

Our Compact

The Volunteering Code of Good Practice

Introduction

The Volunteering Code is one of five Codes of Practice developed as part of "Our Compact" for Doncaster. "Our Compact" is being led by the Local Strategic Partnership (DtS) in order to achieve the maximum benefit for the diverse communities within Doncaster. This agreement is between the members of the LSP family, which includes public bodies, the Third Sector, private sector and social enterprises and aims to improve their relationships for mutual advantage.

The Compact

The Compact sets out the principles that underpin the relationships whilst the Codes of Practice set out detailed recommendations for best working practice. Together they aim to increase understanding, clarify expectations and strengthen collaborative working across the partnership.

The Compact and its codes have been developed by representatives of public bodies and the Third Sector, with the intention that organisations across sectors will be able to adopt them as a shared and common way of working.

The Volunteering Code

This code seeks to ensure that there is consistency in the way that volunteering arrangements are operated in Doncaster. This ensures that volunteers are fully valued for their positive and diverse contribution they make to supporting organisations. The code shall be applied to all operations that incorporate a contribution from volunteers in the public, private and Third Sector.

It is aimed at influencing change to tackle barriers to volunteering, to enable more people to volunteer. The principle is that the volunteer benefits and the organisation or activity benefits where that volunteering takes place.

Understanding Volunteering

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship. It is a commitment for the benefit of society and the community, freely undertaken and not for financial gain. The principle of non-payment of volunteers is central to this Code and to society's understanding of volunteering. Volunteering is defined as an activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment, individuals or groups other than close relatives. People volunteer for many different reasons, they may choose to volunteer to develop skills or gain experience, to socialise or to give something back to society.

We understand the term volunteering to include formal activity undertaken through public, private, Third Sector and community organisations. This may include informal community participation and campaigning.

The Volunteers' skills are to be matched to the opportunities available and to the needs of the organisation. The actions of volunteers impact on all areas of life in Doncaster. Decision makers can play a vital strategic role in considering how their actions support and enable volunteering and community activity.

Principles of Volunteering

This code recognises four principles fundamental to volunteering:

Choice - Volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual to participate at a mutually agreed level.

Diversity - Volunteering should be open to all.

Mutual Benefit - Volunteers offer their contribution and skills unwaged, both the individual and the organisation will benefit through mutual commitment.

Recognition - The contribution of volunteers will be recognised and valued.

Joint Undertakings

All Partners undertake to:

- Work effectively to tackle discrimination to ensure that volunteering is open to all
- Adopt clear policies regarding the payment of volunteer expenses
- Ensure adequate time and resources to support and train volunteers
- Encourage the involvement of volunteers when developing new policies or ideas that affect the volunteers
- Identify where in their organisation the responsibility for volunteer involvement lies
- Encourage a greater understanding about the scope of volunteering and increased recognition of the value volunteers bring