



# Volunteer Policy



The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary  
Service

# Interest Link Borders Volunteer Policy

## A. Introduction

- Interest Link Borders aims to provide volunteer befriending projects for children, young people and adults with learning disabilities in the Scottish Borders that will improve their quality of life, help them to participate in the community and give respite to their carers.
- Our volunteers are a major resource and make a vital contribution to our aims. We intend to encourage, develop and support volunteer involvement in all aspects of our work.
- Volunteers' work is undertaken by choice and it is unpaid. We undertake to organise it effectively.
- Our relationship with our volunteers is one of mutual responsibility and commitment, within which Interest Link Borders and our volunteers both have rights and responsibilities. We hope that volunteers will enjoy their involvement and gain from it in terms of their own personal objectives.
- We recognise that the roles of volunteers will complement and not replace the roles of paid employees.
- As well as delivering our service we hope that Interest Link Borders volunteers will serve on our Board and committees.

## B. Purpose and Advantages of Policy and Procedures on Volunteers

### 1. Interest Link Borders's purpose in adopting this policy is to:

- highlight and acknowledge the value of the contribution made by volunteers
- reflect the purpose, values, standards and strategies of Interest Link Borders in its involvement of volunteers
- recognise the respective roles, rights and responsibilities of volunteers and Interest Link Borders
- confirm Interest Link Borders's commitment to involving volunteers in its work
- establish clear principles for the involvement of volunteers
- clarify the roles of volunteers and address the relation between volunteers, those who engage them and those who receive their services
- help to ensure the ongoing quality of both the volunteering opportunities on offer and the work carried out by our volunteers
- acknowledge the current areas of volunteer involvement.

### 2. The advantages of this policy are:

- It provides a basis for the expansion, if required, of volunteer involvement
- It sees volunteer involvement as a resource which we cannot afford to lose, not as a cheap alternative to paid employees .
- It gives a framework for recruiting and supporting volunteers including people from under-represented groups such as young people, people with a disability, older people, and people from black and minority ethnic communities.

- It commits the organisation to identify and adequately meet the financial and personnel costs of the volunteer programme and to support volunteering through funding and other forms of help.

## **C. Statement Of Principles Of Good Practice**

### **1. General**

In involving volunteers we will be guided by the following principles of good practice:

- the tasks to be performed by volunteers will be clearly defined, so that all concerned with their activities are sure of their respective roles and responsibilities.
- the organisation will comply with the Data Protection Act by the use of application/registration forms and by keeping records of the work done by volunteers as a basis for monitoring, and by enabling volunteers to have access to their records.
- volunteering opportunities will complement rather than replace the work of paid employees.
- opportunities will be given for volunteers to represent their views to Interest Link Borders.
- all existing and future policies will be checked as to how they affect volunteers.
- a mechanism will be established by which the policy and procedures on volunteers can be monitored and reviewed.
- respect for human rights and equal opportunity

### **2. Recruitment and Selection**

- Interest Link Borders will adhere to its equal opportunities statement when recruiting and selecting volunteers
- To ensure that all volunteering opportunities are widely accessible they will be promoted appropriately in accordance with our written method for recruiting volunteers. Such promotion will specify the task to be undertaken and will draw attention to the benefits and experience to be gained from participation in volunteering.
- Volunteers will be required to complete a volunteer's application/registration form.
- Written task descriptions will outline time, commitment, necessary skills and actual duties.
- Volunteers will be placed in accordance with our written volunteer selection procedures.
- Interest Link Borders will comply with the Police Act Part V and will follow the procedures and standards laid down in its Support and Protection of Adults at Risk Policy
- We will request two written references for volunteers
- We will carry out Police Checks on all new Volunteers.
- People who offer to volunteer will have their offers dealt with as quickly as possible.
- We will regularly review the way in which potential volunteers can make contact with us.
- Placements will match the volunteer's skills, talents and interests with the voluntary work to be carried out.
- Once placed, we will expect volunteers to comply with existing policies and procedures.

### **3. Support for Volunteers**

- Interest Link Borders will invest financial and personnel resources for the management of volunteers
- We will provide an induction period and a review session for volunteers to assess the progress of their placements and to resolve any problems at an early stage.
- We will provide funding for the payment of volunteers' expenses. Volunteers will be given clear information about what expenses can be claimed and how to make a claim-
- Interest Link Borders has written procedures for the insurance of its volunteers.
- Volunteers will be given information on legislation and policies that may affect them e.g. Health and Safety, Data Protection, Human Rights and Equal Opportunities. In these respects volunteers will be treated in the same way as paid employees for liability purposes.
- All volunteers will be offered appropriate access to support and supervision on a regular basis, with a named support worker, and will be informed whom to contact in an emergency.
- All volunteers will be offered equal access to appropriate training to enable them to develop their capabilities and personal competence appropriate to their volunteering role.
- Opportunities will be provided for changing and/or upgrading volunteer responsibilities as desired by the volunteer and appropriate to the organisation's needs.
- Volunteers will be encouraged to provide each other with mutual support within the bounds of confidentiality.
- The organisation's complaints, grievance and disciplinary procedures will be explained to volunteers and they will be informed of who to contact if they have a grievance about any aspect of their work. Complaints about volunteers will be dealt with in the same way as paid employees.

Full details on procedures for, and content of, Volunteer Support & Supervision can be found in the Interest Link Borders Volunteer Support & Supervision Procedures.

### **4. Volunteers on Management Committee**

To support its Committee Interest Link Borders will provide:

- an induction on the role and responsibilities of the Committee and the work of the organisation
- opportunities to meet with employees members as appropriate
- written information and reports in good time on matters related to the governance of the organisation, the organisation's constitution and other relevant areas of legislation.

### **5. Rights and Responsibilities**

#### **a. In engaging volunteers, we recognise the rights of volunteers to:**

- know what is expected of them and to be given clear information and induction

- have clearly specified lines of support and supervision
- be given respect, confidentiality and privacy
- be shown appreciation
- have safe working conditions
- be insured
- know what their rights and responsibilities are
- be paid expenses
- have holidays and breaks
- be trained and receive ongoing opportunities for learning and development
- be free from discrimination
- experience personal development through their participation as volunteers
- ask for a reference
- be consulted on decisions that will affect what they do
- withdraw from voluntary work

**b Volunteers should:**

- carry out their tasks in a way which corresponds to the aims and values of Interest Link Borders
- volunteer within agreed guidelines and remits
- respect confidentiality
- respect other volunteers, service users and employees
- respect the human rights of others
- carry out their tasks with regard to the health and safety of others
- attend training and support sessions where appropriate

**6. Relationship with Paid Employees**

- Steps will be taken to ensure that paid employees at all levels are clear about the role and rights of our volunteers, and that good working relationships are fostered between paid employees and volunteers
- The roles of volunteers and paid employees will be complementary and mutually supportive.
- Appropriate training, support and resources will be provided for all those who work alongside volunteers and for those who have a managerial role in relation to volunteers.
- Volunteers on the Management Committee will observe fair standards and conditions of employment, health and safety and equal opportunities in respect of paid employees.

**7 Contracts and Service Agreements**

In entering into contracts or service agreements that involve volunteers we will ensure that:

- the role and rights of volunteers are made clear and that satisfactory arrangements are in place for their management
- the contract or service agreement provides for the necessary resources for involving volunteers
- arrangements are made to set out the roles and commitments of the volunteers
- the impact of volunteering and its benefits are promoted and acknowledged

## **8. Employer Supported Volunteering**

In our encouragement of employer supported volunteering we will:

- increase our employees' awareness of the opportunities for volunteering through our website, newsletter and other media
- develop a policy on employer supported volunteering, to clarify how Interest Link Borders will support employees in this voluntary activity
- if appropriate, then nominate an individual to support, promote and encourage the involvement of employees in volunteering
- invite a Board/Committee member to take a special interest in employer supported volunteering
- acknowledge the value of employees' volunteering activity

## **9. Local Volunteering Sector**

We will develop relationships with the local volunteering sector on the following principles

- That there is a need for a coherent approach to the development of volunteering locally
- That there is a need to work in partnership with the local Volunteer Centre and others to promote community benefit.

## **10. Action Plans and Reviewing the Policy and Procedures**

- Interest Link Borders will produce an annual action plan for volunteer involvement
- Interest Link Borders will monitor and review this policy and procedures on volunteers and the above action plan on an annual basis.

## **11. Responsibility**

Overall responsibility for the implementations, monitoring and review of the policy and procedures lies with the Convenor of the Management Committee and, on a day-to-day basis, with the senior paid employees/volunteers.