#TEAMHERTS VOLUNTEERING

Best Practice Checklist

Introduction

#TeamHerts Volunteering aims to support all organisations involving volunteers across Hertfordshire with best practice in volunteer management. This 'checklist' will help your organisation to consider the way it involves volunteers and adopt best practice.

The checklist can be used to assess if you have good volunteer policies and procedures in place. It's designed to help make sure you are doing things well and think about potential ways you may want to do things differently going forwards.

Supporting one off, short term or micro volunteering

#TeamHerts Volunteering is also offering an innovative platform for organisations to promote their one off, short term or micro volunteering opportunities to potential volunteers: teamherts.org/volunteer/flexible-volunteering

This will appeal to people who want to volunteer but don't have a lot of time on their hands. They are looking for ad hoc opportunities with no long term commitment. The best practice outlined in this checklist applies to these opportunities and volunteers as well, so please bear this in mind when planning and producing or amending your policies and procedures.

Volunteer Coordinator Forums

To help you further with best practice #TeamHerts Volunteering run's Volunteer Coordinator Forums across the county. These Forums give those who recruit, manage, support or supervise volunteers the opportunity to come together and discuss volunteer management best practice. Each session focuses on a different aspect of volunteer management. To see what's on please visit our website.

How best to use the checklist?

There are ten main titles each broken down into several questions. Give each question beneath a mark out of 4 (1 being the lowest score and 4 the highest).

1. **Not achieved**
2. **Working towards it**
3. **Nearly there**
4. **Accomplished**

Once you have completed the checklist, it should give you a good idea about the areas you should be focusing on to review and improve. The checklist provides a guide for your organisation to see how it manages volunteers now and possible areas for improvement.

Note for small organisations

We understand that small groups are not always in a position to achieve all of the points included in the checklist, therefore we have put an asterisk * by what we consider are the most important aspects you should have in your volunteer programme. If you at least achieve these, you will be on the road to success.

INDUCTION PROCEDURES - Does your organisation have clear induction procedures?	1	2	3	4
* Are volunteers introduced to all staff and volunteers?				
Those interested in volunteering on a regular basis are given the chance to experience how the organisation runs before any commitment? i.e. informal visit, taster session.				
*Are volunteers fully briefed about their role by being provided with relevant information and training?				
Are volunteers informed of the problem solving procedures with regards to complaints.				

SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERS - Does your organisation provide support for volunteers?	1	2	3	4
* Do all your volunteers know what support structure is in place and who will be responsible for them?				
Are volunteers provided with the opportunity for a regular catch up/supervision to discuss the individuals needs and progression.				
Does your organisation recognise that volunteer's motivation may change over time or they may be interested in a new challenge? Is this discussed regularly with the volunteer?				
Are volunteers encouraged to say no when they are not comfortable with the task they have been given?				

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION - Does your organisation give recognition to volunteers for their involvement?	1	2	3	4
*Are all regular volunteers offered a reference when they decide to move on?				
Volunteers are given the opportunity to be kept informed about the organisation through newsletter/emails/social networks etc.				
The organisation aims to, where possible, consult with volunteers and inform them about changes which affect them.				
*Do all involved with the organisation recognise the value of volunteers' contributions?				
Do you conduct an exit interview to receive feedback from volunteers leaving the organisation?				

USING ALL RESOURCES- Does the organisation use all the resources available to them to manage volunteers?	1	2	3	4
Does the organisation attend events and network meetings relevant to the management of volunteers?				
The organisation regularly thinks out of the box in recruiting flexible and micro volunteers, including corporate groups and young volunteers?				
Does your organisation keep up to date with changes happening in the volunteer sector?				

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MAKING A COMMITMENT - Has your organisation shown commitment to the involvement of volunteers?	1	2	3	4
*Do all involved in the organisation know and understand the reasons for involving volunteers?				
*Is there a written policy on volunteer involvement which covers procedures for managing volunteers, which is agreed by all?				
Does your organisation review its volunteer policies and procedures regularly? We recommend you do this annually to ensure they stay current.				

PROVIDING RESOURCES - Can your organisation provide the resources needed to work with volunteers?	1	2	3	4
*Is there a key person/persons who are responsible for responding to enquiries promptly, recruiting, selecting, supervising and supporting volunteers?				
Do you give time during staff meetings to discuss volunteers, any problems or successes.				
*Do you budget for volunteers and ensure you have all the means needed to run your volunteer programme? i.e. access to relevant resources, volunteer expenses.				

PROMOTING OPPORTUNITIES - Does your organisation promote itself to all sections of the community	1	2	3	4
Does the organisation look at ways in which it can involve all abilities provided by the community and develop opportunities accordingly?				
*Is your organisation open to involving volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities, providing extra support for volunteers with additional needs where possible?				
*Do marketing materials for volunteers clearly state the different ways that they can get involved using language understood by all?				
Do you promote using a wide variety of methods to reach everyone in the community i.e. #TeamHerts Volunteering website, social media, local publications.				
Do you monitor how volunteers found out about the organisation, so that you can review which marketing channels are effective?				

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES - Does your organisation create opportunities for volunteers which benefit both parties?	1	2	3	4
*Does your organisation carefully think about what tasks volunteers can get involved in before promoting?				
*Are roles descriptions produced using appropriate language and set out the necessary skills, attitudes, experiences and availability needed to carry out the task?				
Are tasks varied and innovative taking in to consideration all types of volunteering (flexible, micro and opportunities for youth and groups)?				
Tasks are adapted to suit the needs, abilities and interests of volunteers where possible.				

SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERS - Does your organisation ensure that volunteers are fully supported and protected from any potential risks?	1	2	3	4
*Are basic risk assessments carried out when producing all types of volunteering roles?				
*Are all types of volunteering activities fully covered by insurance?				
Does your health and safety policy include volunteers and are they briefed on this at induction stage?				
Are flexible volunteers fully briefed on their tasks, including risks and procedures and provided with a named contact should they have any issues.				
Is there a clear policy around volunteers out of pocket expenses with appropriate record keeping?				
*Are volunteers' personal details protected in line with the organisation's Data Protection policy?				

RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES - Does your organisation have non-discriminatory recruitment procedures?	1	2	3	4
Are volunteers provided with information at the initial stages? These include; types of opportunities, recruitment and selection procedures, time scales, DBS checks etc				
*At initial stages of recruitment are the skills, interests, motivations and availability of potential volunteers checked against role descriptions/organisation's needs?				
When a volunteer role is not suitable or becomes unavailable is the volunteer offered a reason and provided with alternative options, where possible?				
*Do you record details of volunteers? i.e application form				
Does your organisation have a policy on taking up references along with the use of official checks, relevant to the volunteer role? i.e DBS checks				