

Research Activity - answers

Using the various resources provided to support this unit, and looking at your organisation's own policies relating to volunteer-involvement, in particular the Volunteer Agreement; answer the questions below.

1. Why is it good practice to use a Volunteer Agreement when involving volunteers?

A Volunteer Agreement demonstrates that the programme and the manager is organised and that the role has been thought through. It also sets out expectations between the volunteer and the organisation, so that both parties are clear about the way in which volunteers are included in the work of the organisation.

2. What is the difference between a Volunteer Agreement and a Contract of Employment?

A Volunteer Agreement is not legally binding and is simply setting out expectations. Asking a volunteer to sign the agreement does not make the agreement legally binding. It simply demonstrates professionalism and commitment on both parts.

3. Is there a legal definition of a volunteer?

There is currently no legal definition of a volunteer in the UK. This means that employment legislation and employee rights do not apply to volunteers. Organisations are therefore encouraged to take a good practice approach to volunteer involvement to ensure that volunteers are respected, valued and treated fairly.

4. How can implementing volunteering good practice support the development of your volunteering programme?

By following a good practice approach to volunteer involvement, you will be in a better position to engage more volunteers and be able to develop innovative and interesting roles. Therefore becoming more attractive to new volunteers and encouraging existing volunteers to stay.

5. Why is it important to understand the difference between legislation and good practice in volunteering?

Because you need to ensure that you don't treat volunteers as employees. If you do, then you are in danger of creating a contract with them and this is a completely different relationship.