



COMPACT

CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE ON VOLUNTEERING

Moorlands Together Compact is an agreement between Voluntary and Community groups in the Staffordshire Moorlands and Statutory partners. It is supported by the Local Strategic Partnership and aims to improve working relationships for the benefit of the community we all serve.

This Code of Good Practice supports and complements the Compact and it's 'way of working' in the Staffordshire Moorlands.

Undertakings

All partners undertake to:

- ❑ Work in partnership, together to improve public perception of volunteering, by raising the profile, status and range of volunteering activity.
- ❑ Work together to ensure that volunteering is open to all.
- ❑ Adopt jointly, clear policies regarding payment of volunteer expenses.
- ❑ Make visible the value of volunteers' contribution to our community, by the use of publications and the wider media.
- ❑ Recognise that voluntary activity should not be used as a substitute for paid work.
- ❑ Work together to create and maintain a modern and dynamic volunteering infrastructure.

Statutory partners undertake to:

- ❑ Consult, through the Local Strategic Partnership, with voluntary and community organisations, so that policies and planning in all areas, takes account of volunteers and their activity in the community.
- ❑ Work to reduce barriers to volunteering which result from the policy and planning decisions they make.
- ❑ Recognise the legitimacy of voluntary and community groups, when including the costs of encouraging access by volunteers, in relevant funding applications.
- ❑ Recognise that volunteer representing organisations have an independent structure within the sector.
- ❑ Adopt policies to ensure that all volunteering infrastructure has realistic long term funding.

Voluntary and Community sector partners undertake to:

- ❑ Promote volunteering and ensure it is inclusive to all members of our community.
- ❑ Include the reasonable costs of reducing barriers to volunteering, in relevant funding bids.
- ❑ Work to identify and source resources to support and train volunteers.
- ❑ Involve volunteers in all decision-making processes and keep them informed of all developments across the sector.
- ❑ Contribute to volunteering representation by supporting and encouraging representation at appropriate levels.
- ❑ Being a strong responsible and respected voice for volunteering in the public arena
- ❑ Promote the concept of the 'Compact way of working' and its relevance to volunteering in the community.

Who does the Code apply to?

This Code of Good Practice applies to all signatories of the Moorlands Together Compact.

It is endorsed by the Moorlands Together Local Strategic Partnership.

Understanding Volunteering

- Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship and fundamental to democracy. It is freely undertaken and not for financial gain.
- Volunteering is defined as **an activity involving spending time, unpaid; doing something that aims to benefit the environment, or individuals or groups other than (or in addition to) close relatives.**
- People volunteer for many different reasons. The key element is that it is freely undertaken.

The importance of Volunteering

- Volunteering is a powerful force for change, both for those who volunteer and the wider community. Volunteers offer support, expertise and innovation to any organisation, enhancing impact and value.
- All decision makers need to be aware of the ways that their decisions and actions affect volunteering and voluntary activity.

Overcoming barriers to volunteering

- Barriers to volunteering can be due to a variety of causes; they **must be challenged, through policy and procedure.** They may include physical barriers, attitudes and behaviour by individuals, or access to opportunity in society.
- Statutory partners will adopt clear policies regarding the payment of volunteers' expenses. They will acknowledge that volunteers should not be out of pocket and should be reimbursed with their expenses as of right. They will recognise that volunteering is not cost free and support and promotion will need appropriate resources.
- Where barriers to volunteering are identified in policies or procedures, they will be challenged and removed.

Undertakings

- **All partners will** adopt clear policies regarding payment of volunteer expenses. Volunteers should not be out-of-pocket because of their activities, and will be encouraged to claim.
- Work to tackle discrimination and make volunteering open to all.

Commit to providing access to the Criminal records Bureau Disclosure service, where appropriate, at no cost to the volunteer.

Statutory partners will

- Consult in line with the Code of Practice on Consultation within this Compact, and take account of the way their decisions may affect volunteers and volunteering. Work to remove barriers to volunteering within their existing policies and procedures. They will recognise that it is legitimate for voluntary and community partners to include costs of enabling volunteering in their applications, where appropriate.

Voluntary and Community Sector will

- Work to allow volunteers to gain information on opportunities that is both diverse and inclusive. They will promote volunteering, where resources allow, facilitating recruitment within an inclusive and informative environment, including relevant costs in funding or procurement bids.

Valuing Volunteer' Contributions

- **The contribution of volunteers can often go unacknowledged.**
- Volunteers make a significant contribution to the Staffordshire Moorlands community. Volunteering is more than performing a service, they can articulate and highlight unmet needs in our community and actively promote the improvement of the needs provision in the Staffordshire Moorlands to the benefit of all citizens. Their contribution and the added value it brings, should be recognised, listened to and celebrated.

Undertakings

All partners will develop, promote and celebrate volunteering.

- Acknowledging that volunteering is an expression of active citizenship and the human right to assemble and associate freely.
- Keep good data on volunteering.
- Communicate to volunteers their value to our community.
- Recognise the need to support, manage and resource volunteers, building the resources needed into all decisions on policy and procedures where it is appropriate to do so.
- Work to make volunteering opportunities, accessible to all, supporting small volunteer user organisations in attracting volunteers from the widest spectrum of the local community.
- Acknowledge that volunteering activity should never be used as a substitute for paid work. Roles for volunteers should always be appropriate and distinctive.
- Each organisation should identify a named person to lead on involving volunteering; following a comprehensive briefing, they should encourage consultation with volunteers wherever and whenever possible. This person will monitor and report on the contribution of

volunteers enabling the celebration and acknowledgement of their contribution to our community.

Volunteering Infrastructure

- The volunteering infrastructure is the physical facilities, structures, systems, relationships and people that exist to support, develop and represent those front line organisations who deliver support to our community through volunteer contributions. They work to develop and regenerate its local community.

It includes the important role of volunteer centres

- This structure has a unique role in supporting volunteers and volunteer using groups. The partners commit to support this infrastructure through investment for the long term.
- They will recognise the unique nature and independence of the infrastructure and work together to maintain it.

Taking the Code forward

All partners will put this Code into practice.

- They will promote volunteering at every opportunity and appoint a 'Volunteers Champion' within their respective organisations.
- The Local Strategic Partnership will adopt this code alongside the Compact for the Moorlands and ensure it is reviewed annually by the Compact Implementation Group, seeking to measure the progress of its implementation. They will receive and implement each annual review.