Fact Sheet – Volunteer Handbooks

If you are an organisation using more than 10 volunteers and likely to be using more or have high volunteer turnover, then using a Volunteer Handbook as a tool for induction and information can be beneficial and time saving. (Though you would have to invest some time putting it together)

A Volunteer Handbook is based around the same concept of a Staff Handbook and ensures the Volunteer understands the policies and procedures of the organisation that relate to them.

It can reflect in more detail the processes set out in the Volunteer Policy: –

* Recruitment
* Expenses
* Health and Safety
* Equality and Diversity
* Complaints
* Supervision

and give more information around other important areas such as:

* Safeguarding, Boundaries and Lone working, if applicable
* Specific information related to the volunteer role
* Learning and Development Opportunities/Training
* General information about clients/the organisation

The purpose of the Handbook is that it should be a “**GO TO”** for volunteers if they are unsure about how something works in the organisation, there isn’t anyone to ask or they feel uncomfortable asking.

**10 TOP TIPS FOR A GOOD VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

1. Use your Volunteer Policy as a guide to what to include in your handbook
2. Ensure you include the steps volunteers need to take if making a complaint or safeguarding concern – what to write down, who to email, who to call?
3. Include an expenses form in the electronic Handbook or refer to where expenses forms can be found in the office
4. Don’t include information already available on your website or in leaflets – you are just doubling your work. Just refer to it or include a pdf or hard copy in an appendix in the handbook.
5. If there are Risk Assessments around the Volunteer Role or Activities - think about including these or at least referring to them in the Handbook.
6. Have hard copies to hand in the space the volunteer activities happen so it is always accessible.
7. Send an electronic version of the handbook to volunteers so they have a copy and encourage them to read it as part of their responsibility for their role.
8. Review your handbook regularly to ensure contact names and numbers are still valid.
9. Depending on the role, the Handbook is a good place to include links or information about other resources that may support them in their role (websites, tools, books).
10. A Volunteer Handbook doesn’t have to be “War and Peace”. Keep it manageable and a document that people can dip in and out of.