

Compact
working together | better together



**Volunteering in Southend-on-Sea
A Code of Good Practice**

‘Success Through Partnership’

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The Compact for Southend-on-Sea sets out the expectations between the voluntary and community sector and statutory organisations

1 Introduction

A Compact for Southend-on-Sea and The Codes of Good Practice

The Compact is a framework for partnership working between statutory organisations and the voluntary and community sector.

The Compact sets out:

- A shared vision.
- Undertakings from both sides.
- Commitment to respect the independence of the voluntary and community sector.
- Systems to help make sure that the agreement works.

The Compact will be supported by Codes of Good Practice in the areas of Funding, Consultation and policy appraisal, Volunteering, Community Groups, including those which are Faith Based and Black and Minority Ethnic organisations.

This is the first of the Codes of Good Practice which will add more detail to the principles laid out in The Compact document. The Code was written by a working group of representatives from the Voluntary and Community Sector and Statutory Bodies

2. Volunteering

Volunteering is recognised as ‘an important expression of citizenship and essential to democracy’. It takes many different forms but is essentially about freely committing time and energy for the benefit of society and the community, without expecting any financial reward. Volunteers contribute to every facet of human life and it is vital to value the important contribution that volunteering makes to the quality of life in Southend-on-Sea.

3. Key Principles:

- Commitment to working together to expand public perception of Volunteering by improving the profile, status and range of volunteer activity.
- Ensuring that volunteers are brought into the policy making process.
- Challenging barriers to volunteering including institutional, geographical and those due to attitudes.

4. Key Undertakings:

- Statutory Sector – Check all proposed legislation and regulations for potential impacts on volunteering, and encourage better practice in recruiting and managing volunteers.
- Voluntary and Community Sector – Improve the management and recruitment of Volunteers, giving them better training and support, and to help volunteers find appropriate roles.

5. Aims

Through this code we aim:

- to provide a framework of good practice for recruiting and managing volunteers that will benefit both service users and the volunteers themselves;
- to promote volunteering as a valued contribution to service delivery and improvement, an important community activity and an opportunity for personal development.

6. Volunteering in Southend-on-Sea

“ being a volunteer allows me to make a vital contribution to all aspects of community life”

A Volunteer is a person that offers to help or does something of his or her own free will, without being paid, this can range from helping a neighbour with their shopping to providing legal advice for a local charity.

There are a number of voluntary and community organisations within Southend-on-Sea that encourage local people to become involved in volunteering.

The scope of voluntary and community involvement includes:

- helping provide a service as an unpaid volunteer within a voluntary or community organisation, the public sector or a private sector body;
- taking part in running a voluntary or community organisation as a trustee, board or committee member.

The Volunteer centre based within Southend Association of Voluntary Services can provide advice and support to local people who want to become more involved in volunteering and community activity.

**Southend Association of
Voluntary Services
Tel: 01702 356000**

7. Principles

The following principles have been identified as fundamental to volunteering:

Choice

Volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual and not as a result of coercion or compulsion. Freedom includes the right to choose not to become involved.

Diversity

Volunteering should be open and inclusive of the whole community of Southend-on-Sea and should reach out to people who are traditionally under-represented. This introduces different perspectives, skills, knowledge and experience to statutory and voluntary sector services and to community activity. Promoting inclusion through volunteering helps people throughout the community to feel usefully involved. Barriers can be overcome by the skills, experience, confidence and contacts gained while helping others.

Reciprocity *Reciprocity – Mutual, given or done in return*

Volunteers are unpaid but they can expect to benefit in other ways in return for their contribution. Such benefits include a sense of worthwhile achievement, useful skills, experience and contacts, sociability and fun and inclusion in the life of the organisation or community. For some, volunteering will equip them for employment.

Recognition

Clear recognition must be given to the contribution volunteers make to the organisation, their community, the economy and to wider social objectives. This is key to developing a fair relationship between volunteers, organisations and the policy and practices of the statutory and voluntary sectors.

8. Support For Volunteering In Southend-On-Sea

Good practice and high standards are essential to promote and support volunteering in Southend-on-Sea.

Guidelines For Supporting Volunteering

All agencies and organisations that involve volunteers in Southend-on-Sea, regardless of the scale of their services and activities, are committed to the following undertakings.

9. Working In Partnership, Together We Will:

- **Promote volunteering in Southend-on-Sea** by working with other organisations to maintain a high public profile and inspire other local people to become volunteers.
- **Share good practice and encourage**, volunteers, voluntary and community organisations to share knowledge and experience with others.
- **Support and value** the worked achieved by volunteers.
- **Listen** to the voice of the individuals/groups supported by volunteers.
- **Recognise** the contribution made by volunteers.
- **Encourage** better practice in recruiting, retaining, supporting and managing volunteers.



The unique contribution of volunteers adds value to service delivery

10. The Statutory Sector Will:

- Take action to promote volunteering amongst those in schools, colleges and universities.
- Aim to increase staff awareness of volunteer contributions to departmental objectives. Additionally, how departmental objectives fit with Active Citizenship, Social Inclusion, Lifelong Learning, Work-Life Balance and other relevant social policy objectives.
- Work to limit the barriers to volunteering and community action presented by existing policies and practices.
- Ensure that all its funding and partnership agreements recognise the contribution made by volunteering.
- Recognise the need for infrastructure support for volunteering.
- Assess how volunteering and community activity contribute to achieving departmental policy and programme objectives, and broader policy objectives. An initial assessment should look at:
 - what kind of volunteer and community activities support departmental policy objectives;
 - numbers of volunteers involved, amount of activity, and details of the diversity of people involved;
 - forms and extent of support for volunteering and community activity provided by the department; and
 - any barriers preventing involvement by specific groups of people especially socially excluded groups.

- Recognise and support the independence of the voluntary and community sector.
- adhere to all undertakings in the section 'The Voluntary and Community Sector Will' where volunteers are engaged by the Statutory Sector.



Volunteering can provide an opportunity for personal development

11. The Voluntary And Community Sector Will:

- Recognise the importance of high standards and effective management of volunteers and that fulfilling this responsibility requires allocation of organisational resources. Staff who recruit, induct and manage volunteers should have this work recognised as part of their job descriptions or work plans, and receive appropriate training and support.
- Ensure proper records are kept of how funding supports volunteering, and the value this produces.
- In partnership with relevant accreditation bodies, encourage and enable (but not compel) accreditation of skills acquired through volunteering for recognised qualifications.
- Ensure that all volunteers have a clear understanding - and a written statement where appropriate - of their own roles and tasks within the organisation and of the organisation's expectations of them.
- Regularly review the roles and responsibilities of volunteers.
- Develop inclusive policies for management, supervision, support, mentoring, training and development roles which recognise the unique contribution volunteers can make.
- Ensure that volunteers are not recruited to fill the place of paid staff.
- Offer to reimburse out of pocket expenses, such as travel and child care and deal efficiently with the reimbursement of volunteer expenses.
- Adequately protect volunteers against any risks involved in volunteering.

- Protect the interests of the organisation and the safety of service users via stringent procedures for checking references and, where appropriate, criminal records.
- Recognise that as part of the reciprocal relationship volunteers should be given thanks and recognition for their contribution at the very least. They should get fair treatment, training and support according to the resources of the organisation with which they are involved.
- Identify a senior manager, or equivalent, to be responsible for volunteer involvement, and for monitoring and reporting on it. Also identify a board-level champion for volunteering.
- Adopt appropriate volunteer policies, in accordance with best practice and this Code.



For the Compact to be effective it is important that all parties take part in consultation and sign up to the document

12. Management Of Volunteers

The following is a checklist designed for use by any organisation or group where paid members of staff manage volunteers:

- Prior to recruitment, be clear about why you want/need a volunteer.
- Provide the volunteer with a clear role/task description, identifying anticipated requirement/s of the organisation.
- Provide the volunteer with an initial induction and training programme.
- Provide the volunteer with appropriate line management.
- Add volunteers to organisation charts. Encourage volunteers to participate in the organisation's wider decision-making process.
- Monitor and acknowledge the contribution that volunteers make to the organisation, to the wider public, to funders and to other volunteers.
- Ask the volunteer what they seek from their placement and share with the volunteer what you want. Remember that any placement should be by mutual consent.
- Always offer to reimburse out-of-pocket expenses. These normally include travel and lunch. Where a placement is away from home, this might also include accommodation and a subsistence allowance
- Ensure that Health and Safety standards are in place and applied equally to all employees (and volunteers). Insurance policies should be extended to cover volunteers.

- Provide opportunities for volunteers to acquire or develop new or existing skills and assist volunteers who want to gain accreditation towards recognised qualifications.
- Volunteers should not be recruited to fill the place of paid staff. This could be perceived as exploitation of the volunteer and deprivation of someone's livelihood.
- Ensure that the work and contribution of the volunteer adds quality and value to the organisation's aims and objectives.
- Ensure that Equal Opportunities and/or diversity policies are in place and applied equally to volunteers. Examine the organisation's ways of working for anything that may pose a barrier for some members.
- Encourage and promote a diverse range of employees at all levels. This will help volunteers of different ethnic groups, ages, disabilities, etc, feel welcome.
- In order to attract volunteers from groups that the organisation has previously failed to reach, it may be helpful to approach those groups/people directly to establish what would make volunteering with the organisation more appealing to them.
- Undertake an 'end of placement' evaluation with volunteers to identify positive aspects of the placement and opportunities for improvement.



**Compact, working together
to develop partnership
based on shared values
and mutual respect**

This document can be provided in other formats and translation of this document is also available.

A glossary of terms relating to Compacts can be accessed through the Compact web-site at: www.thecompact.org.uk

Further information on the Local Compact and a list of signatories to the Compact can be found on agencies web-sites including: www.southend.gov.uk

For further information, or to learn more about A Compact for Southend-on-Sea and The Codes of Good Practice please contact:

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