Fact sheet 3b:

The volunteer agreement: clarifying terms of engagement

**What is it?**

Your volunteer policy is the framework that captures all aspects of your organisation’s volunteer programme. It explains why your organisation involves volunteers, how they are involved, and how you will ensure safe, equal and fair practices.

## Who is it for?

A volunteer agreement is for the benefit of both the volunteer and the organisation. For the volunteer, it can act as a reference point that sets out what is expected of them and what they can expect from the organisation during their time volunteering. The agreement protects the organisation by ensuring that volunteers understand the terms of engagement from the outset. Avoiding ambiguity right from the start can prevent problems further down the line, when for example a volunteer asks for expenses that are not covered by the organisation.

## Guidelines for creating a volunteer agreement

The volunteer agreement will often just be one or two sides of A4 with basic parameters of what a volunteer can expect from the organisation with regards to issues such as induction, training, support, expenses, health and safety, insurance, equal opportunities and resolving problems. It would also give some guidance to the volunteer in terms of abiding by organisation rules, policies and the need for confidentiality, for example.

The agreement should be flexible enough to avoid it looking like an employment contract. For example, an employment contract will include set working hours, whereas a volunteer agreement might say the service is open for a set number of hours and volunteers are encouraged to come in during these times to help out.

Overleaf are two sample volunteer agreements that you can use as a basis for developing your own. The first is an informal, brief but comprehensive agreement, useful when a role does not require specialist skills and/or when the volunteers have

support needs around language. The second is a more detailed agreement, more appropriate for roles involving a greater level of skill, responsibility and/or accountability. These can be downloaded as Word documents.

* [3ii. RESOURCE SHEET Sample volunteer agreement - short](https://drive.google.com/open?id=0BxM5UHfVB7YWZlhseEdUU2Z4YWs)
* [3iii. RESOURCE SHEET Sample volunteer agreement - detailed](https://drive.google.com/open?id=0BxM5UHfVB7YWVHZDUGRkWGpTaGs)

**For more information**

[National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)](http://www.ncvo.org.uk)

NCVO champions the voluntary sector and volunteering across Britain by connecting, representing and supporting voluntary organisations. It has a reputation as an authoritative voice for the sector.

* [www.ncvo.org.uk](https://www.ncvo.org.uk/) Phone: 020 7713 6161 Email: ncvo@ncvo.org.uk

NCVO Knowhow Nonprofit

Knowledge and e-learning for charities, social enterprises and community groups. Learn from experts and peers, and share your experiences.

* [www.knowhownonprofit.org](https://knowhownonprofit.org/)

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