

Our Scottish Borders

Your opportunity

Volunteer Charter

“Volunteering is the giving of time and energy through a third party, which can bring measurable benefits to the volunteer, individual beneficiaries, groups and organisations, communities, environment and society at large. It is a choice undertaken of one’s own free will and is not motivated primarily for financial gain or for a wage or salary.”
Volunteering Strategy, Scottish Executive 2004

Introduction

This Volunteer Charter is a commitment from the New Ways Partnership. New Ways is the Scottish Borders approach to Community Planning. New Ways encourages joint working and community engagement to ensure a sustainable, prosperous Scottish Borders, supported by first-class public services provided by private, public and voluntary sector organisations. A New Ways Forum of approximately 20 partner organisations meet twice yearly for this purpose, and to ensure the needs of the Borders as a whole are being addressed effectively.

Scotland has a healthy volunteering infrastructure supported by the Scottish Executive. The national body Volunteer Development Scotland is core funded by the Scottish Executive to promote, support and develop volunteering. It is represented by 32 Volunteer Centres across each Local Authority in Scotland. Volunteer Centre Borders is your local representative.

In the Scottish Borders recent figures suggest that over 40% of the population in the Borders volunteered compared to a national average of 25%. This volunteering activity has an estimated value of £35 million to the local economy.



Objective

The objective is to obtain an agreed minimum standard for organisations and volunteers across the Scottish Borders.

The Context



The Borders has a long history of volunteering which we are committed to maintaining, because:

- service participants place special value on the care which skilled and trained volunteers can give - care given willingly, in their own time, without expectation of material reward

- volunteers enable us to draw on a very wide pool of skills, derived from professional and personal experience, which enriches the services we offer
- volunteers provide an invaluable insight into the needs of the communities in which they live, thus better informing our work.

All those who work with us, in whatever capacity, can expect to enter into a partnership which has at its core a clear commitment to providing the highest quality service. We are committed to promoting and supporting equality and diversity in our volunteer workforce. We therefore have high expectations of our volunteers, staff and delegates, who in turn have high expectations of us.

What you can expect from us

Volunteers can expect to:

- Have their individual contribution and efforts appropriately recognised and rewarded
- Feel part of a team that makes a difference
- Be provided with opportunities to expand their Skills and experience



Photo courtesy of Eric G Jones

- Have the opportunity to contribute to the future direction of the organisation
- Have access to channels and networks that allow their voice to be heard.

Organisations have the responsibility to:

- Provide volunteers with information about the group and/or organisation
- Provide information about the tasks volunteers will be expected to undertake
- Provide access to resources for volunteers to carry out their tasks
- Provide volunteers with information about out of pocket expenses and reimbursement
- Make sure volunteers get equal treatment in recruitment, placement, training and support.
- Provide volunteers with safe working conditions
- Make sure volunteers time commitments are respected
- Make sure volunteers are valued and respected
- Make sure volunteers receive support when needed
- Provide individuals with time to decide whether to volunteer
- Make sure volunteers have the right to say no and resign



What we expect from you

Volunteers are expected to:

- Work within our policies
- Recognise the needs of our service users as our primary concern
- Work to the highest standard, giving the best of their skills and abilities
- Work in a positive and inclusive way with everyone they come into contact with
- Be accountable for their actions, within a supportive environment
- Take part in appropriate and relevant training and development activities.

Volunteers have a responsibility to:

- Be honest if they might not be suitable for work with certain client groups
- Inform the group/organisation or Co-ordinator of their decision to volunteer
- Keep activities safe and in-line with policies and relevant legislation
- Turn up when they say they will
- Behave appropriately
- Be aware of confidentiality
- Support other volunteers
- Treat others with respect

Conclusion

There is a need to further strengthen the voluntary sector and ensure that it makes an even greater contribution to partnership working and the joint delivery of services. The New Ways Partnership is committed to this process and this Volunteer Charter provides the framework to fulfil this aim.



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Figures from Scottish Household Survey 2003

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This Charter forms part of the Scottish Borders Compact Action Plan. For more information on the Compact please contact Clare Malster 01835 826626 cmalster@scotborders.gov.uk or Liz Walthew 01890 879336 lizwalthew@bfcvs.org.uk.