

HARROW COMPACT

HARROW CODE OF PRACTICE ON VOLUNTEERING

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of this Code are to:

- ensure that voluntary activity in Harrow reaches its full potential;
- encourage statutory and voluntary organisations to offer opportunities to volunteers;
- encourage people to undertake voluntary work, recognising that any choice should be made freely, with no hint of coercion or compulsion, and that it should be open to all, regardless of background, age race, sexual orientation or faith; and
- expand the range of voluntary activity and to raise its status and public perception.

Volunteering has been described as “An important expression of citizenship and essential to democracy”. In practical terms, it is “Any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or some group or individual, other than close relatives”.

Effective volunteering has many benefits for the community which include:

- § Releasing the enthusiasm, talents and ambitions of local citizens, reducing social isolation and bringing communities closer together.
- § Developing democratic and community activity, which is dependent on volunteers; e.g. tenants and residents associations.
- § Encouraging young people to become active citizens and gain new skill.
- § Enabling retired people to make good use of their skills and contribute to the local community.

There is also a great deal of hidden volunteering, carried on at an informal social level, which covers a very wide range of activities; including work carried out by faith groups, in primary health care settings, mother and baby clubs etc.

ACTIONS

The statutory sector will

- § Promote opportunities for volunteering, and the benefits of volunteering in the local media to local residents, businesses and other organisations.
- § Work in partnership to promote volunteering events, for example during the annual national volunteers' week, in order to achieve a higher public profile for volunteering and community activity.
- § Promote volunteering to its staff and stakeholders, including articles in its own publications and tenants' newsletters. Circulate volunteering opportunities to employees on internal circulations and notice boards.
- § Promote volunteering in schools as a part of the new Citizenship Skills Curriculum, and in the Lifelong Learning context.
- § Make joint representations with the voluntary sector to local MPs and government departments to improve criminal records check procedures for volunteers.
- § Carry out joint research with the voluntary sector to establish the economic and social value of volunteering.
- § Promote good practice in the management of volunteers.

The voluntary sector will

- § Assist potential volunteers to find volunteering opportunities that fit their needs, interests and abilities.
- § Encourage its affiliated voluntary and community groups to involve volunteers at all levels within their organisations e.g. information sharing, decision-making, access to training etc.
- § Produce guidelines for voluntary groups to ensure that volunteers have access to proper supervision, training and support, and policies such as health and safety, equal opportunities, child protection (where appropriate). Harrow Centre for Volunteering can help with this.
- § Promote good practice in the management of volunteers.
- § In partnership with the statutory sector, identify sources of funding to support volunteering
- § Encourage and support volunteers working towards qualifications through accredited training programmes, where relevant.
- § Encourage local colleges to provide more accredited training for volunteers.

APPENDIX

Harrow Centre for Volunteering. (HCV)

Harrow Centre for Volunteering works as one of Harrow Association of voluntary service's (HAVS) projects. Sarah Kersey is the manager of the project and she can be contacted during office hours from Monday to Thursday on 020 8863 5426, email address harrowvb@care4free.net and the web address is **www.harrowvolunteers.org.uk**. There is also an answer phone. HCV has an umbrella role in the promotion and support of volunteering and its' main objectives are

BROKERAGE

- § To operate a placement agency for adults and young people living and or working in the London Borough of Harrow who wish to undertake voluntary work.
- § Establish links and work in partnership with local voluntary, statutory agencies and local businesses wishing to use the services of volunteers.
- § Collate and make available information about opportunities for volunteering.

MARKETING VOLUNTEERING

- § Promote volunteering
- § Stimulate and encourage local interest in volunteering and community activity that includes promoting and marketing volunteering through local, regional and national events and campaigns.

GOOD PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT

- § Promote good practice in working with volunteers to all volunteer involving organisations.
- § Deliver training and accreditation for potential volunteers, volunteers, volunteer Managers and the volunteering infrastructure.
- § Administer the Harrow Volunteer Co-ordinators Forum and thereby support organisations working with volunteers and provide examples of best practice.
- § Advocate the rights and responsibilities of volunteers. Research and evaluate to identify user needs to achieve service excellence.

DEVELOP VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

- § Develop volunteer action in response to local needs.
- § Work in close partnership with statutory and voluntary sector agencies as well as community and faith groups to develop local volunteering opportunities.
- § Offer voluntary opportunities to all sections of the community. Target specific groups which face barriers to volunteering.

POLICY RESPONSE AND CAMPAIGNING

- § Identify proposals or legislation that may impact on volunteers. It will lead and or participate in campaigns on issues that affect volunteers or volunteering. Campaign proactively for a more volunteer-literate and volunteer friendly climate.

February 2009