

## Guide for Volunteer-Involving Groups and Organisations

A volunteer is someone who willingly gives up their own time, without payment, for the benefit of others or for a cause they wish to support. At this time demand for volunteers has increased as communities and individuals are having to manage unprecedented challenges and restrictions. At any time, the safety and wellbeing of volunteers is a priority – in the current difficult circumstances it is important that the safety and wellbeing of volunteers is considered by everyone involved in relief and support activities.

This Guide has been created as a source of information and support for groups and organisations that involve volunteers during the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. For guides and templates to help you achieve the following, visit Volunteer Scotland by [clicking here](#) or SCVO (Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations) by [clicking here](#).

### 1. Commitment

Volunteers should be aware that the service or support they are providing will be vital to the service users; people in difficult circumstances will depend on them. Volunteers need to be aware of the commitment that will be required and the time that they will have to donate on what could be a regular and prolonged basis.

### 2. Policies and procedures

All organised volunteering should be supported with the required policies and procedures that will give guidance and instruction on how activities should be managed, and services provided. Groups and organisations should ensure they have copies of the policies and procedures that are required to give their volunteers the guidance and instructions they need to safely and effectively volunteer. If you are unsure about this, you can contact your local AVA Development Officer who will be able to support you. You can find out who your local officer is by [clicking here](#).

### 3. Confidentiality

Groups and organisations should ensure that their volunteers are aware of the requirements around confidentiality, keeping in mind that the nature of some volunteering at this time will give access to personal information and circumstances.

### 4. Boundaries

Groups and organisations need to be aware of the boundaries that must be in place to ensure everyone's safety and wellbeing. Guidance should be given on personal relationships and interactions with people being supported.

## 5. Communications

Everyone has a responsibility to support effective communications. You should ensure that any instructions or guidance given to volunteers is understood and ensure that you share (within the bounds of confidentiality) any information that is required to support the aims and tasks of their activities. There should be a clear communications plan in place so that when messages need to be transmitted, the correct information is reaching the person who needs it. Please make sure that volunteers fully understand how you are expected to communicate within your group or organisation.

## 6. Expenses

Normally expenses incurred by volunteers as a result of their duties would be reimbursed by the organisation or group. You should ensure that your volunteers are aware of what expenses, if any, can be reclaimed. You should ask them to keep any receipts and record any activities that are carried out for transparency purposes, especially if your activities have been funded by an external or publicly funded body. Volunteers should be made aware of the process for claiming legitimate expenses before beginning their activities.

## 7. Health and safety

It is the responsibility of the organisation or group that is involving volunteers to provide guidance, information and instruction that minimises risk and protects volunteers as they carry out their duties. At this time, it is more important than ever that this guidance and instruction is provided, and that all volunteers follow it without exception. Please make sure that if a risk assessment exists for a specific activity, your volunteers understand how the risk is to be managed and controlled. For more information on risk assessment, please see the AVA guide which can be found by [clicking here](#). If you are unsure about how to carry out a risk assessment and require more help, please contact your local AVA Development Officer for more advice by [clicking here](#).

## 8. Personal wellbeing

Volunteers can sometimes witness the unexpected and struggle to cope with the tasks and responsibilities associated with their volunteering. The personal wellbeing of volunteers should always be a priority and there should be a process of support and supervision in place to mitigate against this. MIND has a dedicated area of their website that provides information about mental health during the current pandemic which can be found by [clicking here](#).

## 9. Safeguarding

It is the responsibility of the group or organisation that is involving volunteers to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone. This includes the volunteers and beneficiaries of their services and activities. The volunteer also has responsibility to contribute to this. This should be clearly explained to volunteers and they should know who they can speak to within your group or organisations.

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### **Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action**

We are funded by the Scottish Government and Aberdeenshire's Health and Social Care Partnership to support third sector organisations who are delivering a service within Aberdeenshire in the following ways:

- Development: Further information on any of the subjects within this document is available from your local Development Officer. To find out how to contact the relevant person, please visit our website by [clicking here](#).
- Funding Search: Our dedicated Funding Officer regularly updates our funding webpage with information to help fund your group. You can find out more by [clicking here](#).
- Office Services: We support organisations by offering services such as independent examination of accounts, payroll provision and PVG services. Further details can be found by [clicking here](#).
- Member Services: You can join us and become a member: Information can be found by [clicking here](#).

### **We are Aberdeenshire's Third Sector Interface**



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