organisation’s policies and procedures. As an alternative, it is good practice to have in place a Volunteer Agreement which outlines the commitments and expectations of both the organisation and volunteer. An example of such an agreement is downloadable as a separate resource.