



Volunteer Policy

effective from September 2007

1. General

- 1.1 Lancaster District CVS values volunteers within the organisation. We recognise and encourage the unique qualities of individuals, their experience, skills, knowledge and the commitment they can offer.
- 1.2 In line with our Equal Opportunities policy we work inclusively and welcome the range of experience people from diverse backgrounds can bring to the work. We aim to work with volunteers to support equal opportunities and widen access to opportunities within our organisation.
- 1.3 Volunteering with LDCVS should reflect the best available practice in working with volunteers.
- 1.4 LDCVS will offer a range of opportunities according to the needs of the organisation and the particular skills and interests of the potential volunteer. Volunteering should be of mutual benefit to the organisation and the volunteer. Where possible the experience is intended to offer some form of development and progression for the volunteers that meets their interests and fulfils the needs of the organisation in the work we undertake.
- 1.5 LDCVS accepts the role of volunteers and the services they offer with the understanding that volunteer involvement is at the sole discretion of the organisation.

2. Definition of Volunteer

- 2.1 There is no legal definition and the word can have different meanings depending upon the context in which it is used. For our purposes we will use the definition of volunteering as used in the 1997 National Survey of Volunteering:

“..any activity which involves spending time, unpaid, doing something which aims to benefit someone (individuals or groups) other than or in addition to close relatives, or to benefit the environment.”

3. Recruitment and selection

- 3.1 LDCVS aims to recruit and select volunteers in accordance with equal opportunity legislation and guidance. We will endeavour to ensure recruitment materials are distributed widely to all sections of the community and in formats appropriate to the differing needs of a diverse society.

4. Screening and police checks

- 4.1 Checks for criminal convictions and detailed CBR disclosures will only be made when needed according to the nature of the voluntary work being undertaken



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for the organisation. A risk assessment will be made to assess whether such checks are necessary by legal requirement or to minimise any risk to vulnerable client groups.

- 4.2 LDCVS will seek expert guidance on this matter as it arises from the relevant authorities ie the Criminal Records Bureau.

5. Young Volunteers

- 5.1 Volunteers who are below the age of 16 years will not be considered

6. Volunteers with Medical Conditions

- 6.1 Volunteers receiving any treatment for a condition which may impinge upon their ability to perform the allocated task will need to present a “certificate of capability” from their doctor or other medical supervisor before commencing work with the organisation.

7. Written agreement

- 7.1 LDCVS will give each volunteer a written agreement which will be signed by the volunteer and a representative of LDCVS. The agreement will set out joint expectations for the volunteering opportunity. It will include practical details such as the number of hours that the volunteer is offering, what their specific volunteering role will be and how they will be supported in that role. The agreement will make clear that the relationship between the volunteer and LDCVS does not constitute any formal contract or offer of employment.

8. Role and Scope of Volunteers

- 8.1 Volunteers may be involved in all programmes of work, at all levels of skill and decision making.
- 8.2 Each volunteer will be assigned a specific role and this will be made clear in the written agreement. The role may vary according to what opportunities exist at LDCVS. Some roles may be part of a general opportunity whilst others may be unique to the volunteer or a specific task that they can fulfil. The role will be reviewed on a regular basis according to the needs of the organisation and the volunteer.
- 8.3 Volunteers are encouraged to use their initiative and develop their role within the organisation as opportunities and circumstances allow but volunteers must always consult with the paid staff. Volunteers must always seek approval from LDCVS where there is likely to be an impact on the organisation’s budget or other resources in carrying out their role.
- 8.4 The role may evolve over time and it may be appropriate to agree a new role description where an obvious departure from the original role is seen to be emerging.



9. Trial Period

- 9.1 A trial/ probationary period will be agreed by the volunteer and LDCVS. The length of this will depend upon the nature of the tasks undertaken by the volunteer for LDCVS. The length will be stated in the written agreement. The volunteer and the organisation will then have the opportunity to look at what has been undertaken and whether it is of mutual benefit to continue. It will be a chance to revise or modify the tasks they have agreed, or for the opportunity to be withdrawn.

10. Induction

- 10.1 Each volunteer will be offered a full induction process with further on-going orientation and training where applicable. This to ensure an understanding of the work of LDCVS and their role in the organisation
- 10.2 The induction will include a written checklist that will be signed off by the volunteer and the member of staff concerned as they go through the process.

11. Management

- 11.1 LDCVS will ensure a clear line of management .The CEO will have overall responsibility for the management of volunteers and will ensure organisational aims are met within the legislative frameworks and corporate plans.
- 11.2 Supervisors will be responsible for maintaining regular communication with the LDCVS CEO on the status of volunteers, and for the timely provision of all necessary paperwork to the CEO. The CEO should be informed immediately of any substantial change in work or status of a volunteer, and should be consulted in advance before any corrective action is taken.

12. Support and supervision

- 12.1 Volunteers will be offered support and supervision. How this takes place will vary according to the needs of the volunteer, the role they have undertaken and the judgement of LDCVS
- 12.2 Overall responsibility remains with the LDCVS CEO. Specific day to day support will be offered by named individuals. The named individual will also carry out supervision (appraisal sessions).

13. Information and Communication

- 13.1 Volunteers are entitled to all information pertinent to the performance of their work assignments. Accordingly, volunteers should be included in and have access to all appropriate information, memos, materials and meetings which are relevant to their work. Volunteers should be included on all relevant distribution schedules. Primary responsibility for ensuring that volunteers receive such information will rest with their immediate supervisor.



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13.2 Lines of communication should operate in all directions and should exist both formally and informally. Volunteers should be consulted regarding all decisions that may affect their duties substantially.

14. Absenteeism

14.1 If absence is expected volunteers should inform their supervisor as far in advance as possible

15. Expenses

15.1 Expenses are paid within pre-defined limits which will be outlined in the written agreement. Receipts are to be submitted to the administrator for expenses claims

16. Access to Property and Materials

16.1 Volunteers shall be given appropriate access to the property of the organisation and those materials necessary to fulfil their tasks. Volunteers shall receive training in the correct operation of equipment. Property and material shall only be used when directly required for the volunteer task. Volunteers must seek assistance from the organisation if they are unclear or unsure about any aspect of the operation of equipment.

17. Insurance

17.1 Volunteers will be covered by LDCVS insurance policy whilst undertaking agreed activities

18. Confidentiality

18.1 Volunteers will need to exercise confidentiality and diplomacy on certain issues relating to the work of the organisation. In such circumstances volunteers must agree to adhere to the confidentiality agreement as defined by LDCVS Situations where this applies will be made clear to volunteers. This will be stated in the written agreement and the induction plan.

18.2 Failure to maintain confidentiality could lead to LDCVS withdrawing the volunteering opportunity from the volunteer

19. Volunteers and Benefits

19.1 LDCVS acknowledges that volunteering will not adversely affect people in receipt of benefits provided they are honest and direct with the benefits agencies. However, detailed rules and regulations govern this area and it is beyond the remit of this policy to address this in detail. Consequently, when volunteers in receipt of benefits join the organisation, we will advise them to seek specific guidance.



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- 19.2 LDCVS cannot offer advice on welfare benefits to potential volunteers. It is the responsibility of potential volunteers to enquire with the relevant benefits service as to how volunteering may affect them financially.
- 19.3 LDCVS will offer to supply written details of what work is being undertaken, hours worked and a breakdown of the expenses claimed by the volunteer.
- 19.4 LDCVS will advise volunteers to get in touch with local welfare benefits organisations to seek professional advice and guidance regarding benefits.