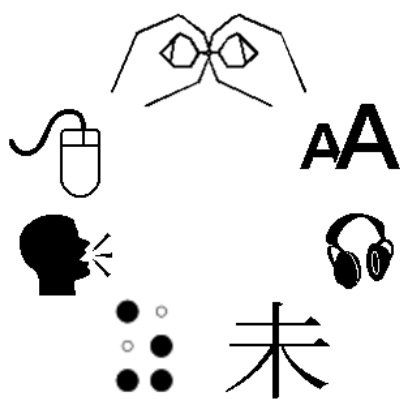


# Volunteering

## code of practice



If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please contact the Third Sector Liaison Officer in the Herefordshire Council Community Regeneration Team on 01432 383038 or email: [compact@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:compact@herefordshire.gov.uk)

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## 1. What is the Volunteering Code of Practice?

- 1.1 The Volunteering Code of Practice is one of the codes which support the Herefordshire Compact. It states undertakings on good practice in volunteering which the voluntary and community, public and private sectors in Herefordshire have agreed to.
- 1.2 The aim of this code is to make a positive impact on the relationship between these sectors and their commitment to volunteering.

## 2. What is the Herefordshire Compact?

- 2.1 The Herefordshire Compact is a mutual agreement between local voluntary and community, public and private sectors in Herefordshire to support and improve partnership working between the sectors.
- 2.2 The Herefordshire Compact is also a framework which guides how the sectors will work together through the codes of practice, of which this is one.

In this document we have outlined our commitments to good practice. These commitments will be supported by a more detailed action plan which will be updated regularly.

Copies of the Herefordshire Compact, Compact Codes and the Code Action Plans are available upon request from the Third Sector Liaison Officer

email: compact@herefordshire.gov.uk  
telephone: 01432 383038

Or online at:  
[http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/community\\_and\\_living/neighbourhood/3333.asp](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/community_and_living/neighbourhood/3333.asp)

### 3. Who and what is this Volunteering Code of Practice for?

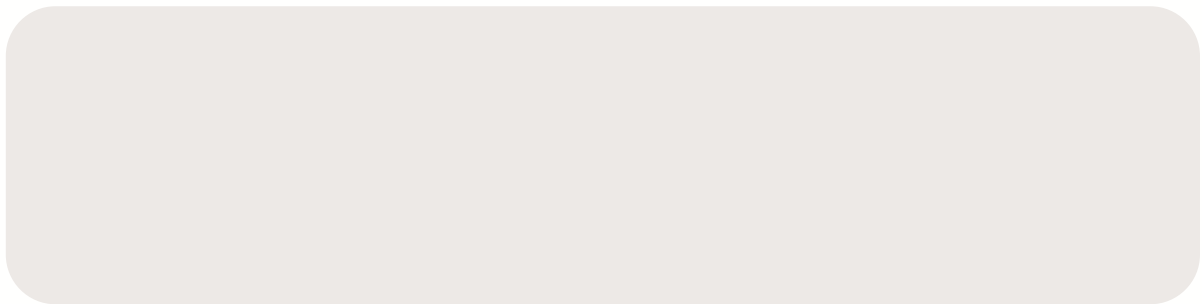
- 3.1 The Herefordshire Volunteering Code of Practice is for volunteers, voluntary and community sector groups and infrastructure<sup>1</sup> organisations as well as individuals and organisations within the public and private sectors operating in the county.
- 3.2 It has been developed to ensure that organisations which sign up to the Herefordshire Compact work with volunteers in a consistent and positive way. A list of the signatories to the Herefordshire Compact can be found on page 11
- 3.3 It is not intended to replace the policies and procedures on volunteering of individual organisations.
- 3.4 In Herefordshire we want to:
- Develop constructive relationships between the voluntary and community, public and private sectors in the county.
  - Increase commitment to volunteering by all sectors.
  - Raise awareness and understanding of what volunteering is.
  - Promote the mutual benefits and value of volunteering to the individual, organisation and community.
  - Actively encourage a diverse range of people to volunteer.
  - Encourage better practice in the management, support and training of volunteers.
  - Recognise the importance of strong Voluntary and Community Sector support services (infrastructure) to support volunteers and promote volunteering.

<sup>1</sup> **Definition of Infrastructure** (from the National Code of Volunteering):

Infrastructure is the physical facilities, structures, systems, relationships, people, knowledge and skills that exist to support, develop, co-ordinate, represent and promote front-line organisations to help them to deliver their aims more effectively. Organisations that make up volunteering infrastructure include volunteer centres.

## 4. What is volunteering?

- 4.1 There is no universally recognised definition of volunteering, but the Herefordshire Local Compact Working Group (which is responsible for the consultation, development, adoption and implementation of the Local Compact for Herefordshire) has agreed the following working definition:



- 4.2 Volunteering is a powerful tool for change, both for those who volunteer and for the wider community. It builds, supports and sustains communities and individuals, making a huge difference at all levels of society.
- 4.3 Volunteers in Herefordshire undertake an enormous range of tasks. There are volunteer drivers, befrienders, gardeners, committee members, literacy tutors and advisers. Some fundraise, help in schools and hospitals, serve on parish councils or help out at a community event while others volunteer to improve and protect our environment and heritage. The list is endless.
- 4.4 Volunteering is undertaken individually or as part of a group. It can be a one-off activity or can be undertaken on a regular basis. It can be formal or informal.
- 4.5 Findings from the Regional Lifestyles Survey suggest that levels of volunteering in Herefordshire are greater than those across the West Midlands region.
- 4.6 The economic value of volunteering in Herefordshire in 2006 was £44.2 million (based on median hourly pay for 2005). *The Value of Volunteering to Herefordshire, Herefordshire Voluntary Action 2006*

**In Herefordshire, 25% of adults provide unpaid voluntary work to some degree compared with 17% for the West Midlands.**

*The West Midlands Regional Lifestyle Survey 2005*

## 5. Principles of volunteering

5.1 In Herefordshire we believe there are five principles fundamental to volunteering:

### **Choice**

- Volunteering must be a choice made freely by each individual.
- Volunteering does not have to be a long term commitment and volunteers can stop whenever they like.
- People should not feel pressured into volunteering.

### **Diversity**

- Everyone should be able to volunteer for appropriate roles regardless of race, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion, income or geographic location.
- Volunteers should be respected as individuals and for the skills that they bring.

### **Mutual Benefit**

- When an individual gives their time and skills on a voluntary basis it should benefit both the organisation and the volunteer.
- Volunteering should be personally fulfilling.
- Volunteers can expect to benefit in a number of ways such as learning new skills; improving their career prospects; increasing their social networks; feeling valued and having fun.
- Organisations benefit from volunteers in many ways, for example: bringing new ideas, enthusiasm, life experience, a wide range of skills.

### **Recognition**

- The contribution that volunteers make to the community, the economy and society should be recognised and celebrated.

### **Support**

- For volunteers to feel valued they must be well supported by good management and training and know how their role contributes to the work of the organisation.

## 6. Joint Undertakings

- 6.1 All organisations that involve volunteers should recognise their responsibilities towards their volunteers.
- 6.2 Regardless of the scale of their services and activities, organisations should seek to follow good practice and achieve high standards by:
- Increasing the range of people who can volunteer by offering a diversity of volunteering opportunities and removing barriers such as access to transport.
  - Making information about volunteering opportunities accessible to all.
  - Ensuring volunteers receive ongoing support, training, personal development and supervision.
  - Making certain that volunteers understand their roles and responsibilities and that these are jointly reviewed regularly.
  - Reimbursing volunteers for all reasonable out of pocket expenses brought about through their volunteering.
  - Having a named person in the organisation who is responsible for volunteers.
  - Involving volunteers in making decisions within the organisation.
  - Working together to provide, maintain and resource services that support volunteers and volunteering.
  - Taking all possible action to ensure that volunteers work in a safe environment.
  - Ensuring that disclosures for volunteers are undertaken in accordance with Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) guidelines.
  - Making sure that volunteers complement not replace the role of paid staff.
  - Providing appropriate training to staff who work with volunteers.
  - Recognising that although volunteering is given freely, it is not cost free and should be budgeted for.
  - Raising the profile of volunteering and encourage a positive image of volunteering.

## 7. Public and Private Sector Undertakings

7.1 The public and private sector partners commit to:

- Respecting the independence of the Voluntary and Community Sector.
- Recognising that the Voluntary and Community Sector needs support and resources to actively encourage a wide range of people to volunteer.
- Recognising that the full cost of volunteering should be included in funding and partnership agreements and accept that volunteer time can be used as legitimate match funding.
- Providing training to enhance the understanding of public sector staff about volunteering.
- Supporting rather than duplicating Voluntary and Community Sector initiatives.
- Ensuring that new policies and procedures are checked for their impact on volunteering before being adopted.
- Making provision within budgets to cover the full cost of the recruitment and effective management of volunteers.
- Encouraging employers to allow employees to volunteer during work time.

## 8. Voluntary & Community Sector Undertakings

- 8.1 Voluntary and Community Sector groups and organisations commit to:
- Developing, promoting, recognising and celebrating volunteering.
  - Adopting good practices when involving, managing and supporting volunteers.
  - Recognising the contribution that trustees make as volunteers in organisations and provide the appropriate training for them to carry out the role.
- 8.2 The volunteer centres, as the local volunteering infrastructure organisations for Herefordshire, will work to standards set by Volunteering England to:
- Match people to opportunities by helping individuals to find suitable and satisfying volunteering placements.
  - Support organisations to adopt good practices for involving volunteers.
  - Market and promote volunteering countywide to reflect the quality and range of activities that are available.
  - Develop new volunteering opportunities that reflect people's interests, skills and needs.
  - Campaign on policy matters.
  - Act as a strategic lead at county level on volunteering and to take forward new volunteering initiatives identified through the Compact.

## 9. Volunteer Expectations

- 9.1 A volunteer in an organisation signed up to the Herefordshire Compact can expect to:
- Be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses incurred through their volunteering.
  - Receive clear information about their roles and responsibilities.
  - Have a named person in the organisation to give them relevant support and supervision.
  - Be protected and covered by insurance while volunteering.
  - Have access to training and skills that are appropriate to the tasks involved.
  - Be treated fairly in an environment which does not accept discrimination.
  - Be given the opportunity to influence what happens in the organisation.
  - Be free to express their feedback, both positive and negative, about the organisation and feel confident that this will be acted on.
  - Not to be used to replace paid workers.

## 10. Volunteer Responsibilities

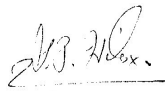
- 10.1 A volunteer should:
- Be willing to have appropriate training for their role.
  - Accept the organisation's aims and principles.
  - Be familiar with and work to the policies and practices of the organisation.
  - Treat information about service users, workers or other volunteers in total confidence.
  - Carry out agreed commitments to the organisation and let the appropriate person know as soon as possible if they cannot fulfil that commitment.

**Signatories to the Herefordshire Compact are:**



Mike Ashton, Chief Executive

**Chamber of Commerce Herefordshire & Worcestershire**



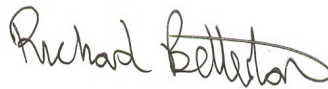
Lynda Wilcox, Chief Executive

**Herefordshire Association of Local Councils**



Chris Bull, Chief Executive

**Herefordshire Council / Herefordshire Primary Care Trust**



Richard Betterton, Chair

**Herefordshire Infrastructure Consortium**



Sharon Gray, Area Director

**Learning & Skills Council Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire**



Richard Quallington, Nominated Representative

**Voluntary Sector Assembly**



Mark Turner, Chief Superintendent

**West Mercia Constabulary**

## Breach and Mediation

If an organisation considers that the values, undertakings or standards in this Code have not been followed it should:

- Identify where the Code has not been followed and by which organisation
- Decide whether to take it further and identify their objective(s) in doing so
- Raise directly with the other organisation in the first instance and offer constructive suggestions as to how things can improve
- Then if not resolved, refer to the Local Compact Working Group which will be responsible for ensuring the complaint is considered on its merits and where necessary, seek to improve working practice
- If it cannot be resolved locally, then as a last resort refer to The Commission for the Compact

Any complaint made should be in writing. On receiving a complaint the organisation should investigate and reply in writing.

**For help and advice about volunteering,  
please contact:**

**Herefordshire Voluntary Action**

Berrows Business Centre, Bath Street, Hereford HR1 2HE  
Tel: 01432 343932 Email: [volunteer@herefordshireva.org](mailto:volunteer@herefordshireva.org)

or

**Community Voluntary Action Ledbury and District**

Salter's Yard, Bye Street, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 2AA  
Tel: 01531 636333 Email: [enquiry@voluntaryactionledbury.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@voluntaryactionledbury.org.uk)



This document has been published by the Herefordshire Partnership Local Compact Working Group.

If you would like further information about the Herefordshire Compact, please contact the Third Sector Liaison Officer in the Herefordshire Council Community Regeneration Team on 01432 383038 or email: [compact@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:compact@herefordshire.gov.uk)

November 2009