

# **VOLUNTEER SAFETY AND SECURITY**

**March 2015**

**Notes from training sessions run by Sandy Adirondack since 2003**

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*Note that there is considerable overlap between the various sections – most guidance is only stated once even though it may apply to several sections (e.g. criminal record checks, self-defence awareness)*

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## 1. FOR ALL VOLUNTEERS

Whatever your volunteers might do and whatever the risks to them, the service users/ service users or public:

- ◆ Get and use *Volunteers and the Law* by Mark Restall (Volunteering England 2005). Full booklet and summary can both be downloaded free at [tinyurl.com/mugdbxs](http://tinyurl.com/mugdbxs). Although some of the details is out of date, the general principles are still the same.
- ◆ Get information about volunteering good practice in general, and for your type of volunteers and volunteering in particular, from Volunteering England, part of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations ([www.volunteering.org.uk](http://www.volunteering.org.uk)), Wales Council for Voluntary Action ([www.wcva.org.uk](http://www.wcva.org.uk)) and other relevant organisations.
- ◆ Sign up at [legalupdate@sandy-a.co.uk](mailto:legalupdate@sandy-a.co.uk) for email alerts when Sandy Adirondack's legal update website for voluntary organisations at [www.sandy-a.co.uk/legal.htm](http://www.sandy-a.co.uk/legal.htm) is updated. This covers legal aspects of volunteering, and many other issues relevant to volunteer-using organisations.
- ◆ Join UK Volunteer Programme Managers (UKVPMs), an online forum for discussion on all aspects of volunteering, at [groups.yahoo.com/group/UKVPMs/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UKVPMs/).
- ◆ Put appropriate recruitment, induction, supervision and support in place.
- ◆ Keep recruitment procedures, induction, ongoing training and policies under regular review – at least annually, or whenever the work changes significantly.
- ◆ Record 'next of kin' and emergency contact details for all volunteers and employees.
- ◆ Understand that insurances intended for businesses, rather than specifically for voluntary organisations, may not explicitly cover volunteers. Ensure that injury to volunteers is covered by the organisation's employer's liability or public liability insurance (different insurers deal with differently with volunteers). Ensure also that injury, damage or loss caused by volunteers (to other workers, service users, members of the public or anyone else) is covered by the organisation's public liability insurance and, if applicable, its professional indemnity insurance.
- ◆ Ensure volunteers feel valued, right from the start, for what they do.
- ◆ Especially (but not exclusively) for volunteers who work on their own, arrange volunteer get-togethers – for teambuilding, exchanging ideas and experiences, and mutual support.

### Suitability of volunteers

- ◆ Be clear beforehand about whether the volunteer needs to have awareness of specific cultural issues in relation to the type of work, and/or needs to be able to communicate in a specific language or languages.
- ◆ Develop an application procedure that elicits the information you need and want: type of work the volunteer wants to do; motivation for volunteering; previous work relevant to the volunteering (whether paid or unpaid, and whether in a personal or professional capacity); for work with children or vulnerable adults, reasons why any employment or volunteering with these groups ended; criminal record.

- ◆ Use an interview or phone conversation to explore these areas in more depth.
- ◆ Understand the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, and the exceptions which allow some organisations (but not all) to obtain standard and enhanced disclosures (Disclosure and Barring Service criminal record checks). Understand which types of work (whether paid or voluntary) organisations have a statutory duty to obtain DBS checks for, and the types of work for which checks are available but not obligatory. Have clear policies for who needs to be DBS checked, and whether potential volunteers are allowed to do some work, under supervision, while they are waiting for their check to come through.
- ◆ Encourage volunteers (and employees) to sign up for the DBS update service when they apply for a DBS check, so in future organisations only need to do an online update check when the person wants to do similar work, rather than applying for a new check.
- ◆ Have clear procedures for when references, medical checks, checks on professional qualifications and other checks are required by law, and when the organisation carries them out even if there is no duty to do so.
- ◆ Ensure volunteer has suitable qualifications and experience and where appropriate, verify this in some way. Ask to see originals, not photocopies of relevant documents.
- ◆ Have clear guidelines about the checks that are carried out on volunteers from overseas for whom you may not be able to obtain or verify information or references.
- ◆ Make the initial period of training and induction part of the selection process.
- ◆ Arrange for new volunteers to work initially with a more experienced person, with the more experienced person explicitly asked to assess the volunteer's competence and suitability.
- ◆ Have a trial period, making clear it is both for the individual to assess whether this volunteering role is right for them, and for the organisation to assess whether the volunteer is right for the role.
- ◆ If a volunteer is unsuitable, deal with this as sensitively as possible. Offering another volunteer role within the organisation, or signposting to another organisation, may be appropriate.
- ◆ Be aware of changes in a volunteer's attitudes, emotions or physical capacity, which may affect their ability to carry out their role.

### **The activity & location**

- ◆ Be clear about the purpose of your organisation as defined in your governing document (constitution, memorandum and articles of association, trust deed) and the boundaries of the organisation's work as defined in its policies and priorities. Don't be drawn into other inappropriate activities because it's what a volunteer wants to do.
- ◆ Keep premises and equipment safe – gas, electricity, electrical equipment, kitchens, playgrounds, whatever.
- ◆ Carry out a risk assessment in relation to each activity, location, type of equipment.

- ◆ Review risk assessments as often as necessary e.g. when an activity changes, new equipment starts being used, organisation starts working with new service users, a new volunteer starts working with them.
- ◆ Ensure volunteers know how to assess risk on the spot in relation to weather conditions, the particular people they are working with on the day etc (the rocks in the river may have been safe when they were risk-assessed the day before; they may not be safe if the river is swollen, the weather is very windy, or the children are exhausted from staying up most of the night).
- ◆ Emphasise the importance of common sense.
- ◆ Have alternative plans if a planned activity is not possible.
- ◆ If appropriate, provide photo ID cards and require them to be worn.
- ◆ Think about the insurance implications of whatever you do (public liability for injury, damage or loss arising from premises, equipment, non-professional activities; professional indemnity for provision of information/advice and provision of professional services; breach of confidentiality if handling sensitive information; breach of copyright if producing print or online publications). Ensure it covers activities and services provided by volunteers – some policies may cover only activities or services provided by employees. Check for any exclusions for volunteers above or below a specified age.
- ◆ Accept that nothing can ever be risk-free, and the benefits of your activities outweigh the potential risk of harm.

### **Policies and procedures**

- ◆ Go through the organisation's procedures (safeguarding children and adults, health & safety, data protection and confidentiality, equal opportunities, mobile phones, social media etc) with the volunteers – don't just give volunteers pieces of paper or refer them to a website. Discuss with them in relation to the work they will be doing.
- ◆ Get volunteers to sign policies confirming they have read and understood them, as part of induction and whenever policies are changed, so they can never say "no one ever told me".
- ◆ Give volunteers a small card with the key rules/policy provisions relating to the work they will be doing.
- ◆ Keep all policies and procedures under regular review (at least annually).
- ◆ Be willing to change your practices and procedures if necessary.
- ◆ Develop a culture of acknowledging and learning from mistakes or problems, rather than a blame culture where people are afraid to admit mistakes.

### **Training and information**

- ◆ Provide initial and ongoing training about all aspects of the work.
- ◆ Ensure training is provided:
  - as part of induction to all new employees and volunteers;
  - as appropriate to temps, casuals, consultants and others who do occasional, one-off or short-term work for the organisation;
  - whenever there is a need for reminding or updating.

- ◆ Keep your own knowledge up to date.
- ◆ Ensure appropriate first aid training and provide appropriate first aid materials and equipment.
- ◆ Provide clear guidelines and training on physical contact with service users e.g. when (if at all) is it possible to hold a child's hand, put an arm around an adult's shoulders, hug? Role play situations e.g. service user who is very distressed – is it OK to hug?
- ◆ Adapt guidelines as appropriate for particularly high risk activities e.g. physically dangerous such as rock climbing; potentially compromising such as where service users will be getting undressed or will be sleeping; activities that inevitably involve physical contact such as helping service users learn to swim, positioning people in yoga, reflexology.
- ◆ Provide clear guidelines and training on dealing with potential or actual violence.
- ◆ Provide clear guidelines and have absolutely clear procedures for dealing with disclosure by a person of abuse that is taking place outside the organisation's activities (e.g. at home or school), and for dealing with suspicions of such abuse.
- ◆ Provide clear guidelines and have absolutely clear procedures for dealing with potential or actual allegations of abuse, damage, injury within the organisation's activities.
- ◆ Require volunteer to sign an agreement to abide by codes of conduct and other policies and procedures.

### **Monitoring, supervision and support**

- ◆ Provide appropriate supervision, both ongoing and one-off when necessary, dealing with issues that arise for the volunteer.
- ◆ Provide clear line management for volunteers.
- ◆ Monitor activities regularly, both formally (supervision sessions, appraisals) and informally.
- ◆ Provide opportunities for volunteers to meet both formally and informally. Encourage open discussion of the situations they face and how different volunteers deal with them.
- ◆ Create an environment where volunteers can express concerns to their managers about particular activities or their own (or others') competence to carry out those activities, and where they feel able to ask for training or support.
- ◆ Keep records of issues raised in supervision, how they were dealt with, how they are to be reviewed. Make action plans based on evaluation of activities.
- ◆ Keep volunteers, activities, procedures under constant review.

## **2. WORKING WITH CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE, VULNERABLE ADULTS**

*See section 1 for general good practice.*

- ◆ *See **Safeguarding for volunteer involving organisations: A guide to help you develop a comprehensive approach to safeguarding in your organisation**,*

published by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (undated, but probably 2014), available via [tinyurl.com/mcx7tuz](http://tinyurl.com/mcx7tuz).

## **Suitability of volunteers**

- ◆ Register with the Disclosure and Barring Service or an umbrella body for disclosure checks, and carry out checks on everyone who will be working in regulated activities (as defined under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006) with children, young people (generally up to 18, although in some cases up to 16), and/or adults. Some organisations may be required (by law, funders or their own policies) to carry out checks on any person working with children or young people, or adults in regulated situations, even if working supervised. The DBS does not carry out checks for people working in most other posts.
- ◆ Sign up for the mailing list of the Disclosure and Barring Service ([www.gov.uk/dbs](http://www.gov.uk/dbs)) to keep up to date with changes.
- ◆ Have a clear policy about whether a volunteer can start, under supervision, before the checks are complete.
- ◆ When taking up references make clear that the work involves working with children/young people/vulnerable adults, and ask explicitly if the referee has any grounds for concern about the person's suitability for this type of work.
- ◆ Make a follow-up call to referees to find out if there is anything else the referee wants to add (and would perhaps prefer to say verbally rather than in writing).

## **Service users**

- ◆ Get parental or relative's consent as required by law or the organisation's own procedures.
- ◆ Get as much information as is appropriate about the service user e.g. medical conditions, dietary requirements, allergies. Remember this is sensitive information under the Data Protection Act so have clear rules on who has access to the information.
- ◆ Set ground rules for service users. Write a code of conduct together with them.
- ◆ Where possible, help individual service users to understand how the rules apply to them personally, and how abiding by them will reduce risk. Provide written guidelines if appropriate.
- ◆ Clearly explain the service or activity being offered to the service user (or to a carer or support worker) so that they know what to expect of the service and the volunteers.
- ◆ Assess needs of the service user group and each individual using a person-centred approach.
- ◆ Ensure adequate adults per child (to comply with legal requirements at least the minimum required under relevant legislation, but more if considered appropriate), and adequate staff or volunteers for working with adults with special needs.
- ◆ Have clear policies and procedures in place, based on recognised good practice such as from the Safe Network, run by NSPCC and Children England ([www.safenetwork.org.uk](http://www.safenetwork.org.uk))

- ◆ Ensure volunteers are aware that service users may be particularly susceptible to “suggestions” and may take a volunteer’s question or suggestion as being an invitation, recommendation or even an order.
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### **3. WORKING ONE TO ONE / HOME VISITS / BEFRIENDING**

*See section 1 for general good practice, and section 2 on work with children and with adults in regulated situations.*

- ◆ Carry out a thorough induction and ongoing training, including training in risk awareness, setting boundaries and confidentiality.
- ◆ Ask volunteers about allergies for example to cats or dogs, or things they could not cope with, such as pet snakes.
- ◆ Clarify and manage expectations of volunteers and service users and have procedures that emphasise prompt feedback, reflection and regular reviews.
- ◆ Require volunteers to agree to the organisation’s procedures.
- ◆ Be clear about the objectives for each service user/volunteer ‘match’, and bring the relationship to an end when the objectives have been met. Have procedures in place for recognising and dealing with the service user’s and/or volunteer’s feelings about the ending of the relationship.

#### **The activity and location**

- ◆ Particularly for 1:1 work, ensure good matching procedures and keep them under regular review.
- ◆ Carry out an assessment (of the service user, home and/or setting where the 1:1 work will take place) by a suitably trained and experienced person, before the volunteer starts the work.
- ◆ Where the volunteer is walking, using public transport, or having to park in a potentially unsafe area, assess those risks.
- ◆ Provide a realistic assessment of the likely time to get to/from the service user’s home.
- ◆ Be sure volunteers know where they are going so they do not have to wander around looking lost (and vulnerable). Provide maps, including if appropriate information about bus stops, taxi ranks, reputable minicab firms, where to park, phone kiosks, and paths and other areas to avoid. If areas are known to be mobile phone dead spots, plan accordingly. Don’t assume that sat nav, Google maps etc will get people to the right place.
- ◆ Ensure home assessments include not only the home itself, but also the general area, access to/exit from the home, risk from other family members or residents, pets and other animals.
- ◆ Where going into a home or other setting for the first time (for assessment visit or, if no assessment, for first visit) ideally go with two people.
- ◆ If possible carry out visits, especially the first one, in daylight.
- ◆ If appropriate and feasible, ideally do all visits in pairs.

- ◆ The volunteer should try to sit/stand near the door, and ideally have the door unlocked. Try not to get into a situation where the service user, especially if volatile or potentially violent, is between the volunteer and the door.
- ◆ Assess risk to volunteer as well as risk to service user: verbal, emotional, physical and sexual abuse; property damage; theft of money or property; over-involvement or over-dependence; allegations of any of the above.
- ◆ Don't assume you know who will be in the house – it is impossible to control who will be there on the day.
- ◆ Insofar as possible, pre-plan every visit.
- ◆ Provide a "safety pack": mobile phone, coins and phonecard (for when mobile doesn't work), torch + spare batteries, contact phone numbers (including out of hours and backup numbers).
- ◆ Have rigorous systems for 'clocking in' and 'clocking out'. Ensure someone knows where volunteer is, when they are due back, the route they are taking, how to contact them – and what to do if volunteer does not return or ring in when they should.
- ◆ "Code word" system for volunteers to indicate without appearing to do so when they are in trouble e.g. "Everything is *perfectly* OK" where the word "perfectly" is the code.
- ◆ A course participant has recommended Guardian24 ([www.guardian24.co.uk](http://www.guardian24.co.uk), 028 9046 6460) and Identicom ([www.connexion2.com/identicom.asp](http://www.connexion2.com/identicom.asp), 0844 856 6606). Identicom is an ID badge that contains electronics enabling the wearer to raise an alarm. Guardian24 is a fully automated service that monitors out of office workers and unaccompanied people.
- ◆ Lone workers may need to share, for their own safety, information about service users that ordinarily would not be shared. For example if the worker's spouse (rather than another worker) is going to be the one monitoring safe return, the spouse will need to know where the worker is going, and may also need to know that the service user or environment is particularly risky. The organisation should have clear guidelines for how much information is disclosed outside the organisation, and anyone to whom it is disclosed should be made aware that they are covered by the organisation's confidentiality and data protection policies.
- ◆ Rather than disclosing information beforehand, it may be appropriate to give the "monitor" information about the service user, location being visited etc in a sealed envelope, to be opened only if the volunteer does not ring in or return when they are supposed to.
- ◆ Provide appropriate training, including roleplay, on all of the above.
- ◆ Require all incidents or near-incidents to be reported immediately.
- ◆ Ensure appropriate confidentiality and recording of information (see below), particularly when advice or treatment are given.
- ◆ Have a clear agreement/"contract" with the service user as to what the volunteer will provide, the time scale, how contact in non-work settings will be dealt with (do the volunteer and service user acknowledge each other when they see each other in Tesco?), etc.
- ◆ Have clear complaints procedures for service users.

- ◆ Ensure public liability insurance covers damage to volunteers' property away from the organisation's premises e.g. in service users' homes, and covers damage to service users' property caused by volunteers.

### **The service users**

- ◆ If appropriate, take referrals only from professionals (not appropriate for organisations that work with self-referrals).
- ◆ Make clear that referrers must declare any risks known to them e.g. dogs, steps, smoking, volatile service users, volatile family members. If referrers are not expected to provide this information or are not allowed to under their data protection policies, be aware of the implications.
- ◆ Find out as much relevant information about the service user as possible, including any previous contact they have had with the organisation.
- ◆ Be clear about how much information is provided to volunteers. If information is withheld, be aware of the implications.
- ◆ Notify the service user beforehand, in writing and/or by phone or face to face, of when the volunteer will be visiting.
- ◆ Tell the service user how to identify the volunteer (name badge, description etc).
- ◆ It may be appropriate for the volunteer to introduce her/himself by ringing the service user before visiting – this may help the volunteer get a sense of the person.
- ◆ Provide opportunities for service users to feed back to the organisation, both informally and if appropriate perhaps through an independent person, or in a group with a facilitator.
- ◆ Keep appropriate and accurate records of service user contact and review regularly.
- ◆ Have good complaints procedures in place.
- ◆ Carry out ongoing risk assessment.

### **Training and information**

- ◆ Provide clear training on what the volunteer can and can't do.
- ◆ Provide specific training in requirements of individual service users if appropriate.
- ◆ Be prepared to set new standards if necessary, and ensure compliance.
- ◆ Ensure volunteer has all necessary information about the service user before the visit.
- ◆ Create a code of conduct for volunteers based on equality and respect, giving guidance on acceptable behaviour.
- ◆ Where volunteers are supposed to create a "friend" relationship, have clear guidelines about what this means in relation to physical contact (even casual hugs), alcohol (can they go to the pub; does the organisation reimburse for costs of alcohol; does volunteer have a responsibility to try to stop service user from drinking too much?).
- ◆ If appropriate, have clear guidelines for appropriate dress.

- ◆ Develop clear written guidelines within the organisation and keep them under regular review. For example: how to deal with verbal or physical abuse and when it's OK for the volunteer to walk away; what volunteers should do when they see service users in shops or other public places (even just nodding or saying hello can put the service user in a compromising position, but ignoring the service user can be seen as rude); what volunteers can and cannot do especially in home visits (can a volunteer who is there as a befriender change a light bulb? can a care-and-repair volunteer take the service user shopping?).
  - ◆ Have clear guidelines about how much information about themselves it is appropriate for volunteers to disclose, and what they should do if they feel they have disclosed inappropriate information to a service user or a member of the service user's family.
  - ◆ Give volunteers instruction on how not to get themselves into situations which could turn against them.
  - ◆ Provide training and roleplay in dealing with possible scenarios: verbal aggression, physical aggression, violence or threat of violence, being held hostage....
  - ◆ Have clear procedures for what to do in an emergency.
  - ◆ Provide information about personal safety and lone working from relevant organisations e.g. Suzy Lamplugh Trust ([www.suzylamplugh.org](http://www.suzylamplugh.org), 020 7091 0014).
  - ◆ Provide training in first aid.
  - ◆ Ensure volunteers know what to do and whom to contact if the service user is seriously ill or injured.
  - ◆ Ensure volunteers know what to do if they feel endangered, and that it is OK to leave.
  - ◆ Have clear policies about under what circumstances, if any, volunteers can accept money or gifts from service users or their families. Most organisations have a rule that money should be donated to the organisation, not given to or kept by the individual. An organisation may or may not allow the individual to keep small gifts, and may or may not allow larger or more valuable gifts to be given to the organisation but not the individual. It is nearly always a rule that all gifts, no matter how small, must be disclosed to the organisation.
  - ◆ Have clear policies about under what circumstances, if any, a volunteer can give money, clothing, food, a gift to a service user – and who this has to be disclosed to.
  - ◆ Have clear policies about not providing loans to service users or their families – or whether there are any circumstances under which this would be acceptable, and how to safeguard both the lender and borrower in this situation. Loans are not just money - they could also be clothing, gardening or household equipment, or other items.
  - ◆ When recruiting and training volunteers, focus on the positives of the role – such as the satisfaction of making a difference to someone's life – not just the risks. But encourage them to have realistic expectations about what can be achieved and not to believe they can be the service user's fairy godmother.
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## **4. LONE WORKERS (in organisation's premises or other settings over which organisation has some control)**

*See section 1 for general good practice and section 3 on 1:1 working and home visits.*

- ◆ Risk assessment of risks to volunteer, service user(s), public.
  - ◆ Where possible, get information about service users from other sources.
  - ◆ Keep external door locked, with an entryphone system (camera if possible).
  - ◆ If door is open for anyone to walk in, install something that buzzes or rings whenever someone enters.
  - ◆ Consider finishing early (e.g. closing a shop at 4pm rather than 5pm in winter) if volunteers are working on their own.
  - ◆ Where the volunteer gives information or advice: as below in section 9, with particular emphasis on recording and on debriefing/supervision sessions.
  - ◆ Constant awareness of and training on personal safety: panic buttons linked to another office where there are people and/or to the police, mobile phones, alarms, self-defence (if appropriate).
  - ◆ When the personal safety of a volunteer is at risk, it may be safest for them to leave the premises to get help, rather than trying to get the service user/intruder to leave – even if leaving the intruder in the building means a potential risk to the organisation's property.
  - ◆ Get information from Suzy Lamplugh Trust ([www.suzylamplugh.org](http://www.suzylamplugh.org), 020 7091 0014).
  - ◆ Recognise that many people volunteer for social as well as altruistic reasons, and working on their own will not meet those needs.
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## **5. VOLUNTEERS WORKING UNSUPERVISED**

*See section 1 for general good practice, section 3 on 1:1 working and section 4 on lone working.*

- ◆ Ensure that even where volunteers are largely unsupervised, they are aware that they are accountable to someone – a supervisor, manager, staff team or ultimately the board/management committee.
- ◆ Where volunteers are not only unsupervised but largely determine what they are going to do and how and when they are going to do it, it is particularly important for them to understand that they are ultimately accountable to a manager or the board/management committee, must report to them and must operate only within the framework and procedures set by them.
- ◆ Health and safety, child/adult safeguarding, data protection, confidentiality and security of money may be particular issues when volunteers are working unsupervised. Carry out risk assessments for these and similar areas.
- ◆ For volunteers working at home, see Wales Council for Voluntary Action's briefing *Risk assessment: Volunteers based at home* at [tinyurl.com/lj3pf5w](http://tinyurl.com/lj3pf5w).
- ◆ Create clear role descriptions and guidelines on boundaries.

- ◆ Agree a framework for regular contact and monitoring, which could include formal or informal 1:1 or team meetings, phone calls or forms to complete.
  - ◆ Bring volunteers, or volunteers and paid staff, together for teambuilding, support, exchanging views.
  - ◆ Seek feedback from service users.
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## 6. DRIVING

*See section 1 for general good practice.*

- ◆ Get information from Community Transport Association ([www.ctauk.org](http://www.ctauk.org), 0845 130 6195).
- ◆ See Wales Council for Voluntary Action's briefing *Volunteer drivers* at [tinyurl.com/m5a2jsw](http://tinyurl.com/m5a2jsw). Provide support for drivers through induction and ongoing training and information.
- ◆ Drivers often operate as individuals. Help them feel part of the organisation by involving them in events, recognising their contribution and providing them with support. See also section 5, Volunteers working unsupervised.

### **Suitability of driver**

- ◆ Have relevant application procedure asking about driving experience, accidents in past three years, accidents causing injury to passengers or people outside the vehicle at any time, experience of service user group, manual handling experience and training, references etc.
- ◆ Be clear whether the work is such that organisation has a statutory duty (or is required by funders) to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service check. If there is no obligation to undertake checks, have a clear policy about circumstances when checks are undertaken.
- ◆ Take up references – ask explicitly about suitability as a driver and for work with the service user group.
- ◆ Require, check and keep copy of driving licence and have procedure in place to check every 6-12 months.
- ◆ Have clear and explicit policy that driver must notify organisation immediately of any penalties (except parking), charges involving driving and the outcome of any charges, or points added to licence. This includes even fixed penalties e.g. driving in a bus lane, parking on a yellow line and includes all driving-related offences even if not while driving for the organisation or even if not in the UK.
- ◆ Have clear procedure for assessing penalties or charges and making decision about whether person can continue driving for organisation.
- ◆ Have clear policy about whether licence has to be clean or driver can have points (and if so, whether there is a maximum).
- ◆ Ensure drivers are aware of speed limits (including where they are different for minibuses) and the Highway Code.
- ◆ Be aware of requirements on licences or training required for driving certain vehicles. e.g. MIDAS training for minibuses, and ensure drivers comply.

- ◆ Consider whether to require manual handling and/or first aid training for all drivers, or all drivers who will be carrying passengers. Ensure training is kept up to date (especially first aid).
- ◆ Even if a person has a valid licence and insurance, consider whether the organisation needs to take additional steps to ensure their suitability to drive – e.g. if it appears that their eyesight or coordination is declining.
- ◆ Create a policy for how and when you will assess driving ability (e.g. annual external test for all drivers in their own vehicles).
- ◆ Consider whether to require drivers to make an annual health declaration and declare any significant change to their health – or whether to require drivers to have a medical examination.
- ◆ Be aware of the particular difficulties which may be faced by older drivers or drivers in poor health, and monitor regularly. Provide occupational health checks including eye tests.
- ◆ Build in a three-yearly review, linked to licence renewal, for drivers over 70 years old.
- ◆ Ensure volunteers know they are not to drive whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- ◆ Have a clear policy for what the volunteer supervisor/other staff or volunteers should do if they suspect someone of having potentially impaired driving ability e.g. due to alcohol, tiredness etc.
- ◆ Use supervision, role plays and similar situations to assess volunteer's personal suitability – their sociability, sensitivity, awareness of confidentiality issues, awareness of potentially problematic situations.
- ◆ Ask for feedback from service users and staff to identify any potential issues.

### **Suitability of vehicle (organisation's own)**

- ◆ Ensure all checks (daily, weekly, monthly) as required under the Highway Code are carried out by a suitably trained person.
- ◆ Ensure all checks are logged and signed by the person carrying out the checks, and the records are kept in a secure place.
- ◆ Regular servicing, with records signed and kept.
- ◆ Keep insurance up to date, be sure it covers all the types of driving the vehicle will be used for, stick strictly to restrictions on drivers (under 25, over 70 etc) or extend policy to cover them.
- ◆ Keep vehicle registration document in a safe place with a copy off site.
- ◆ Get MoT done in good time to have any necessary repairs done before MoT expires.
- ◆ Renew road tax in good time.
- ◆ Have spare set of keys.
- ◆ Keep copy of vehicle instruction manual in glove box (keep original securely at office) and ensure drivers know it is there.
- ◆ Provide hands-free mobile phone in the vehicle, with a clear policy for when the phone can be used by the driver.

- ◆ Ensure all drivers are clear about under what circumstances and how to contact AA or other call-out service.
- ◆ Have number for call-out service on windscreen sticker and/or key fob.
- ◆ If appropriate keep basic spare parts in vehicle.
- ◆ Have clear policy about whether repairs can be carried out by driver or must be done by call-out service (e.g. flat tyre, fan belt).
- ◆ Keep torch (and spare batteries) and first aid box in vehicle.
- ◆ If appropriate have blankets, water etc in vehicle – for long journeys or journeys in very cold weather have high-energy food in vehicle.
- ◆ Have procedures for replacing/ topping-up spare parts, first aid equipment, water etc.
- ◆ Organisation should join Community Transport Association to ensure it keeps up with legal changes and good practice on community vehicles.

### **Suitability of vehicle (driver's own)**

- ◆ Check the suitability of the vehicle, its condition and size.
- ◆ Carefully check and keep copy of vehicle registration document (copy should be signed and dated to show who saw it).
- ◆ Check and keep signed/dated copy of MoT certificate.
- ◆ Check and keep signed/dated copy of road tax disk.
- ◆ Check whether driver/vehicle has emergency breakdown cover.
- ◆ Check and keep copy of insurance documents.
- ◆ Have procedure in place to check necessary documents once a year.
- ◆ Have procedure requiring drivers to supply registration document, MoT, road tax and insurance documents whenever they change vehicle.
- ◆ Require driver to notify their insurer that they are driving for the organisation. Some insurers treat volunteer driving as "social domestic and pleasure" use, others class it as business use. Get evidence (on policy or from insurer) that driver is covered *for the driving they will be doing for the organisation*.
- ◆ Organisation should have policy about whether it will reimburse driver for any additional premium charged by their insurer.
- ◆ If driver has only third party, or third party fire and theft insurance, make clear that damage to their vehicle will not be covered even while they are driving for the organisation. (Check with organisation's insurer about how to word this).
- ◆ Make clear that drivers are expected to carry out all daily, weekly and monthly checks required under the Highway Code.

### **The journey**

- ◆ Carry out a risk assessment.
- ◆ Get necessary consent in writing e.g. from parents before carrying passengers.
- ◆ If appropriate have two volunteers on the vehicle – to alternate driving, and/or to deal with passengers.

- ◆ Provide ID card and require driver and other volunteers to carry/wear it at all times.
- ◆ Ensure vehicle, driver and other volunteers are appropriate for the passengers (children, vulnerable adults, people with disabilities).
- ◆ Ensure driver has a hands-free mobile phone, or other volunteer in the vehicle has an ordinary mobile phone. Ensure they check before setting out that it has battery power and they have a charger.
- ◆ Have absolutely clear rules on use of mobile phones and similar equipment while driving (can hands-free phones be used? only for emergency calls, or ordinary calls? can driver make personal calls while driving for the organisation?). Require the driver to sign a copy of these rules.
- ◆ Provide emergency contact numbers.
- ◆ Provide detailed maps, with alternative routes if appropriate. Indicate stopping points for food, loos, petrol. Be clear if there is a fixed route and no diversions are to be made to it (unless required by police etc).
- ◆ Ensure vehicle has adequate fuel before setting off.
- ◆ Driver must ensure all passengers are wearing seatbelts and wheelchairs are securely fastened in place.
- ◆ If driver is collecting fares or donations, make provision for security of money (see guidance on handling money below). Check that this is covered by relevant insurance.
- ◆ For long journeys be aware of Working Time Regulations (but bear in mind that they apply to people accustomed to long-distance driving – driving times for volunteers are likely to need to be much shorter).
- ◆ Have procedures for what happens if the passenger is not there when s/he is supposed to be collected. Does the driver wait? leave? notify the organisation? contact the police? ask neighbours? [NB data protection issues here; passenger may not want neighbours to know s/he is a service user of the organisation.]
- ◆ Have clear rules about what drivers can and cannot do e.g. can they lift people in and out of wheelchairs, can they carry shopping to the door for passengers, can they take shopping into the house, can they unload shopping, can they "just help" by changing a lightbulb or mending a leaking tap, can they offer to drive the person even when they are doing so as a private individual rather than as a volunteer (e.g. as a volunteer they might drive the person to lunch club every Tuesday. How do they respond if person says they need someone to drive them to their grandson's birthday party on Sunday?)
- ◆ Ensure drivers are aware of, and sign, data protection/confidentiality policy if relevant (see dealing with personal, sensitive or confidential information, below).
- ◆ Ensure drivers know that *every* incident while driving for the organisation, no matter how minor and regardless of whether it actually involves the vehicle, must be reported to the organisation as soon as reasonably practicable (initially in person or by phone, then in writing).
- ◆ Ensure drivers know they are personally liable for any penalties or fines they incur while driving for the organisation, including parking penalties.
- ◆ Provide initial and ongoing training about how to deal with accidents or even minor incidents while driving: who driver should notify and who organisation will notify (e.g. if a service user is injured, who notifies their family/carer?).

- ◆ Ensure drivers/escorts know evacuation procedure, and are capable of assessing the safety of passengers on an individual situation basis.
  - ◆ Have clear policy whether first aid can be administered by anyone who feels competent to do so, or only people with current first aid certificate.
  - ◆ Ensure that drivers have any necessary equipment on board e.g. first aid kit, protective clothing.
  - ◆ Have training to talk through or role play scenarios e.g. children squabbling in the back seat, passenger having an epileptic fit, yobs hurling abuse or worse at the vehicle because it is full of \*\*\*\*\*s [insert appropriate offensive term], service user refusing to put on seat belt (especially in back seat, where it may be their responsibility rather than the driver's), dire accident with passenger(s) injured or dead, dire accident with driver seriously injured or dead.
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## **7. INTRINSICALLY HAZARDOUS SITUATIONS**

*e.g. climbing and other hazardous activities, work with some animals, work in extreme heat or cold, some agricultural, horticultural or environmental work, building work, work with hazardous substances*

*See section 1 for general good practice.*

### **Suitability and number of volunteers**

- ◆ Be clear what experience, training and/or formal qualifications are required for volunteers and for service users/participants.
- ◆ Verify that volunteers have the experience and qualifications they claim to have.
- ◆ Ensure appropriate ratio of professionally trained and/or highly experienced supervisors (whether paid staff or volunteers) to less well trained people and to untrained service users/participants. If necessary reduce the number of untrained or less trained people, or increase the number of properly trained and experienced supervisors.
- ◆ In particular ensure there are enough trained first aiders (from the organisation and/or St John Ambulance, Red Cross etc) and, where necessary, doctors, nurses or others with relevant medical training and experience.
- ◆ Ensure volunteers, other workers, and participants (if appropriate) have up to date tetanus and other relevant jabs.
- ◆ Ensure there are enough marshalls or stewards, they are adequately trained, and they are aware of what to do in emergencies.
- ◆ Where volunteers need specialist knowledge e.g. poisonous plants, ensure they receive proper training and have understood it.

### **Risk assessment**

- ◆ Get appropriate information beforehand – Ordnance Survey maps, information from gas & electricity boards about buried pipes and cables, weather forecasts, time of sunset, tide tables.
- ◆ Carry out serious, proper risk assessments and review them regularly.

- ◆ Take expert advice to highlight specific dangers.
- ◆ If the activity is being provided by another organisation, ask to see their risk assessment and make any necessary additions to it.
- ◆ Ensure everyone knows risk assessment is not a one-off event – it must be done regularly, and new risks must be taken into account minute by minute and must be reported as required under the organisation's procedures.
- ◆ Emphasise the importance of common sense. Yesterday's risk assessment may no longer be appropriate.
- ◆ Provide appropriate written information about do's and don'ts, how to carry out activities, what to do in various situations, how to deal with emergencies.
- ◆ Ensure all volunteers are fully briefed and have been through the risk assessment in advance of the activity.
- ◆ Ask volunteers to sign to sign a disclaimer showing they are aware of the identified risks. (But this cannot remove the organisation's liability for injury or illness caused by its negligence.)

### **Service users/participants**

- ◆ Get parental or relative's consent as required by law or the organisation's own procedures for children or with adults who may be vulnerable.
- ◆ Ensure the relevant people have immediate access to up to date information about volunteers', other workers' and participants' relevant medical conditions, and next of kin or other numbers to contact in an emergency.
- ◆ Ask participants to sign to sign a disclaimer showing they are aware of the identified risks. (But this cannot remove the organisation's liability for injury or illness caused by its negligence.)

### **The activity and location**

- ◆ Be clear about who is ultimately in control – who is the leader, and do they have the skills, experience and capability to carry out this role in an emergency? Have a very clear back-up procedure – who takes the control if the leader is incapacitated or unavailable? And who is next in line? And next?
- ◆ Ensure supervisors and relevant volunteers are fully up to date with relevant legislation and safety regulations, and these are reflected in the organisations policies, procedures and day to day practice.
- ◆ Ensure the organisation has public liability insurance and it covers all activities that will be carried out by volunteers and others. If work is being contracted out, ensure contractors have appropriate insurance *and* that the insurance will indemnify the organisation if any claims are brought against it for the contractor's negligence.
- ◆ Where an activity requires specific licensing or permission – whether ongoing (registration of activity centres) or one-off (a street event, tree felling) be sure these licences or permissions are in place.
- ◆ Where an activity requires other consent, e.g. from a neighbouring landowner, get it in writing beforehand.
- ◆ If the activity involves fire e.g. burning horticultural waste, notify fire brigade beforehand and ensure their guidelines are followed.

- ◆ Ensure thorough awareness of safety when working with equipment such as power tools, or with substances that are flammable or otherwise hazardous.
- ◆ Ensure thorough awareness of relevant hygiene when working with animals, plants etc – e.g. wash hands with alcohol gel before handling food or eating.
- ◆ Provide, or require volunteers to provide, appropriate protective clothing. Ensure people wear it.
- ◆ Test all tools, equipment and protective clothing regularly. Keep a record of tests. Maintain tools, equipment and protective clothing in good condition.
- ◆ Put up signs and safety notices.
- ◆ Contain the risks: put up fencing, keep all hazardous materials or tools in secure storage.
- ◆ If appropriate ensure volunteers and service users have torches, matches, whistles.
- ◆ Provide first aid and other emergency equipment and ensure people know how to use it.
- ◆ Ensure volunteers have mobile phones, with contact and emergency numbers programmed in, or walkie talkies. If neither is suitable (working in areas out of mobile phone range) consider how the volunteer would summon help if needed.
- ◆ Ensure adequate and appropriate training, supervision, action if things are not being done right.

### **Emergencies and disasters**

- ◆ Have emergency/disaster/contingency plans in place.
  - ◆ Ensure all alarms, fire extinguishers etc are tested regularly and volunteers know how to use them.
  - ◆ Ensure volunteers understand the organisation's security procedures, or procedures for a specific event, and comply with these.
  - ◆ Ensure CCTV, if used, is working.
  - ◆ Emphasise the importance of vigilance and have clear procedures about what should be reported and to whom, and what action should be taken.
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## **8. PAINTING & DECORATING**

*At one course, a participant was about to oversee volunteers painting and decorating a community centre and so the whole group identified issues which should be considered.*

### **Suitability of volunteers**

- ◆ Ensure work matches each volunteer's competence.
- ◆ Provide adequate training.
- ◆ Ensure volunteers are aware of any potential risks to health and ask whether they have any medical conditions which might be an issue when carrying out the work.

- ◆ Obtain references and Disclosure and Barring Service checks if appropriate.

### **Work environment**

- ◆ Clearly identify which areas are not to be worked on.
- ◆ Set limits on the number of volunteers working in each space.
- ◆ Provide easy access to toilets and drinking water.
- ◆ If food/refreshments are to be provided, follow food hygiene rules.
- ◆ Make sure there are no trailing leads.
- ◆ Use dust sheets/other protective coverings. Fix in place or use non-slip materials to reduce risk of trips and falls.
- ◆ Ensure there is adequate ventilation (e.g. open windows to reduce fumes from paint etc).

### **Work at height**

- ◆ Use interior scaffolding rather than ladders where appropriate.
- ◆ Ensure there is no one working underneath ladders or scaffolding.

Ladders should:

- ◆ Be prevented from slipping (use any locking devices, ensure ground is firm and level),
- ◆ Be long enough to do the job safely,
- ◆ Have a handhold available to allow the worker to maintain 3 points of contact where possible,
- ◆ Be used without overreaching,
- ◆ Be inspected and checked regularly where necessary.

### **Work procedures**

- ◆ Recognise who is the overall leader of the event.
- ◆ Have a clearly identified person responsible for Health and Safety.
- ◆ Have experienced people responsible for monitoring the work all day and taking action if unsatisfactory (not to adequate standards, or unsafe practices).
- ◆ Identify who is responsible for resolving arguments/disputes between volunteers.
- ◆ Ensure volunteers know what they are supposed to do and how to do it.
- ◆ Be realistic about what can be achieved in the available time.
- ◆ Allocate areas and tasks to each person/team.
- ◆ Encourage team working.
- ◆ Ensure people take breaks.
- ◆ Risk assess for worst case scenarios: fall from height, fire, roof caving in, a crowd storming the building.
- ◆ Have clear guidelines about children on site.

## **Tools and equipment**

- ◆ Ensure equipment is fit for purpose (appropriate and safe).
- ◆ Ensure there is enough equipment available.
- ◆ Issue operating procedures and provide adequate training.
- ◆ Provide protective equipment if needed and ensure it is used (e.g. dust masks, goggles).
- ◆ Make sure protective clothing is worn if needed (e.g. overalls, gloves, steel-toe boots).
- ◆ Don't let people bring their own tools/ladders etc.
- ◆ Use non-toxic paint.
- ◆ Use the correct paint for each surface.
- ◆ Ensure all electrical equipment is tested.
- ◆ Ensure tools are put away when not in use.
- ◆ Take steps to reduce risk of theft of materials or property belonging to volunteers or the organisation.
- ◆ Keep tools out of the reach of children.

## **Fire safety and procedures**

- ◆ Appoint a fire warden/person responsible for overseeing fire regulations and emergency procedures.
- ◆ Designate the entire area a non-smoking environment.
- ◆ Create a safe area outside for smoking (away from the building with receptacle for matches and butts).
- ◆ Ensure there are no naked flames and no heat sources near flammable materials.
- ◆ Ensure fire evacuation procedures are well known and that there is a clear assembly point.
- ◆ Make sure fire extinguisher checks are up to date.
- ◆ Have clear procedures for emergency communication.
- ◆ Ensure there is a working phone line/mobile phone coverage.

## **First aid**

- ◆ Have a clearly identified first aider (with tabard or other identification).
- ◆ Ensure there are appropriate first aid kits and equipment available.
- ◆ Be aware of the risks of fainting etc associated with labour intensive work.
- ◆ Keep contact details for all volunteers and who should be contacted in an emergency.

## **Insurance**

- ◆ Notify the insurer and be sure to comply with any conditions.

- ◆ Ensure insurance covers injury to volunteers and damage to their property, and injury and damage caused by volunteers.
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## **9. GIVING INFORMATION AND ADVICE**

*See section 1 for general good practice.*

### **Information and training**

- ◆ Provide training and constant updating on factual information.
- ◆ Ensure volunteers know how to state to service users the limitations of the service.
- ◆ Provide training to help volunteers know what questions to ask, how to ask, how to interpret service users' reply, how to assess what service user wants to get from the organisation, and how to judge what information is appropriate for the service user.
- ◆ Ensure volunteers know it's OK to say they don't know the answer.
- ◆ Provide training, including roleplay, on how to deal with difficult situations: service users who will not provide necessary information but still expect volunteers to provide the answer; service users who become over-emotional, abusive, violent...
- ◆ Ensure volunteers know where and when to direct to other specialists (within organisation or other agencies/publications/websites).
- ◆ Ensure clear, logical procedures are in place and are followed, e.g. who to contact out of hours, in an emergency, or for clarification.
- ◆ Try to get support and backup for the organisation, e.g. from parent body, federation or support network of similar organisations, of council for voluntary service.
- ◆ Establish good working relationships with related agencies.
- ◆ Ensure volunteers create an environment where service users feel able to return and where they want to refer others to the service.
- ◆ Ensure volunteers know their boundaries: if someone asks for information/advice in an informal setting (party, supermarket) how should they deal with it?
- ◆ Ensure the organisation has professional indemnity insurance covering the types of information and advice that will be provided by volunteers and others.

### **Monitoring**

- ◆ Maintain accurate systems for recording service users' concerns and information/advice given.
- ◆ Ensure everyone understands data protection law and the organisation's data protection and confidentiality policies – this is especially important in small communities where the volunteer is likely to know the service user and anyone else involved in the case.
- ◆ Ensure volunteers know how to record information that is accurate, relevant and not excessive, clear to other staff who might subsequently need to deal with the

service user, and recorded in a way that can be shown to the service user if s/he asks to see it.

- ◆ Regularly sit in on sessions, hold debriefing sessions and/or monitor case records to be sure information/advice is being provided appropriately.

### **Support and supervision**

- ◆ Create and maintain good support systems within the organisation: formal and informal peer support, appropriate supervision and appraisal procedures, open management style, external support or supervision where appropriate.
- ◆ Be willing (as managers and/or as board/management committee) to deal with poor performance.

### **Protecting the organisation and individuals**

- ◆ Ensure professional indemnity insurance covers the full range of information/advice given, and insurers know it will be provided by volunteers.
  - ◆ Maintain workable and appropriate complaints procedures for service users and grievance procedures for volunteers.
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## **10. DEALING WITH PERSONAL, SENSITIVE OR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

*See section 1 for general good practice.*

- ◆ Ensure a clear data protection policy and linked procedures are in place about what personal information is collected and why, how it is stored, who has access to it and under what circumstances, under what circumstances and to whom it will or may be disclosed, how long it is held for and why, whether destruction is automatic after a certain period or has to be authorised.
- ◆ Ensure clear guidelines about what other sensitive or confidential information is collected and stored (e.g. about the organisation's contract bids and negotiations), who has access to it, when and how it can be disclosed, etc.
- ◆ Develop and implement a confidentiality policy, linked to data protection, about who has access to information and when and under what circumstances it can (or must) be disclosed to others within or outside the organisation. Include a clause specifying when information will be shared on a "need to know" basis. Where legally required or appropriate, get consent to disclose information.
- ◆ Recognise that there may be a distinction between what types of information can (or must) be disclosed in different contexts; for example from one volunteer to another, from a volunteer to their manager, from a volunteer to a service user.
- ◆ Have one person who is responsible for overseeing the implementation and review of data protection and confidentiality policies, and who can be contacted if there is a query about whether or how information should be recorded or disclosed.
- ◆ Have good human resources procedures in place so that volunteers are made aware of these policies and how to implement them from day one.

- ◆ Ensure all staff and volunteers read and sign the data protection and confidentiality policies.
- ◆ Integrate the policies into all areas of the organisation, including induction.
- ◆ As part of the induction, give training in office procedures such as how to store files, shredding documents, online security and so on.
- ◆ Provide regular training to volunteers. Make sure they are clear about their obligations and understand the consequence of any breach of these policies.
- ◆ Where appropriate use pro formas for collecting information, risk assessments, records of advice given etc.
- ◆ Be aware that individuals have in most cases a right to see virtually all information held about them. Provide appropriate training in what information should be recorded and how it should be recorded.
- ◆ Ensure service users, volunteers and others know what information you are holding about them, why you are holding it, how it will be used and disclosed etc. Don't use information for purposes which people have not been informed about (unless the purposes are explicitly allowed under data protection or other law e.g. safeguarding).
- ◆ Get explicit consent to hold information defined as "sensitive personal data" under the Data Protection Act.
- ◆ Discuss and role play situations where a service user asks for something to be kept confidential. Are there situations where a volunteer can keep information totally confidential, i.e. not tell a manager and not put anything in the service user's records? Or does everything have to be reported and/or recorded in some way?
- ◆ Where monitoring information is collected that is intended to be anonymous, make sure it actually is anonymous.
- ◆ Help volunteers understand the distinction between confidentiality (sensitive information about individuals or the organisation that should only be discussed with people who need to know about it and have a right to know) and secrecy (an unwillingness to discuss information even with people who need to know).
- ◆ Help volunteers identify situations where they might inadvertently disclose information e.g. at bus stops, in mobile phone conversations that can be overheard, at home, in the pub after work, to other volunteers, to other people who know the service user. Have very clear guidelines about what can and cannot be disclosed. Role play how the volunteer might deal with awkward situations.
- ◆ Provide debriefing/support/counselling sessions or a phone number for volunteers to talk about situations without having to offload at home or in other inappropriate settings.
- ◆ Be aware of potential conflict between lone working/going into risky situations (where the basic rule is that someone should know where you are going) and confidentiality. Discuss with volunteers the best way to strike a balance, and incorporate it into the confidentiality policy.
- ◆ Have clear sanctions for breach of data protection and confidentiality policies – but also be absolutely clear that there are situations where information *must*, by law or under the organisation's procedures, be disclosed to a relevant person within the organisation, social services or police.

- ◆ Ensure locked filing cabinets, drawers etc are kept locked and the keys are kept secure; ensure computers are password protected and the passwords are kept secure.
- ◆ Put in place appropriate security systems for computers and other devices. Ensure information on computer is only accessed by those who need to know by creating different levels of authorisation, protected by passwords.
- ◆ Have clear policies about information that can be held on the organisation's portable devices (mobile phones, laptops, tablets, flash drives etc), what can be held on individuals' portable devices. Require everything to be password protected and encrypted.
- ◆ Use fireproof storage for documents, computer disks etc. Keep copies of paper documents and back-ups of electronic information off the premises.
- ◆ Don't provide information about individuals to someone who rings up and asks for it unless you are 100% certain who the person is and that they have a right to the information. Unless you recognise their voice, say you will ring back. Check the telephone directory or internet to ensure the number you are ringing is actually for who you think it is.
- ◆ Ensure all staff are aware that conversations and phone calls can be overheard. Be careful about what is said about individuals or confidential matters, where and when.
- ◆ Try to ensure interview rooms etc are soundproof (but not so soundproof that people could not hear a shout for help).
- ◆ Be sensitive about what is said in reception areas and other public areas.
- ◆ Ensure everyone is aware that emails are not secure, and can be sent to or seen by unauthorised people. Put a disclaimer on emails saying the information must not be used by an unauthorised person ... but once the information is out, it cannot be controlled.
- ◆ Have very clear policies about volunteers putting information or comments about the organisation in their blogs or on Facebook, Twitter and other social media.
- ◆ Position computers so the screen cannot be seen by unauthorised people.
- ◆ Turn computers off, or at least close down all visible documents, when the computer is not attended.
- ◆ Ensure secure handling and storage of information: documents, files, archived files, information on computer (including laptops and handheld computers), information on disks and other electronic media – not only in the office but also at home or on other sites for people who work away from the office.
- ◆ Have very clear guidelines for how long information is kept, why and how it is kept, and when and how it is to be destroyed.
- ◆ Use shredders or secure recycling/shredding facilities to dispose of paper.
- ◆ Ensure destruction of floppies, CDs, zip disks with information about individuals or the organisation's confidential business.
- ◆ Back up information regularly and keep the back ups particularly secure.
- ◆ Be very aware of the risks related to cloud storage of information, and ensure procedures are in place to ensure it cannot be inappropriately accessed or used.
- ◆ Where information is compiled into reports, databases etc by someone who is not an employee of the organisation, ensure copyright is assigned to the

organisation. (If the work is done by an employee, copyright automatically belongs to the organisation. But if it is done by a volunteer, consultant etc, copyright belongs to that person even if they have been paid to do the work – unless they assign it to the organisation.)

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## **11. VOLUNTEERS HANDLING MONEY, WORKING IN SHOPS AND/OR INVOLVED WITH FUNDRAISING**

*See section 1 for general good practice.*

### **General financial procedures**

- ◆ Be rigorous about selecting volunteers who will handle money or carry out public fundraising – see previous sections about volunteer recruitment and selection.
- ◆ To assess suitability: make checks on the honesty of the volunteer, ask about any convictions, find out if they have previous experience of handling money, check they have the appropriate level of numeracy. If they will be fundraising face to face, consider whether they have the personality to deal with members of the public.
- ◆ Ensure someone in a leadership role oversees and monitors financial controls.
- ◆ Have stringent financial control procedures in place, especially where cash is involved. Start with the Charity Commission's CC8 *Internal financial controls for charities* and the related self-help checklist, at [tinyurl.com/nzd9h6q](http://tinyurl.com/nzd9h6q). This is applicable to non-charities as well as charities.
- ◆ Create user friendly policies and procedures about financial matters, such as handling money and claiming expenses.
- ◆ Ensure receipts are given, especially for cash income.
- ◆ Monitor petty cash regularly.
- ◆ Make regular checks to ensure records are being kept accurately.
- ◆ Restrict access to petty cash, cheques and all financial documentation such as bank statements. Ensure these are stored safely and not allowed to be taken home.
- ◆ Arrange for safe storage of cash and other money collected until it can be processed. Pay it into the bank as soon as possible.
- ◆ Be clear about who is authorised to sign cheques and/or authorise telephone or internet transactions, and any limits on the amount.
- ◆ If volunteers are expected to carry out accounting tasks such as budgeting or bookkeeping, ensure they have the appropriate training and supervision and access to necessary records, computer software etc.
- ◆ Require volunteers to provide receipts or appropriate records (mileage, telephone use) when claiming reimbursement for expenses.
- ◆ Have rules about the circumstances, if any, under which a volunteer or the organisation can make a loan to a service user.

## **Shop volunteers and other volunteers handling cash**

- ◆ Provide training as necessary – in counting money, entering transactions on a database or using the till for example.
- ◆ Make sure shop volunteers receive appropriate training in all aspects of the role (not just what they want to do), including using the till, customer service etc.
- ◆ Give regular briefings to shop workers or other fundraisers to keep them up to date on the work of the organisation for which they are raising funds.
- ◆ Try to ensure there are always two people present when cash is being collected, handled or counted; ensure all collecting tins are numbered and sealed and cannot be opened without the seal being broken; where appropriate, provide receipts from a duplicate receipt book.
- ◆ Assess risks to the safety of volunteers carrying money and ensure you minimise any possibility of them attracting attack (through age, inexperience, working alone etc.).
- ◆ Provide personal alarms for volunteers who handle or carry money on their own.

## **Fundraising**

- ◆ Get information from the Institute of Fundraising ([www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk](http://www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk), 020 7840 1000) about the type of fundraising the volunteer will be involved in, and ensure the volunteer understands the legal requirements and good practice.
- ◆ Ensure volunteers understand Gift Aid rules and where appropriate, encourage donors to fill in a Gift Aid declaration.
- ◆ Be sure to comply with the law related to fundraising, especially when going house to house (or pub to pub etc) or collecting in a public place.
- ◆ Have clear guidelines about who is authorised to fundraise for the organisation, who can use the organisation's name and logo, what happens if someone fundraises without authorisation or in a way that could bring the organisation into disrepute.
- ◆ If a registered charity, have the charity name and number on all collecting tins and fundraising materials.
- ◆ Ensure volunteers know the procedures for the type of fundraising they will be doing.
- ◆ Ensure fundraisers have appropriate ID (for some collections this is a legal requirement and the ID must comply with Home Office rules).
- ◆ Set realistic budgets for fundraising activities and events and realistic projections about how much is likely to be raised. Be clear about the extent to which the purpose is fundraising (and therefore it must bring in enough money to justify to financial and time outlay) and the extent to which the purpose is publicity (in which case it might be acceptable to run the activity even if it does not make money),
- ◆ Ensure fundraising sites (for collecting, events or whatever) are suitable. Carry out risk assessments, ideally with people familiar with the site and familiar with the type of fundraising you are doing.
- ◆ Get all necessary licences and permissions.

- ◆ If an event or activity is to be held outdoors, have contingency plans for bad weather and ensure volunteers know what these are.
  - ◆ If an event or activity depends on the presence of a celebrity, have contingency plans for them not showing, and ensure volunteers know what these are.
  - ◆ Have clear guidelines about what volunteers can and cannot say to the media or the public, especially about controversial issues.
  - ◆ Ensure volunteers have adequate and appropriate training for the type of fundraising they are carrying out, including safety and security, site-specific issues, dealing with the media, fundraising law.
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## **12. VOLUNTEERS AT EVENTS**

*See section 1 for general good practice.*

- ◆ Ensure the event has been planned thoroughly, taking into account required risk assessments, insurance, licensing etc.
  - ◆ Make sure there are enough volunteers to enable them to take adequate rest breaks.
  - ◆ Provide water and, for long events, refreshments for volunteers.
  - ◆ Include relevant training as part of the volunteer induction, for example, manual handling, dealing with conflict, crowd control.
  - ◆ Train volunteers in how to do their own risk assessment.
  - ◆ Ensure volunteers know who to contact in an emergency and how to do so. Provide personal alarms if appropriate.
  - ◆ If volunteers will be dealing with cash, follow the guidelines for handling money (above).
  - ◆ See the section on fundraising (above) and on hazardous activities (section 7) for more guidance on events.
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## **13. VOLUNTEERS INVOLVED IN PUBLICATIONS, WEBSITES etc**

*See section 1 for general good practice.*

- ◆ Ensure the volunteer is aware of the purpose of the publication/website, its intended audience, the type of material it should and should not cover, and the extent to which the publication represents the organisation (rather than, say, representing service users and/or volunteers).
- ◆ Where material is produced by anyone who is not an employee the copyright belongs to them, not the organisation. If the organisation wants copyright in the content or design of material created by a volunteer, have the volunteer assign (transfer) it to the organisation or give the organisation a licence (consent) to use the material for a specified purpose or purposes.

- ◆ Be very clear that no material (text, images, sounds) can be used unless the organisation owns copyright, or has consent from the copyright owner to use it for that purpose. Just because something is publicly available on the internet or in a magazine does not mean it can be used by anyone else.
  - ◆ Be very clear about the extent of the volunteer's authority to commission material (ask someone to write articles, take photos, draw artwork, design a publication or website, or undertake other work for the publication).
  - ◆ Be clear about whether the volunteer has final say about what goes in the publication or on the website, or whether it has to be approved beforehand by someone else in the organisation, or perhaps by a readers' panel. If it needs approval, be clear about the process and allow enough time.
  - ◆ Where appropriate, make clear whether content represents the organisation's view, or the view of the writer. This is particularly important for blogs.
  - ◆ Where appropriate, include disclaimers.
  - ◆ Ensure that whoever has final say is aware of what could constitute libel. Don't include material which could be libellous.
  - ◆ Be aware of privacy issues – don't include information about individuals that they might consider private, or photos or drawings of them, without getting consent.
  - ◆ If anyone can add content to a website, be clear about the rules for this and whether the material is moderated (vetted) before going onto the website. Do Disclosure and Barring Service checks on anyone who moderates a website intended for children.
  - ◆ Have a process for updating websites.
  - ◆ Consider whether the organisation's rules on employees writing about their work on blogs, social networking sites etc should also apply to volunteers.
  - ◆ If sending newsletters by email, use a mailing system that does not allow recipients to see other people's email addresses.
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#### **14. REDUCING THE RISK OF, AND DEALING WITH, ALLEGATIONS AGAINST VOLUNTEERS**

- ◆ Try to ensure referral agencies provide all relevant information about potential service users, so volunteers are aware of how to act appropriately towards them.
- ◆ Have clear procedures for child protection and work with vulnerable adults, to reduce the possibility of inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour. Set boundaries for what is and is not acceptable.
- ◆ Avoid one to one working if possible.
- ◆ If one to one working is necessary, consider whether it can be done in public settings or in a situation where other people are available or are within earshot.
- ◆ Ensure that volunteers report all incidents or potential incidents, or anything they think a service user might consider an incident.

- ◆ Have a clear complaints procedure for service users, with clear investigative procedures. The procedure should make clear the situations where external agencies, such as police, will be brought in.
  - ◆ Try to ensure insurance policies will provide legal advice for volunteers accused of inappropriate behaviour, theft etc.
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## 15. YOUNG VOLUNTEERS

*See section 1 for general good practice.*

- ◆ Get guidance from Volunteering England, Wales Council for Voluntary Action or Volunteer Development Scotland about work with young volunteers.
  - ◆ Contact the local education authority for local rules and guidance on school age volunteers (e.g. type of work that school age children can do and number of hours they can work). Volunteers should not be allowed to do types of work that employees of the same age are not legally allowed to do. In relation to the restriction on hours, most organisations seek to comply with it – but some have a policy that school age volunteers can volunteer for more than the hours that would be allowed for paid workers.
  - ◆ Develop a policy on working with young volunteers – what age range of volunteers will the organisation allow; what activities are they allowed to do; how are they recruited, trained and supervised; how are they vetted.
  - ◆ For under 16s get parental consent in writing unless they will be volunteering with their family.
  - ◆ Be aware of any specific needs, such as medical conditions, and ensure you have parental consent to provide medical treatment if necessary.
  - ◆ Have clear procedures for what sorts of references and other checks, if any, you will require for young volunteers.
  - ◆ Provide training for those managing or supervising young volunteers.
  - ◆ Ensure the organisation's health & safety, child protection and other policies explicitly cover young volunteers.
  - ◆ Ensure insurances explicitly cover young volunteers.
  - ◆ Do a risk assessment for the activity in general and for each young volunteer taking into account the volunteer's age, experience, maturity, awareness of risk.
  - ◆ Adapt the organisation's usual induction and training programme as necessary.
  - ◆ Place volunteers in roles which are suitable for them - make it interesting for them.
  - ◆ In one to one situations where a young volunteer works with another person, consider asking that person to select the volunteer who will work with them.
  - ◆ Ensure every volunteer knows how and why their work will be monitored and what will happen if there are problems.
  - ◆ Ensure there are appropriate support structures aimed specifically at young volunteers.
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## 16. VOLUNTEERS WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS

*See section 1 for general good practice.*

- ◆ Have clear policies relating to working with those with specific needs. For example: equality and diversity, safeguarding vulnerable volunteers, working with ex-offenders.
- ◆ Assess the needs of the volunteer as fully as possible.
- ◆ Don't make assumptions about what people are and are not able to do. Don't stereotype.
- ◆ Initiate an open dialogue from the start. Use the application process and interview to discuss what they want and don't want to do, special assistance they might need, their own concerns about volunteering.
- ◆ Be aware of specific needs, such as medical conditions, and what action or treatment may be required. For young volunteers, ensure you have parental consent to provide medical treatment if necessary.
- ◆ Ensure risk assessments take account of this particular volunteer and the work he or she will be doing.
- ◆ Be aware of any potential problems, such as risk of bullying or physical risks.
- ◆ Ensure public safety is not compromised.
- ◆ Check the environment, ideally with the volunteer, and make it friendlier and safer.
- ◆ Provide the volunteer with appropriate equipment, such as protective clothing, a suitable chair, a mobile phone.
- ◆ Make policies and other documents available in large print, on audio tape or on computer.
- ◆ Ensure actions, as well as formal policies, recognise the worth of all volunteers.
- ◆ Check out insurance implications.
- ◆ Check references and undertake Disclosure and Barring Service checks as appropriate for those working with vulnerable volunteers.
- ◆ Adapt training and support as appropriate.
- ◆ Be realistic about whether someone is capable of carrying out a role. Have clear job descriptions for volunteers and don't give someone responsibilities they can't handle.
- ◆ Monitor continuously needs and capabilities of volunteers to ensure ongoing suitability for the role.
- ◆ Re-tailor the role if necessary.
- ◆ Make sure the volunteer has a clear understanding of the tasks they are being asked to do, and the boundaries of their role.
- ◆ Ensure they know who to turn to for support if needed. This could be done through a buddy system, where volunteers have support from an individual mentor.

- ◆ Be aware of factors which could have an impact on a volunteer, such as a change in personal circumstances, personal issues or issues with the role and provide support as appropriate.
  - ◆ If appropriate, have volunteers work in pairs or groups instead of on their own.
  - ◆ Be clear how the organisation's confidentiality and data protection policies apply to volunteers with special needs – who needs to know what, and why?
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## **17. SERVICE USERS AS VOLUNTEERS**

*See section 1 for general good practice.*

- ◆ Be very clear, and try to ensure volunteers are very clear, about the boundaries between their role as a service user and their role as a volunteer.
  - ◆ If possible, a service user should not volunteer within a group they attend.
  - ◆ It may be appropriate to require a time gap between using a service and becoming a volunteer (for example, a parent who has used a service for their terminally ill child, and wants to volunteer after the child has died).
  - ◆ Provide training, training and more training, to ensure the volunteer can see the wider picture, and not just base their input on their own situation and their own experience of the service.
  - ◆ But make the best possible use of that experience!
  - ◆ Ensure that monitoring and supervision take account of the volunteer's dual role.
  - ◆ Ensure that others in the organisation respond appropriately to the dual roles, and don't treat the person as a service user when they are acting as a volunteer, and vice versa.
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## **18. UNCOOPERATIVE OR RESISTANT VOLUNTEERS**

*See section 1 for general good practice.*

- ◆ Have good practice procedures and checklists in place for volunteers in general, and for volunteers in this particular sort of role. This makes it easier to show the volunteer's behaviour is unsuitable in general – you are not attacking them individually.
- ◆ From the beginning, be clear about the type of volunteer needed and design your selection process to help you make suitable appointments e.g. think about role descriptions and interview questions.
- ◆ Create a clearly defined role description which includes any relevant information about codes of practice, boundaries, induction and training etc.
- ◆ Have a comprehensive induction and ongoing training programme in place – so volunteers are clear about how the organisation operates, and what is expected of them and why.
- ◆ Be clear at all times about the level of commitment required of the volunteer.

- ◆ Give them a role where they have the opportunity to take ownership of something
- ◆ Be clear about levels of autonomy – to what extent do volunteers have to do what they are told, and to what extent can they decide what they are going to do, and how they are going to do it.
- ◆ Have a trial period for volunteers, making clear that this is both for them to decide whether they want to volunteer, and for the organisation to decide whether the potential volunteer is suitable.
- ◆ Make a point of regularly providing updated information and guidance.
- ◆ Have regular reviews and supervision with all volunteers. Focus on identifying issues, solving problems and reinforcing boundaries where necessary. Don't let things slip. Yes, they might get better of their own accord, but they probably won't – and the longer poor practice is allowed to continue, the harder it is to deal with.
- ◆ Have a problem solving procedure in place (similar to disciplinary and grievance procedures for employees, but usually less complex and more informal).
- ◆ Listen to volunteers. Allow them to feel heard. Involve them in the organisation by including them in meetings and decision making.
- ◆ Where things are going to change, involve the volunteers from the beginning in discussing the reasons and ways of introducing the change. Springing it on them as a *fait accompli* nearly always leads to resentment and resistance.
- ◆ Where there is resistance to learning or doing things in new ways, consider whether it can be introduced in small chunks instead of all at once.
- ◆ Offer the support of a mentor volunteer.
- ◆ If a volunteer is acting unacceptably, try to find out why. Do they feel threatened, undervalued, undermined, frightened of failure?
- ◆ If volunteer is unsuitable for one role, consider offering them something else.
- ◆ If a suitable role is not available, suggest they visit the Volunteer Centre for other volunteering opportunities
- ◆ Have guidelines and policies in place – to create a clearer understanding of the issues in dispute, and to be able to demonstrate that everyone is dealt with fairly.
- ◆ If guidelines are not in place, consider whether to involve volunteers in developing them – this can help them understand the wider issues.
- ◆ Where there is a legal requirement (e.g. health & safety, data protection, fundraising law) or funder requirement or where it is clearly part of the organisation's reasonable procedures (e.g. asking to see driving licence at regular intervals), make clear that non-compliance will mean the person will no longer be able to volunteer for the organisation, or at least not in that role.
- ◆ Explain what the impact of uncooperative behaviour might be on the organisation, the volunteer, and the people the volunteer works with (co-workers, service users).
- ◆ Stress their commitment to the organisation's aims, everyone working to a common purpose, and show how their failure to comply could compromise achievements.

- ◆ Explain that if they do things they are not authorised to do, or do not follow the organisation's procedures, the organisation's insurance may be invalidated. This could mean that if a successful claim were brought against a volunteer or the organisation, the volunteer or organisation might have to pay out, with no insurance to cover it.
  - ◆ Where a volunteer says they will take responsibility if something goes wrong, make clear it is not up to them. If they are acting on behalf of the organisation, the organisation is liable.
  - ◆ Make clear to service users that there is a limit to what volunteers can do.
  - ◆ It may be appropriate to ask someone to take a break from their volunteer role for a while.
  - ◆ Remember the bottom line is that volunteers are there to do the work of the organisation – the organisation is not there to meet the needs of volunteers (except in cases where the volunteers are themselves the organisation's beneficiaries). If a volunteer cannot or will not comply with the organisation's policies and procedures, they will have to be asked to stop volunteering or to move into another role.
  - ◆ Think about issues around what type of reference you provide for references who leave in these circumstances. Remember that they may not be suited for your work and procedures, but may be fine somewhere else.
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## **19. VALUING VOLUNTEERS**

- ◆ Enjoy, encourage and appreciate. Say thank you at the end of each session.
  - ◆ Get to know the volunteers. Allow enough time for them. Listen – really listen.
  - ◆ Involve them in the organisation. Include them in meetings and decision making.
  - ◆ Treat them like adults. Encourage a sense of ownership and responsibility for their tasks.
  - ◆ One size doesn't fit all. Make space for diversity.
  - ◆ Even the most unprepossessing individual has hidden depths.
  - ◆ Everyone is a gem.
  - ◆ Never assume anything.
  - ◆ Be honest and constructive when things don't go well. Negative criticism doesn't get you very far.
  - ◆ Help break down a feeling of 'us' and 'them' through regular communication between volunteers and other people in the organisation.
  - ◆ Share the successes of the organisation to help volunteers feel they are making a difference.
  - ◆ Volunteers are our most valuable resource – many of our organisations wouldn't be able to operate without them.
  - ◆ Remember they don't have to be here.
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## **20. PLACING VOLUNTEERS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

- ◆ Be clear who is responsible for the initial checks on the suitability of the volunteer, such as verifying references and DBS checks – the organisation who makes the referral or the one where the placement will be.
  - ◆ Take responsibility for referrals and demonstrate commitment to the organisations and the individuals.
  - ◆ Monitor and support the receiving organisation to ensure good practice. Identify areas for development and provide training or refer to an appropriate provider.
  - ◆ Provide support for the individual volunteer through clear communication. Have good policies for the selection, support and supervision of volunteers as in the sections above.
  - ◆ Evaluate the success of the placement from the point of view of the individual and of the organisation.
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