

POLICE SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS

Helping to build safer communities

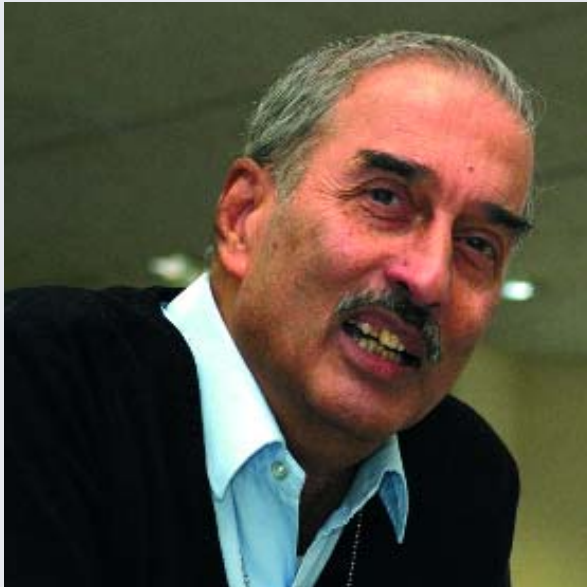




'The work I have been doing has improved my skills further. My confidence has definitely improved. I would say to anyone considering volunteering that if you have the free time it is a really worthwhile role to do, if not for the police then for yourself. It's your chance to really make a difference.'

Zoe Carter

Zoe works in administration at two police stations in London, in the criminal justice unit and the Schools Involvement Team.



'People can come in and talk to us in person instead of being kept hanging on the telephone for ages. We listen to them and advise them. If it is a serious problem there are officers in the building who are more than willing to come down and help us.'

Max Fernandez

Max helps out at the front desk at a station in Enfield, London.

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Executive summary

This guide has been developed by Thames Valley Police in partnership with the Home Office, the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Association of Police Authorities. It provides a brief overview of the issues that need to be considered when developing a volunteer programme. These include:

- ▶ Consultation – successful integration of police support volunteers will depend upon timely consultation with all relevant stakeholders in the force to ensure there is a real commitment to volunteering and an agreed approach on the scope and involvement of volunteers.
- ▶ Legal status of volunteers – it should be recognised that the nature of volunteering is unique and varies considerably from paid employment. Police support volunteers are not employees and have no employment status. However, volunteers are bound by the same rules that govern employees when on volunteering duty.
- ▶ Resources – police support volunteers are not free. Forces interested in setting up a volunteer programme need to carefully consider the costs of developing and maintaining the programme.
- ▶ Volunteer policy – all forces should develop an appropriate police support volunteer policy document clarifying the principles of volunteer involvement and giving guidance on practical issues such as recruitment, management and support.
- ▶ Role development – volunteer roles should be needs-driven and identified before any recruitment takes place, to ensure police support volunteers can be placed promptly. Roles should enhance and complement the jobs of paid employees; police support volunteers are not there to replace established police staff posts or cover staff vacancies and shortages.
- ▶ Health and safety – all volunteer roles must be risk-assessed according to the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.
- ▶ Recruitment, selection and placement – there should be a consistent approach to recruitment and selection across the force to ensure all police support volunteers are treated equally. This should form part of the policy document.
- ▶ Training – any training provided to police support volunteers should be appropriate to the role they are performing for the force. Care should be taken to ensure police support volunteers do not receive training which could be interpreted as ‘consideration’ (see section on Legal status of volunteers).
- ▶ Management – volunteer management systems should not simply copy those for paid employees. The distinctive nature of volunteering requires systems to be developed that meet the specific needs of volunteers. At all times conduct of the highest standard is expected of volunteers to ensure employee and public confidence is maintained.
- ▶ Monitoring and evaluation – these are essential for the long-term sustainability of the programme, and systems should be developed that enable the programme to be measured effectively.



Introduction

In response to ever-increasing demands on policing and a need to provide a quality service to local communities, there has been a growing awareness in recent years of the value of volunteers and the vital role they can play in the fight against crime, disorder and fear of crime.

Background

The National Bureaucracy Task Force 2002 recommendations encouraged the development of community volunteer schemes within forces, and also maximising their potential to provide an additional resource and to involve the local community in policing. It is clear from the Police Reform Act and the publication of the *National Policing Plan 2005–2008*, that if targets relating to community safety, reassurance and crime reduction are to be met, effective community engagement is essential. The Government's White Paper *Building Communities, Beating Crime* has as two of its three broad objectives the spread of neighbourhood policing and greater involvement of communities and citizens in the way they are policed. The valuable role of police support volunteers in freeing up uniformed officers to spend more time on the front line is fully recognised in the Government's booklet *Neighbourhood Policing*, published in 2005. The greater use and involvement of volunteers is a crucial way in which forces can better engage with communities and deliver a more effective policing service.

Volunteer involvement in the police service is, of course, nothing new. The Special Constabulary has provided invaluable support for many years and has played an essential part in developing the partnership between the police and communities. Likewise, organisations such as Neighbourhood Watch have enabled individuals to offer practical support to the police, engendering a sense of responsibility and ownership for the communities where they live and work.

In recent years, however, a third strand of volunteering has emerged in the form of 'police support volunteers' or PSVs. For the purposes of this guide a police support volunteer is defined as:

An individual with no police powers who through personal choice gives time and energy to perform tasks for their local force, without expectation or receipt of compensation, except for reimbursement of agreed out-of-pocket expenses. Volunteering is based on choice so there is no mutuality of obligation, ie the local force is not obliged to provide a role for the volunteer and the volunteer is not obliged to accept the proposed role.

A number of forces have already established police support volunteer programmes that promote community engagement and participation, and many others are now carefully considering the benefits that such a programme

can bring. These innovative programmes provide unique opportunities for individuals to use their skills, experience and knowledge to make a positive contribution to their community and provide support to their local force.

Community engagement through volunteering promotes diversity and provides a mechanism for increased transparency. It encourages the development of an open and inclusive police force which reflects the diverse nature of the community it serves. It is a partnership that adds value and brings mutual benefit.

Case study

In Thames Valley Police, the Police Volunteer Support Team has opened 10 new police offices in mainly rural locations to increase police availability, visibility and accessibility in these areas and to offer support to local communities that feel isolated. A further 13 police stations have also been able to extend their opening hours with the help of police support volunteers and are now able to provide an enhanced service to the public.

Aim of the guide

It is the aim of this guide to provide a framework for a coherent approach to volunteering in the police service and a brief overview of the issues that need to be considered when developing a volunteer programme. It brings together a wide range of both external and internal good practice and incorporates learning from forces that already have established programmes of police support volunteer activity.

It is not the intention of this guide to provide all the answers or to act as a restraint on existing volunteering practices. Rather it aims to highlight some of the issues that need to be considered when engaging the community through volunteering, and to help forces develop volunteer programmes that meet their specific needs.

Stage 1: Consultation

1.1 Volunteer roles

One of the great strengths of involving police support volunteers is their flexibility to meet diverse needs within a force and community. Creativity and innovation in volunteer role development should be encouraged at all levels to ensure volunteers are meaningfully involved in roles that bring added value to the force. However, when developing appropriate roles, it should be remembered that police support volunteers are not there to replace paid employees. Examples of roles that are currently undertaken by volunteers in forces where volunteer programmes have been established include:

- ▶ Front-counter assistance
 - Providing a triage system in busy central stations
 - Opening police offices/community points/one-stop shops in rural areas, residential areas, towns, etc
- ▶ Providing administrative support to officers and staff, including filing, photocopying, typing, inputting data onto crime systems, etc
- ▶ Supporting CCTV operators at times of high demand and monitoring CCTV tapes
- ▶ Assisting with crime prevention and community safety initiatives
- ▶ Recording and storing lost and found property
- ▶ Providing specialist skills, eg language, computer and IT skills
- ▶ Assisting with minor investigative work
- ▶ Undertaking elimination prints
- ▶ Helping with PR and media work, including sending out press releases, taking photographs, etc
- ▶ Supporting Watch Schemes and liaising with specific sections of the community, eg pubs, shops and businesses
- ▶ Website design
- ▶ Mentoring of police officers and staff
- ▶ Gardening – providing a welcoming and attractive environment
- ▶ Assisting with Special Constabulary and Volunteer Cadet schemes
- ▶ Supporting criminal justice units by improving service delivery to victims and witnesses
- ▶ Specialist roles
 - Forensic accountants – accountants volunteering on complex fraud cases, analysing information and acting as advisers
 - Management consultants – advising senior management teams on business management and best practice.

Volunteer case study – Thames Valley Police

'I have been actively involved in community safety issues for over 20 years since I became involved with a victim support team, having initially been a victim of crime myself. My involvement grew through my interest in community issues and being invited to participate in various steering committees dealing with crime prevention, anti-social behaviour, youth projects, Neighbourhood Watch and Crimestoppers.

'I enjoy meeting the public and listening to their concerns, which help give me a better understanding of the anti-social behaviour problems facing the community. When I moved to the Iver area in 1989, I became involved with a Neighbourhood Watch group that met at Iver Police Station, which closed in the early 1970s. During this time I met the local officer who was setting up the volunteer scheme in Iver and I joined. I led the volunteer team for five years, opening the police station once a week on a Tuesday.

'Today there are over 12 volunteers whose tasks, apart from front-counter duties, include sending out burglary packs to victims and following these up, aiding the police with statistics for vehicle crime, working with the community safety inspectors and other volunteer organisations such as Crimestoppers, and monitoring CCTV video.

'Iver Police Station reopened officially on 1 April 2003 with area beat officers who welcome the ongoing work of the volunteers. It makes a big difference having Iver Police Station open as it creates so much goodwill in the community just knowing we have our "own officers" there. There is very little that is not enjoyable about the volunteer work and there is the bonus of the social side.'

Tina Heath, Iver Police Station

1.2 Consultation process

Prior to the start of any volunteer programme development it is necessary to establish why the force wants to involve police volunteers. If no response other than one based on cost is forthcoming, it is unlikely that a successful volunteer programme will be developed. There are many positive reasons why police support volunteers should be involved, including:

- ▶ Increasing the capacity of the force – improving performance and achieving strategic priorities
- ▶ Releasing police officers and police staff to concentrate on core policing duties
- ▶ Encouraging community participation in issues that directly affect them
- ▶ Access to an extensive pool of skills, talents, experience and local knowledge
- ▶ Delivering a customer-focused service that meets local needs
- ▶ Improved interaction between the police and local community
- ▶ Demand reduction
- ▶ Greater flexibility
- ▶ Increased diversity
- ▶ Enabling the community to have a better understanding of the work of the police.
- ▶ Special Constabulary
- ▶ Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership representatives
- ▶ Voluntary sector representation, eg local volunteer bureau, council for voluntary service
- ▶ Community representatives
- ▶ Volunteers (where they are already present), eg Neighbourhood Watch.

Issues that need to be considered at this stage include:

- ▶ Why does the force want to involve police support volunteers?
- ▶ What kind of roles should/should not police support volunteers perform?
- ▶ How will this add value to the work of the force?
- ▶ What is the benefit to the local community?
- ▶ How will it be resourced and funded?
- ▶ What impact could this have on the force?
- ▶ How will police support volunteers fit into the wider organisation?
- ▶ How will this be progressed?

Successful involvement of police support volunteers depends on a clear understanding of why volunteers are being involved and a real commitment to volunteering. This means providing the required resources for the programme and developing an environment where volunteers are welcomed and valued. It is also important that differences between employees and volunteers, and the implications of these, are fully recognised by the force. Commitment and ownership at all levels within the force are therefore key factors in successful volunteer programme development.

To achieve this level of commitment, it is necessary to involve stakeholders in the consultation process. These should include:

- ▶ The police authority
- ▶ The Chief Constable and senior management team
- ▶ BCU commanders
- ▶ Representatives of police officers and police staff, eg Police Federation, UNISON
- ▶ Staff associations, eg Police Superintendents' Association, British Association of Women Police, Black Police Association



Stage 2: Building the foundations

2.1 Establishing a programme board

Having established why the force wants to involve volunteers, it is advisable to set up a programme board or steering group to oversee the development of the programme. The board will have responsibility for developing the vision and strategic direction, discussing legal implications, funding, policy development, monitoring and evaluation, and the appointment of a programme manager. The programme board should comprise representatives from key internal business groups, including for example:

- ▶ Senior management representation, eg assistant chief constable with responsibility for the police support volunteer portfolio
- ▶ Health and Safety Department
- ▶ Legal Department
- ▶ Unions/Police Federation
- ▶ Finance Department
- ▶ Human Resources
- ▶ Diversity Unit
- ▶ Training Department
- ▶ Marketing and PR Department
- ▶ Vetting Department.

It is recommended that a representative from the voluntary sector is also invited onto the board to advise on general volunteer management good practice. Support may also be required from other specialist groups to provide expert advice on particular issues.



2.2 Funding the volunteer programme

It should be recognised at an early stage that volunteers are not cost-free. Although volunteers bring added value to the force and are a cost-effective way of delivering services, there are significant costs associated with volunteering. These should be carefully considered to ensure funding is made available at the appropriate times. Costs involved in running a volunteer programme include:

- ▶ Staff salaries
- ▶ Marketing and recruitment
- ▶ Selection and placement
- ▶ Training and equipment
- ▶ Out-of-pocket expenses for volunteers
- ▶ Insurance
- ▶ Administration
- ▶ Data collection and analysis
- ▶ Management and support
- ▶ Volunteer events.

These costs need to be met if the programme is to be effective and meet objectives in line with force and community needs.

2.3 Principles of volunteering

Having established why the force wants to involve volunteers, it is important to develop a set of principles that underpin the volunteer programme. These should clarify the role of volunteers and their place within the organisation, and form the foundation of the volunteer policy.

Principles should be tailored to meet the needs of the force and should include:

- ▶ The purpose of the volunteer programme
- ▶ The role of volunteers
- ▶ How volunteers fit into the force
- ▶ Clarification of the relationship between the police and volunteers
- ▶ Issues relating to diversity.

2.4 Volunteer policy

While volunteering is based on informality, flexibility and innovation, it is important to establish more detailed guidance to ensure quality and consistency in the management of volunteers and their effective involvement in the organisation. It is therefore necessary to produce a written volunteering policy document, which should be agreed by the programme board in full consultation with stakeholders. The policy clearly identifies the principles underpinning the involvement of volunteers and gives guidance on issues such as recruitment, selection, support and management. It also creates a framework of best practice which should be implemented across the force.

Developing a policy will:

- ▶ Demonstrate the commitment of the force to develop an effective volunteer programme
 - ▶ Show where and how police support volunteers fit into the organisation
 - ▶ Provide guidance on practical matters such as recruitment, management and support
 - ▶ Ensure all members of the force know why police support volunteers are involved and the boundaries of the relationship, to allay fears of job substitution.
- The policy should be relevant to both the organisation and volunteers so that there is a clear understanding of what both parties can expect from the relationship. It is recommended that the policy is supported by a set of management guidelines, which will provide greater detail on particular issues, including:
- ▶ Role development
 - ▶ Recruitment and selection procedures
 - ▶ Diversity
 - ▶ Induction and training
 - ▶ Management and support
 - ▶ Conduct, including grievance and disciplinary procedures
 - ▶ Retention and recognition
 - ▶ Volunteer expenses
 - ▶ Confidentiality
 - ▶ Insurance
 - ▶ Health and safety, risk assessments.

2.5 Legal status of volunteers

In recent years concern has been expressed about the legal status of volunteers and the implications this may have on organisations involving them. It is commonly accepted that volunteers should not enter into any form of legally binding agreement or contract, either in writing or verbally, that would suggest the presence of an employment relationship. A contract of employment is created when an individual agrees to undertake a task in return for something, usually of economic value, which is legally referred to as 'consideration'. If this rule is applied to volunteers, then a contract could be argued to have been created where the volunteer receives anything of economic value in return for volunteering, for example training unrelated to their role, 'expenses' that are not related to actual documented expenditure, gift vouchers, membership of police sports and social clubs, etc. Volunteers who receive such consideration may well be regarded as working under a contract of employment. This means they may be entitled to relevant workers' and employees' rights, which could have significant implications for the force.

Recent volunteer-related employment tribunal rulings have highlighted the confusion surrounding this issue but, following an appeal decision (which set a precedent) on

17 November 2003, the situation does appear to be gaining some clarity.

Case study

In the case of South East Sheffield Citizens Advice Bureau v Mrs J Grayson, Grayson, a former employee, wanted to bring a Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) claim against the bureau. The bureau said it had only 11 employees so came under the DDA small employer exemption. Grayson sought to show that the bureau's 17 volunteers were working under a contract, and the bureau therefore was not entitled to the exemption. She argued that the volunteers had to agree to work at least six hours a week, and received consideration in the form of training, reimbursement of expenses, and an indemnity (promise of payment) if a negligence claim were successfully brought against them.

The employment tribunal agreed with Grayson that this created a contract of employment. However, the employment appeal tribunal disagreed. They said there was a unilateral contract, sometimes called an 'if' contract: 'If you do any work for the bureau and incur expenses in doing so, and/or suffer a claim from a client you advise, the bureau will indemnify you against your expenses and any such claim.' This did not impose any obligation on the volunteer actually to do any work, so it did not constitute a contract for services or a contract of employment. Furthermore, the training was necessary to enable the volunteer to do the work, and did not constitute consideration for work.

(Source: www.sandy-a.dircon.co.uk)

Based on the decision of the employment appeal tribunal, it would appear that police support volunteers are unlikely to be seen as working under a contract provided they:

- ▶ Receive only reimbursement of actual out-of-pocket expenses and training, etc related to their role
- ▶ Do not receive perks or anything else that could be interpreted as consideration
- ▶ Are not seen to be benefiting economically from their relationship with the force
- ▶ Are not subject to 'sanctions' if they decide not to work.

It is therefore important that these principles are adhered to when developing the programme.

Terms that are indicative of an employment relationship should be avoided where possible in relation to volunteers, eg terms such as 'employer', 'employee', 'employment', 'contract', 'staff', 'workers', etc. Advice and guidance should be sought from the force legal department and from local and national voluntary sector networks who are experienced in these matters.

It is therefore essential that careful consideration is given to the development of any volunteer management systems to ensure they do not suggest an employment relationship.

2.6 Differences between employees and volunteers

In order to develop a programme that meets the needs of volunteers and the force, it is important to recognise that voluntary work differs significantly from employment. Concern has been expressed in recent years about the growing trend of treating volunteers in exactly the same way as paid employees, with the exception of payment. When volunteers are subject to the same management systems as those for paid staff, the distinctive nature of the volunteering relationship is lost, and boundaries between volunteers and employees become blurred. Confusion over the legal status of volunteers has added to the need for separate management systems that reflect the specific needs of volunteers.

There are significant differences between volunteers and paid employees and these should be reflected when developing an appropriate volunteer management system. These differences include:

- ▶ Employees work under a contract of employment, volunteers do not. A contract of employment means a contract of service or apprenticeship, whether stated or implied, and requires an offer, acceptance, an intention to create a legal relationship and consideration.
- ▶ Volunteers only receive reimbursement of actual out-of-pocket expenses whereas employees receive a salary.
- ▶ As there is no link to wage, volunteer motivations will vary. It is therefore important to create an environment where these needs can be met.
- ▶ Employees are subject to employment law, volunteers are not. This means that volunteers are not entitled to employee or worker rights, and do not have the same responsibilities, eg do not have to give a period of notice. This also means that forces do not have the same responsibilities towards volunteers as they do for employees, other than where legislation provides for specific exceptions, eg the duty of care, which applies to both employees and volunteers.
- ▶ Volunteering is based on choice and not obligation, ie forces are not obliged to provide volunteers with a role and volunteers are not obliged to accept the proposed role.

2.7 Appointment of a programme manager

Forces may wish to consider the early appointment of a programme manager with responsibility for the strategic direction, development and management of the volunteer programme. This individual will act as a champion for volunteers and advocate on their behalf within the force. They will also participate in programme board meetings and act as a link between the members. Therefore, careful consideration needs to be given to the positioning of this post within the organisation to ensure its effectiveness.

As the programme develops and expands, it may be necessary to consider the appointment of additional posts. This will ensure effective development of the programme and that volunteers are managed to greatest effect. The potential for growth should be clearly identified in budget

forecasts to enable required funds to be made available at appropriate times. This requires a clear understanding of the vision of the volunteer programme and careful forward planning.

Case study

In the Metropolitan Police Service, the Met Volunteer Programme (MVP) is centrally managed by the Head of the Volunteer Programme supported by a staff of three managers:

- ▶ Programme Manager
- ▶ Training and Development Manager
- ▶ Community Engagement Manager.

As the programme has developed, and demand for it increased, additional volunteer co-ordinator posts have been created within each of the 32 borough command units. These posts have a responsibility for local development and management of volunteers and will work closely alongside colleagues supporting the Metropolitan Special Constabulary and Volunteer Police Cadets, the other two of the three volunteering arms of the Metropolitan Police Service's extended policing family.



Stage 3: Policy into practice

3.1 Establishing a project board

It is advisable to establish a project board which will oversee development of the operational processes and procedures needed to run the programme effectively. This should have a close link with the programme board to ensure strategy and policy are effectively translated into practice. The programme manager should attend both the programme and project board meetings to ensure this close link is maintained. The project board should include:

- ▶ Programme manager
- ▶ BCU volunteer manager (where appointed)
- ▶ Volunteer representatives
- ▶ Health and safety representation
- ▶ Human Resources representation
- ▶ Union representatives.

Specific support may also be required from other departments to provide advice on particular issues, eg data protection, literature development.

3.2 Volunteer role development

It is essential that suitable roles are identified before any recruitment takes place. When developing roles it is important to have some understanding of why individuals volunteer, their levels of commitment and their lifestyles, as these will impact on the roles that they are able or willing to undertake.

Individuals volunteer for many different reasons, but some of the more common motivations include a desire to:

- ▶ Give something back and make a difference to their local community
- ▶ Learn new skills and gain experience
- ▶ Use their skills, experience and knowledge to positively benefit the work of the police
- ▶ Meet new people and make new friends
- ▶ Engage and interact with people from different communities and backgrounds
- ▶ Work as part of a team in a professional environment
- ▶ Consider possible career opportunities either as a police officer or a member of police staff.

Case study – Why do people volunteer with the Metropolitan Police Service?

‘I am very much interested in a career within the police. I applied for jobs but found my lack of experience let me down. I was lucky enough to have two weeks’ work experience arranged for me. Following this work experience I became a volunteer with the Met. I work at two stations. At one I help in the criminal justice unit and at the other I work with the schools involvement team which I really enjoy. I feel volunteering is worthwhile for me as I am gaining invaluable experience for my future career while serving the community in which I live.’

‘After many years with the GPO/BT, I took advantage of an early retirement scheme. At a meeting, I was having my usual moan about the lack of police on the streets, when the then borough commander pointed out he could make better use of the officers if members of the public would volunteer to do some tasks. What started in 2001 as my response to his challenge soon became a satisfying and enjoyable weekly stint helping in the stores department. A bit of exercise in a very friendly environment is doing me no harm at all! If nothing else, I would like to think that it is a way of saying “thank you” to the people who do an essential and often unpleasant job on our streets on our behalf.’

Volunteers offer their spare time and have other commitments, including work, personal, social, family and study, which they need to work round. It is therefore important that roles should be diverse in terms of skills required, location, time, regularity, etc. Roles do not have to be long term or permanent, they can be time specific, short term or ad hoc. The advantage of volunteering is its flexibility to meet specific needs in the force and

community. In recent years there has been a growth in episodic and time-specific volunteering, which enables volunteers to get involved in short-term projects and tasks. Such roles can be advantageous where individuals are unable or do not wish to commit for long periods of time.

When identifying suitable roles for volunteers, other issues that should also be considered include the following.

3.2.1 Roles should be needs-driven and enhance and complement the jobs of paid employees; volunteers are not there to replace paid staff or cover staff vacancies and shortages. The involvement of volunteers should not raise fears of job losses or be a threat to employees. This will only serve to undermine the programme and make staff unwilling to work alongside volunteers. Rather, volunteer roles should enhance and complement police officer and police staff roles. It is therefore advisable that individuals are provided with a volunteer role description which details the purpose of the role, a list of tasks and, where appropriate, skills or experience that may be required. This will ensure that:

- ▶ The 'right' volunteer is matched to the 'right' volunteering opportunity
- ▶ The volunteer is provided with sufficient information with which to make an informed decision about accepting or rejecting the role
- ▶ Employees have a good understanding of what the volunteers will do, the boundaries in which they are working and their contribution to the team.

Union and staff association representatives should be consulted with regard to appropriate volunteer roles to ensure concerns over job substitution are avoided.

Case study – Met Volunteer Programme (MVP)

Met Volunteers are supporting Bromley Mind – in a jobmatch project. As not all people with mental health issues are registered disabled, they are treated for the purposes of benefit as unemployed. A 19-year-old male with autism was recruited into the MVP. He assists in the post room and has gained experience within a working environment which will stand him in good stead when applying to potential employers. The experience is boosting his confidence and self-esteem. The time he gives the MVP releases a member of staff to concentrate on other duties.

3.2.2 Roles should directly contribute to core policing activities and have clearly defined outcomes. To ensure the volunteer programme supports the strategic aims of the force, roles should reflect priorities both within the police service and local community. This will give the programme meaning and purpose, and ensure roles are appropriate to local needs. It is important that volunteers understand their place in the bigger picture, and how their contribution benefits the force and local community. Without this, volunteers can lose sight of their purpose and commitment to the force.



Case study

In Lancashire, two volunteers are categorised as neighbourhood policing team assistants and work from Barnoldswick Police Station, a small rural police station which houses a neighbourhood policing team. Over recent months they have assisted the team in:

- ▶ Keeping and maintaining a running log for a 'Dispersal Order' in the town and compiling associated statistics
- ▶ Producing a telephone folder of useful contacts from the separate folders kept by individual officers
- ▶ Compiling information from a survey regarding youth activities in the town
- ▶ Setting up the West Craven CCTV system
- ▶ Quality of service call-backs.
- ▶ A number of different clerical tasks, freeing up officers for their beats
- ▶ Patrolling the Barnoldswick Balloon Festival
- ▶ Keeping a running log of proactive policing on the first night of the 'Dispersal Order'
- ▶ Producing a report for the town council regarding the effectiveness of the order.

3.2.3 The training requirements of the role should be carefully considered to ensure appropriate training can be provided. Volunteers should not be asked to perform a task that requires training that the force cannot provide either through cost or availability. It is therefore important that training requirements are carefully considered during role development.

3.2.4 Volunteers need to receive supervision and support to ensure they are effective in their role. It is good practice to provide volunteers with a supervisor who not only has a real grasp of the role they are fulfilling but can also support volunteers in their role. Volunteers will require different levels of support but it is important to recognise this early in the development process so that a suitable person is appointed to undertake this role. It is recommended that this supervisor is a paid employee rather than a volunteer so there is greater accountability.

Case study – Met Volunteer Programme

Yvonne is a black British woman who first joined the MVP because she thought ‘it was brilliant to bring the community into the police station’.

She first gave her time to thoroughly reorganising the office admin. arrangements of many of the senior management team on her borough and then turned her attention to the front-counter triage team. This new project offered enhanced customer care to those members of the community needing to visit the police

station. In one year she gave 146 hours of volunteering time and enjoyed the atmosphere so much that she took up a temporary salaried post in the community safety unit. She still retains her volunteering involvement, giving one hour to the front counter before commencing her day’s work.

Yvonne has now applied to become a police officer and is in the early stages of recruitment.

3.3 Insurance

All police support volunteers need to be adequately insured to undertake the roles they are being asked to perform. This may vary from one role to another and insurance requirements should be determined and in place before police support volunteers undertake any activity. Force insurers should be contacted at the earliest stage so that any problems or restrictions can be considered in full. This is an important safeguard for both the volunteer and the force.



Insurances that need to be considered include public liability, employer liability, professional indemnity, etc.

3.4 Recruitment, selection and placement processes

The volunteer-involving sector is a highly competitive marketplace. Police forces wishing to engage communities through volunteering are competing against long-standing, well-respected organisations that have many years of experience working with volunteers. It is therefore essential that forces identify suitable roles and put in place appropriate volunteer management systems which will attract and retain volunteers and ensure the effective running of the programme.

The recruitment, selection and placement processes should form part of the policy statement to ensure there is a consistent approach across the force. Issues to be considered and discussed include:

- ▶ Defining recruitment and marketing messages
- ▶ Designing appropriate recruitment literature
- ▶ Developing a police support volunteer application form that meets the needs of the force
- ▶ Defining the criteria for accepting or rejecting police support volunteers, eg age restrictions, precluded occupations, previous convictions, nationality issues and refugee status, health matters, conflicts of interest, individuals claiming benefits, etc
- ▶ Volunteer vetting procedures eg security checks, references
- ▶ Developing an appropriate interview process to include questions relating to diversity
- ▶ Matching volunteers to suitable placements.

Case study – Met Volunteer Programme

A Turkish community engagement liaison project has been established, supported by two Turkish volunteers who organise materials and the details of events which the Metropolitan Police Service is arranging in the Turkish community. They help with translations, have a cultural liaison role and are also available to support Turkish members of the public attending front counters at the police station. A similar project involving a Kuwaiti national is now being implemented.

3.5 Induction and training

All police support volunteers should receive induction training when they take up their placement. This will ensure they understand the organisation and the boundaries in which they are operating, are welcomed into the force and made to feel a valued part of the team. Areas that can be covered during induction may include:

- ▶ Introduction to the force
- ▶ How police support volunteers fit into the wider organisation
- ▶ Introduction to relevant policies and procedures, eg data protection and confidentiality issues, health and safety legislation
- ▶ Employee/volunteer relations
- ▶ Accepted standards of conduct
- ▶ Supervision and support structures
- ▶ Practicalities such as insurance, payment of expenses, etc
- ▶ Welfare issues

- ▶ Availability of training
- ▶ Equal opportunities and diversity.

Police support volunteers may also require role-specific training, which will enable them to perform their duties more effectively. It should be noted, however, that any training provided must be relevant to the role being performed. Training that is not relevant to their role may be construed as ‘consideration’ and should be avoided. Roles requiring high levels of training and supervision may be inappropriate for volunteers to undertake unless a regular and sustained commitment is given.

3.6 Management environment

3.6.1 Supervision

Supervision is vital for volunteer integration and retention, and ensures volunteers feel valued and part of the team. For it to be effective it should provide individuals with guidance, support, feedback and an opportunity for open discussion. It can be either formal or informal and should be dependent on the individual volunteer and the role they are performing. Supervision is usually conducted on a one-to-one basis so that sensitive issues can be discussed if necessary. It is recommended that supervision is carried out by a paid member of staff who has some responsibility for the management of volunteers in the team.

Lancashire Police have recruited 211 volunteers to assist the newly formed neighbourhood policing teams. They assist the teams with administrative work, crime prevention initiatives and police surgeries, and are making a positive impact on the quality of service being delivered to local communities.

Lancashire Police have recruited a volunteer to work with the Community Safety Team to enhance the engagement between the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual (LGBT) community and the police. The aim of the role is to encourage the increased reporting of homophobic

incidents and to increase the personal safety of members of the LGBT community.

There are 85 volunteers working in communications rooms across the constabulary carrying out call-backs to people who have contacted the police, providing updates and results of incidents and queries. Initial evaluation has shown that this has increased the satisfaction of those people contacted. One member of the public re-contacted by a volunteer stated 'It was good to know that someone cared and the incident hadn't been forgotten by the police'.

3.6.2 Support

To aid communication between the force and volunteers, it may be helpful to consider the creation of volunteer focus groups. Focus groups provide individuals with an opportunity to meet together in small groups on a regular basis to discuss the volunteer programme, give feedback and comment, raise relevant issues and offer support. This can aid further development of the programme and enables the early identification of problems. It also provides individuals who may volunteer alone, with the opportunity to get to know other members of the team.

In addition to providing group support, it is also important to consider what support individual volunteers may require and how this may vary with time. When a volunteer first starts they may require significant levels of support to ensure they are able to perform their role effectively.

When arranging meetings and/or training with volunteers, it should be remembered that volunteers may be in full-time employment and unable to attend during normal working hours.

3.6.3 Health and safety

All roles should be subject to a risk assessment to ensure the health and safety of all volunteers. Forces have the same duty of care towards volunteers as they do towards their paid employees. This means that they should avoid exposing police support volunteers to any situation that may be a risk to their health or safety. Risk assessments should therefore be undertaken for all roles performed by volunteers, including working time considerations, and appropriate control measures put in place. Any role that is deemed to have a high level of risk attached to it may be inappropriate. The risk associated with a particular role will vary according to the capability of the individual volunteer to undertake it. All police support volunteers should be made aware of the force health and safety policy, the procedures that are laid down within it and their obligations under it. This should form part of the induction process and regular updates should be provided when necessary to ensure safe working conditions are maintained.

3.6.4 Retention

Central to successful volunteer retention is an understanding of why people volunteer and recognition that motivations may change over time. If volunteers are unhappy they will leave.



Roles should have meaning and purpose and volunteers need to feel that their contribution is recognised and valued by the force. Volunteers also need to be properly managed and effectively involved. This will ensure that they are working within set boundaries and that they are making a real impact. Other factors that can increase retention include:

- ▶ Allowing volunteers to participate in problem-solving and decision-making processes
- ▶ Matching volunteers to roles that fit their needs and interests
- ▶ Providing opportunities for personal development and growth
- ▶ Enabling volunteers to be flexible in the service they provide.

3.6.5 Recognition

Recognising the contribution that volunteers make to the force is an integral part of successful volunteer management and retention. Informal thanks should be ongoing and regular so that volunteers know they are a valued part of the team. A simple thank you can keep a volunteer motivated and committed. However, there are occasions when more formal recognition is required. Formal recognition can take many forms but care should be taken when arranging events to ensure prizes or awards given cannot be construed as ‘consideration’. Appropriate recognition methods may include:

- ▶ Volunteer certificate of thanks
- ▶ Special service award
- ▶ Honours nominations
- ▶ Volunteer award ceremonies
- ▶ Articles and editorial coverage in internal publications
- ▶ Away days
- ▶ Commendations
- ▶ External volunteer awards, eg Whitbread Young Achievers Award, Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service.



3.6.6 Conduct

Police support volunteers are representatives of the police and, as such, conduct of the highest standard is expected to ensure employee and public confidence is maintained at all times. All police support volunteers should be required to comply with the policies and procedures of the force and are responsible for maintaining confidentiality. It should be emphasised at an early stage that activities undertaken in their private lives must not affect the integrity of the force or compromise the volunteer programme.

Particular reference should be made at this point to diversity issues and the promotion of an inclusive police service, which is committed to demonstrating respect, tolerance and understanding in all its dealings with the community through fair treatment and equality of opportunity. As representatives of the police, police support volunteers need to understand that the service is seeking to eliminate all forms of harassment and unfair bias and that discrimination will not be tolerated. It is vital that they

understand and comply with force policies and procedures relating to diversity issues to ensure the integrity of the force is not compromised.

These issues should be covered during the induction training to ensure police support volunteers are made fully aware of their responsibilities and the outcomes should their conduct fall below the expected standard.

3.6.7 Grievance and disciplinary processes

Police support volunteers are not covered by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC). However, those who manage or work with volunteers are covered so it is possible that the IPCC could investigate the managers/co-workers in respect of any misconduct issues that come to light. In order to ensure that volunteers are dealt with appropriately, it is necessary to establish a grievance and disciplinary process for police support volunteers. As previously stated, these procedures should not simply copy those for paid employees, rather they should reflect the distinctive nature of the volunteering relationship. Procedures that need to be considered include:

- ▶ Complaints by volunteers
- ▶ Complaints about volunteers from members of the public or staff
- ▶ Issues relating to poor reliability, inappropriate attitudes relating to diversity issues, misconduct, failure to meet required standards or poor performance.

These procedures should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure compliance with best practice principles.

It should be made clear to police support volunteers that, due to their lack of employment status and their inability to pay annual subscriptions, trade union representation will not be made available to them.

3.6.8 Exit interviews

When a police support volunteer leaves the force it is advisable to conduct an exit interview with them. This should be undertaken by a member of staff who has some responsibility for the welfare of volunteers locally and should be carried out in a non-threatening, comfortable environment where the volunteer can speak freely. The exit interview provides an excellent opportunity to find out in detail why the volunteer wants to leave and to review the placement. For some this may simply be a change in their personal circumstances that means they are no longer able to volunteer or that they are moving away from the area. For others, however, their reasons for leaving may be dissatisfaction with the organisation, demotivation, or feelings associated with being undervalued and unappreciated. Where such concerns are expressed it is important to take time to consider the issues raised and whether there are ways to improve the situation. While providing a solution to the problem may not prevent that individual volunteer from leaving, prompt action will signify to the remaining volunteers that their concerns are taken seriously, which may prevent other volunteers from leaving.

3.6.9 Expenses

Police support volunteers should not be out of pocket from their volunteering activity. It is therefore necessary to consult with stakeholders and gain agreement on which expenses the force is prepared to cover. Forces should discuss their proposals with HM Revenue and Customs before they are put into practice, so that tax implications are clear and the risk of creating additional tax burdens for individuals who volunteer is minimised. Police support volunteers should only receive recompense for actual out-of-pocket expenses, anything other than this may be interpreted as consideration. It is important that volunteers are made fully aware of which expenses can and cannot be reimbursed, so that they know what to expect. Expenses that could be covered might include:

- ▶ Home to duty travel costs, eg mileage rates or public transport costs
- ▶ Travel costs associated with their role, eg between stations, in the community, to training events or volunteer meetings
- ▶ Car parking costs where free parking is not available
- ▶ Meal and refreshment costs where individuals volunteer for more than a specified number of hours.



Stage 4: Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of the programme should be given careful consideration in the early stages of the programme's design and should be carried out jointly by the programme board. The purpose of evaluation is to identify areas of weakness or problems, eg low volunteer retention rates or poor recruitment processes, and reward achievement. Without any measurements of achievement it is impossible to say whether the programme is successful or not. The operational design of the programme should include the systems that will enable staff, management and volunteers to determine how things are going and highlight areas for improvement. All monitoring and evaluation should be clearly linked to the programme's objectives, against which achievements can then be measured.

Monitoring is the collection of relevant information while it is happening; a review is a straightforward statement of 'what we did' within a defined time period; evaluation is the analysis of the information and puts a value on the work.

Monitoring should be ongoing and tailored to meet the needs of the programme. Information that may be monitored might include:

- ▶ Diversity information (eg age, gender, ethnicity)
- ▶ Numbers
- ▶ How volunteers heard about the programme
- ▶ Roles undertaken by volunteers
- ▶ Volunteer hours
- ▶ Use of resources
- ▶ Costs (eg expenses, administration, training)
- ▶ Effectiveness of systems and procedures (eg recruitment)
- ▶ Public perceptions of volunteers
- ▶ Staff perceptions of volunteers
- ▶ Reasons for leaving.

Having collected the relevant data, it is necessary to review and evaluate it. For evaluation to be effective there must be four essential factors:

- ▶ The objectives should be clear from the beginning and should be written down
- ▶ There must be sufficient relevant data available about what has happened
- ▶ The evaluation must be independent and unbiased. This means that the people undertaking it must be willing to be critical of the programme and its achievements
- ▶ Following the evaluation there must be a willingness to change the things that are wrong with the programme.

Monitoring and evaluation are essential for the long-term sustainability of the programme and should be carefully considered at all stages with the development process to ensure effective measurement.

Further information and useful contacts

Association for Research on Non-profit Organisations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA)

www.arnova.org

Group dedicated to the creation, application and dissemination of research about voluntary action, non-profit organisations and philanthropy.

Directory of Social Change (DSC)

Directory of Social Change (London)
24 Stephenson Way
London NW1 2DP

Helpdesk (London and Liverpool): 08450 777707
Tel: 020 7391 4800
Fax: 020 7391 4808
www.dsc.org.uk

Directory of Social Change (Liverpool)
Federation House
Hope Street
Liverpool L1 9BW

Tel: 0151 708 0117
Fax: 0151 708 0139

Provides an extensive range of training, seminars, conferences and events for the voluntary sector and volunteer-involving organisations, and publishes a wide range of guides, books and CD-ROMs.

Energize

www.energizeinc.com

Leading international training, consulting and publishing firm specialising in volunteerism.

Home Office: Active Communities Directorate (ACD)

General ACD enquiries:
Tel: 020 7035 5328
Fax: 020 7035 5386
www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Government office responsible for supporting volunteering and the voluntary and community sector.

Home Office: Police Human Resources Unit

Tel: 0207 035 1857
www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Home Office section responsible for, among other things, police volunteers and special constables.

Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR)

Institute for Volunteering Research
Regent's Wharf
8 All Saints Street
London N1 9RL

Tel: 020 7520 8900
Fax: 020 7520 8910
www.ivr.org.uk

Aims to develop knowledge and understanding of volunteering in a way that is relevant to practitioners and policy makers.

National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)
Regent's Wharf
8 All Saints Street
London N1 9RL

Helpdesk: 0800 2798 798
Tel: 020 7713 6161
Fax: 020 7713 6300
www.ncvo-vol.org.uk

Works with and for the voluntary sector in England by providing information, advice and support and by representing the views of the sector to government and policy makers.

www.askncvo.org

Online best practice resource for the voluntary sector.

Sandy Adirondack

39 Gabriel House
10 Odessa Street
London SE16 7HQ

Tel: 020 7232 0726
Fax: 020 7237 8117
www.sandy-a.dircon.co.uk

Freelance management and training consultant for the voluntary sector, includes a page of up-to-date legal information for voluntary organisations.

VolResource

www.volresource.org.uk

Aims to make it quick and easy to get useful information on anything to do with running a voluntary organisation (whether community group, charity or other non-profit body).

Volunteer Development Scotland (VDS)

Volunteer Development Scotland
Stirling Enterprise Park
Stirling FK7 7RP

Tel: 01786 479593
Fax: 01786 449285
www.vds.org.uk

Works strategically and in partnership to promote, support and develop volunteering in Scotland.

Volunteering England

Volunteering England (London)
Regent's Wharf
8 All Saints Street
London N1 9RL

Volunteering England (Birmingham)
New Oxford House
Waterloo Street
Birmingham B2 5UG

Tel: (London and Birmingham) 0845 305 6979
Fax: (London) 020 7520 8910
Fax: (Birmingham) 0121 633 4043
www.volunteering.org.uk

Works to promote volunteering as a powerful force for change, both for those who volunteer and for the wider community. The website offers a range of resources for anyone who works with or manages volunteers as well as for those who want to volunteer.

Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA)

Helpdesk: 0870 607 1666
www.wcva.org.uk

Represents and campaigns for voluntary organisations, volunteers and communities in Wales.

