



Policy and Guidance for Engaging Volunteers

This document establishes the Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) Policy and Guidance for Engaging Volunteers. Officers of the IFCA will also provide advice on interpretation.

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1. Introduction

Volunteers contribute to the delivery of a number of activities and services provided by the Southern IFCA. The Southern IFCA is committed to the development of volunteering opportunities across the widest spectrum of social groups, particularly in the communities of Southern. The Southern IFCA works in partnership with the voluntary and community sector in Southern to promote volunteering and encourage people of all ages and in every community to take part in volunteering.

This policy is intended to provide Southern IFCA staff with good practice guidance on volunteering in general. The policy can also be used as a reference document for use when developing any formal agreements with volunteers involving organisations.

2. What is a volunteer?

In this context a volunteer is an individual who commits their time and energy freely on an unpaid basis for the benefit of Southern IFCA, and who does so through personal choice, without the expectation of financial reward, other than receiving out of pocket expenses. The term volunteer is intended to include student placements as part of taught or research courses.

Volunteers contribute to a range of services delivered by the Southern IFCA and each opportunity has unique characteristics. Volunteering provides an exciting opportunity for individuals to experience development outside their usual environment at the same time as furthering personnel development and expertise in the marine sector.

3. Health and Safety Arrangement

In general, the same health and safety standards should be applied to volunteers as they would to Southern IFCA employees exposed to the same risks. However, if the health and safety risk assessment shows that the risks to volunteers are different, the preventive and protective measures taken should reflect the different risks. It is good practice for a programme or project involving volunteers to provide the same level of health and safety protection as they would in an employer/employee relationship, irrespective of whether there are strict legal duties

4. Risk Assessing the Opportunity

Volunteering England has produced a Risk Toolkit 'How to take care of risk in volunteering

- A guide for organisations' (How to take care of risk in volunteering).

The toolkit aims to simplify risk management for organisations it offers:

- information: the main risks, legal liabilities, insurance;
- advice and guidance: setting up and implementing systems;
- methods and templates: techniques, tools and forms; and
- case studies: examples of organisations' good practice.

<http://www.volunteering.org.uk/goodpractice/information>

5. Why have a Policy?

A written policy gives formal recognition to the importance of volunteers and ensures that the following objectives are met:

- volunteers are involved in the most appropriate activity (i.e. suitable selection);
- volunteers are welcomed, receive a relevant induction and feel valued;
- volunteers have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and what may be expected of them;
- volunteers' contributions are maximised by providing appropriate training and support; and
- more people become involved as volunteers.

The purpose of this policy is to help all staff involved in recruiting and managing volunteers to adhere to good practice and support volunteers in a planned and managed way.

6. What are the benefits of engaging volunteers?

To Southern IFCA and the public:

- volunteers come from all walks of life and offer a diverse, broad range of experiences and skills. These experiences/skills can be drawn upon and developed to positively impact a range of activities for the IFCA;
- volunteers may be engaged to do (either) one-off tasks and/or ongoing work with
- particular individuals, groups or projects;
- volunteers can be flexible and innovative in their approach;
- volunteers enhance a sense of community and help to build a healthy civil society; and
- the community and the environment benefit from the contribution made by volunteers.

To the volunteer:

- provides outlets for people's skills and abilities ;
- widens social horizons and increases self esteem ;
- opens the way to learning new life skills and developing self-confidence; and improves the CV at the same time as having fun.

7. What is the recruitment and selection procedure?

Within the Southern IFCA, the recruitment and selection of volunteers is the responsibility of the designated manager or projects that involve volunteers. The Southern IFCA will seek advice and support and matters concerning occupational health as appropriate. In addition, additional safeguards may be required for specific volunteering opportunities (e.g.CRB checks for volunteering opportunities involving vulnerable adults and children).

Schemes succeed where volunteers have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and the volunteer feels valued and supported. APPENDIX 1 provides a pro-forma to help managers and staff describe the volunteering opportunity.

8. How will expenses be met?

It is important that volunteers are not out of pocket financially, and that expenses are paid promptly. This approach requires that an appropriate budget must be provided by the recruiter. It is essential that necessary approved equipment and other costs are met. Expenses should be discussed and agreed before the placement begins. Eligible expenses will be determined in accordance with established policy and procedures. Volunteers should have access to a local contact that can ensure prompt payment and avoid the volunteer having to be out of pocket for a period longer than agreed.

9. What should volunteers expect of

Southern IFCA?

MISSION

Southern IFCA is committed to the development of volunteering across the widest spectrum of social groups.

DEFINITION

A volunteer is an individual who commits their time and energy freely on an unpaid basis for the benefit of Southern IFCA, and who does so through personal choice, without the expectation of financial reward, other than receiving out of pocket expenses.

PRINCIPLES

- Volunteer engagement has the support of staff and Authority members;
- Volunteer roles are clearly defined;
- The recruiter will set aside time for the recruitment of new volunteers;
- Selection procedures are open and inclusive;
- Volunteer induction is in place which includes Health and Safety procedures and Child and Adult Protection where relevant;
- Volunteers have a named contact;
- The recruiter will provide support and training appropriate to the role;
- The recruiter has employers liability, public liability and personal accident insurance to include volunteers;
- Reimbursement of out of pocket expenses in a simple way;
- Volunteers views will be included in decision making processes which affect them; and
- The recruiter will have a written agreement with the volunteer.

10. What should Southern IFCA expect of the Volunteers?

PRINCIPLES

The privacy, property and confidentiality of others will be respected;

- Volunteers will in no way discriminate on the grounds of age, gender, race or religion, sex or sexual orientation;
- Health and Safety and Child and Adult Protection procedures will be followed as appropriate (volunteers are encouraged to attend regular training and refresher sessions as required);
- There will be a named contact for the volunteer. Volunteers will maintain regular contact and immediately report any problems to their designated named contact;
- Volunteers will aim to fulfill the commitment they have made, as fully as possible, and if unable to attend must inform their designated contact; and
- Volunteers will gain no financial profit from their involvement in volunteering (other than the offer of out of pocket expenses).

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Chief Officer will monitor and evaluate this policy to ensure it continues to reflect the needs of the Southern IFCA, and is a suitable template document for use by other organisations involving volunteers.

QUALITY STANDARDS / BEST PRACTICE

Some basic principles:

- In common with paid staff, volunteers may need a certain level of professional support in order to achieve a consistently high standard of work.
- It is good practice to have a written agreement with every volunteer clearly stating their role and purpose of the task involved.

APPENDIX II provides an example to help managers and staff draft a volunteering agreement to suit their needs.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Step One Establish your need

Managers and staff involved in the recruitment of volunteers should consider the following questions:

- What results are you seeking?
- How is that activity currently undertaken? Is it a core activity that should be delivered by paid staff? Is this an enhancement or enrichment which may be suitable for volunteers?
- Are there policies and procedures for working with volunteers, if not, who will work on developing these before volunteers are recruited. This will need to cover areas like:
 - Identifying volunteer roles;
 - Establishing the likely time period for the activity and number of volunteers required;
 - Recruitment and placement; and
 - Health and safety, including risk assessments, Child and Adult Protection, Criminal Records Bureau checks and insurance.

Step Two Profile your opportunity

Using your answers to the questions in Step 1 above, you need to profile the volunteer opportunity and think about how you will decide if a volunteer is right for your role. (Appendix 1 will help you). You will also need to consider checks that will need to be conducted e.g. References, CRB etc.

Step Three Advertise the opportunity

Advertise locally (e.g. press, Volunteer Centres in Southern, newsletters, Southern IFCA website,). Be aware that people volunteer for different reasons so target your volunteering opportunities e.g. improve your CV - students and unemployed people can gain new skills, use your skills / make new friends – older volunteers and pre-retirees.

Link your needs to appeal to new volunteers e.g. 'Draw from your past to preserve our future' (conservation). Use recruitment websites: www.do-it.org.uk (via Volunteer Centres), local radio, Millennium Volunteers.

Step Four Appointing volunteers

Remember, organisations need to be ready to recruit – phone lines covered, information packs ready to go out, times availability for interviews – a date set for induction etc. Contact and arrange to meet potential volunteers to discuss the role further. Ensure you adhere to Southern IFCA's equal opportunities policy. Try not to turn away good volunteers.

Before appointment, conduct checks as appropriate. These may include:

- volunteer completes an application form;
- obtain 2 references;
- health checks;

- criminal record checks (where the volunteer will have access to vulnerable people);
- ask the volunteer to sign the volunteer agreement (see example in Appendix II) to acknowledge their agreement, give them a copy, build in a review date; and
- You may find that collating a Volunteers Handbook is useful for all the
- information that a volunteer may at some time need to refer to.

NB

Welfare Benefits People in receipt of welfare benefits can volunteer and receive out of pocket expenses. Claimants must tell the Benefits Agency before volunteering.

12. What Happens Next?

All volunteers need ongoing support. The support you provide will depend on the nature of the work and the needs of the volunteers themselves.

Refer to Section 6 of this policy for detail. However, minimum elements of support should include:

- Relevant induction into the organisation. This should cover:
 - Being provided with a named person as main contact / mentor should the volunteer have any queries / concerns;
 - Information about the work of the organisation / team / office;
 - Health & Safety (including insurance);
 - Contact and process for solving volunteer queries; and
 - Complaints
- Training as appropriate
- Regular 1:1s
- Expenses paid promptly

Don't forget to say 'Thank You' to your volunteers on a regular basis. Ask them if they have particular training wishes / needs relevant to the opportunity and ensure they are still happy in their role. Make sure your volunteers feel valued and appreciated.

Contact:

Robert Clark
 Chief Officer
enquiries@southern-ifca.gov.uk

APPENDIX I – Southern IFCA Volunteer Opportunity

Opportunity Title:

Name:

Designation:

Address:

Daytime Phone / Fax:

Mobile:

Email:

Geographical area

(Please provide details of the area in Southern the volunteering opportunity will take place. (If this is a fixed venue please provide address))

Start/end dates (if applicable)

Start:

End:

Description of the role

Please provide details of the nature and key responsibilities of the opportunity. Please attach a role description where one is available.

Time commitment

(weekdays/weekends. Am or pm, hours per week/month, flexibility?)

Preferred skills/qualifications/ experience#

Training/support given

(e.g. mentor scheme, induction, health & safety, child / adult protection, financial assistance to attend recognised training courses. Please state if volunteers without the skills detailed above could be considered as additional training /support can be provided).

Problem Solving

(e.g. Contact for volunteer queries and name and process for complaints procedure)

Expenses

(detail of travel/ other expenses paid to volunteers)

Insurance

Will volunteers be covered by insurance whilst carrying out their work? Please give details, including any age / other restrictions specified by your insurers.

Recruitment method

(e.g. informal, discussion / interview, trial period)

Will the volunteering opportunity involve activities with children or vulnerable adults?

If yes please give Details Checks that will be conducted (e.g. References, CRB disclosure, Health Checks)

I confirm that the above information is correct

Signed:

Dated:

(Manager)

Print Name:

APPENDIX II – Volunteer Agreement

Volunteers are an important and valued part of Southern IFCA. We hope that you enjoy volunteering with us and feel a full part of our Team. This agreement tells you what you can expect from us and what we hope from you. We aim to be flexible, so please let us know if you would like to make any changes and we will do our best. Insert here details of the volunteering role, contact person in the organisation, recruitment, support, expenses, insurance.

We, Southern IFCA, will do our best:

- to introduce you to how the organisation works and your role in it and to provide any training your need;
- to provide regular meetings with your manager so that you can tell us if you are happy with how your work is organised and get feedback from us;
- to respect your skills, dignity and individual wishes and to do our best to meet them;
- to pay your expenses costs;
- to consult with you and keep you informed of possible changes;
- to insure you against injury you suffer or cause due to negligence;
- to provide a safe workplace;
- to apply our equal opportunities policy; and
- to apply our complaints procedure if there is any problem.

I, [.....], agree to do my best:

- to volunteer to the best of my ability in the role outlined in Appendix I, and to give as much warning as possible whenever I cannot volunteer when expected; and
- to follow Southern IFCA's rules and procedures, including health and safety, equal opportunities, confidentiality, child/adult protection and attending supervision meetings.

Note: this agreement is in honour only and is not intended to be a legally binding contract of employment.

Signed Dated:
(Volunteer)
Print Name