

## 5.3 BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

In addition to the essential policies there are many additional policies your organisation may need to put in place to ensure good practice. Some common policies are listed below however, it is worth remembering that you should only create and implement policies that are relevant and necessary for your organisation. For example: there is no point in creating a child protection policy if you have an elderly client base and your volunteers are over the age of 50. If and when you decide to engage younger volunteers and/or clients then you should ensure the relevant policies are adopted and implemented. All policies need to be approved by your committee or board who will tailor or adapt these in line with your organisation requirements or decide that a separate policy is not necessary and a general statement in your Volunteering policy is enough for your organisation and volunteer requirements.

### 5.3.1 Confidentiality

Whether this is a clause in your volunteering policy, a separate confidentiality policy or part of your Code of Conduct it should outline to staff and volunteers the importance of confidentiality and their responsibility within the process. This should include confidentiality in relation to use of social media and images. If Confidentiality is a key requirement for your volunteering roles then you should ensure that this is clearly defined and your volunteers understand the repercussions of breaching confidentiality.

### 5.3.2 Data Protection

You should always explain to volunteers how their records will be stored and accessed in a way that complies with data protection legislation.

The GDPR is the EU General Data Protection Regulation which will replace the Data Protection Act 1998 in the UK and the equivalent legislation across the EU Member States. The GDPR will apply in the UK from 25 May 2018

Simplified, these rights ensure that individuals have freedom to control their personal data and make sure it is not processed if they have not given consent. If your organisation collects any personal data you have an obligation to explain to volunteers why you need to gather the data and how it will be used. You also have an obligation to document what personal data you hold in the organisation, including where it came from, who you share it with and why you use it. See <http://gdpr-legislation.co.uk/> for more Data Protection information

### 5.3.3 Recruiting Ex-Offenders

It is important that voluntary organisations have a policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders to both paid and volunteer positions. This would usually form part of an organisation's equal opportunities policy.

Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, ex-offenders normally have the right not to reveal spent (old) convictions. This protects their privacy and should help to counteract prejudice against individuals with convictions who are seeking work. However, certain posts (e.g., those which give prolonged or sustained access to children and vulnerable adults) are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 by the Exclusions and Exceptions (Scotland) Order 2003. This gives organisations the right to ask individuals to declare all criminal convictions, both spent and unspent. The fact that a person has a conviction should not necessarily make him or her unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults. The person's suitability should be looked at as a whole in the light of all the information available.

### 5.3.4 PVG

Any volunteer or staff member who is undertaking regulated work with a child or a vulnerable adult is required to join the Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme (PVG). This helps make sure people whose behaviour makes them unsuitable to work with children and/or protected adults, can't do '[regulated work](#)' with these vulnerable groups. There are two types of regulated work – work with children and work with protected adults.

Voluntary Organisations can only access disclosure records through a registered body like Volunteer Scotland who can guide you through the enrolment process and offer advice on whether your organisation is involved with work which meets the requirements for disclosure checking.

See <http://www.volunteerscotland.net/disclosure-services/for-organisations/> for more PVG Scheme information

### 5.3.5 Child Protection

The Children Act 1989 became law in 1991 and was amended in 2004. It is a major piece of legislation affecting children, their parents and those working with children either as paid staff or volunteers. The Children Act also applies when recruiting volunteers under the age of 16. When working with young people, whether as volunteers or clients,

organisations need to ensure that they have a Child Protection Policy in place. Your organisation's child protection policy can be as simple as stating that it is the policy of your organisation "to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.' The work you do with children and young people will determine the scope of the policy and guidelines. Consider carrying out a Risk Assessment to minimise the harm that children and young people could be exposed to during your volunteering activity.

Organisations who may wish to engage young volunteers need to consider the following:

- A Child Protection Policy should be implemented.
- Volunteers should always work under the direct supervision of a member of staff
- Volunteers should never be placed in charge of a programme or activity or other people
- Parental consent is obtained **before** placing a volunteer

### 6.3.6 Lone Working

As a rule you should not leave volunteers to work on their own however there are some volunteering roles which will require this such as one to one befriending and mentoring roles. If you have a role that would require lone working make sure it is clearly stated in your role description, you have adequate training in place to ensure your volunteers are safe and informed and you have a lone working policy. The intention of a lone working policy is to ensure the safety of lone workers or staff who sometimes work alone, by minimising the risks that they face and putting in place appropriate measures to improve their safety.

A good lone worker policy should at least include:

- Definition
- Responsibilities (organisational, personal)
- Risk assessment
- Guidance on Lone working situations

### 5.3.7 Resolving Problems (Disciplinary, Grievance, Whistleblowing)

There can be times when the performance or conduct of a volunteer falls below what is expected or a volunteer has a grievance they would like to air or they may feel the need to tell your organisation about someone else's behaviour that is causing them concern. In most instances positive volunteering management can encourage open and honest discussion during an Informal Meeting and can alleviate issues before they require formal action. However it is recommended that you have disciplinary, grievance and whistleblowing guidance in place to prevent misunderstandings and seek to protect the volunteer and the organisation. Separate policies for staff and volunteers are needed and although they need to be different, it's important to make sure that the process for volunteers doesn't contradict anything that's in place for staff.

You can combine guidance on disciplinary, grievance and whistleblowing into one policy document or individual policies depending on your group or organisations specific requirements.

### 5.3.8 Social Media

If your organisation uses social media in its work and recognises that those who are involved in its work may also use social media either as part of their role or in their private lives you should implement a written policy for all staff, volunteers and stakeholders encouraging its responsible use. The policy should clearly set out what your organisation expects from volunteers when using social media and should give clear guidelines on responsible use of social media including what volunteers can say about the organisation, personal use of social media while volunteering and explain how problems with inappropriate use will be addressed.

Photographs are a valuable tool to record volunteering activities. However, it is important to be clear about who can take photographs, how they will be stored and used and how permission will be sought.

Some more detailed guidance and example policies can be found in [our Document Library](#)