

Introduction

This guidance manual has been produced to assist services in their implementation of the Council's Volunteering Policy as at 1 October 2002.

The notes and forms which it contains have been prepared by a Corporate Working Group to provide advice to those managing and supervising volunteers and can be used as they stand or altered to suit the particular circumstances of individual services. Whilst they are not set in "tablets of stone" they are based on good practice and it is hoped that they will prove to be of benefit, not only to those services who are well used to engaging volunteers and already adhere to many of the practices described, but also to those other services for whom volunteers are a new dimension. We hope too that the policy and its accompanying documents will inspire those services which currently have no volunteers.

Please remember -

- volunteers can and do enhance Council services and currently make a significant contribution within North Ayrshire Council as demonstrated in the Volunteering Audit undertaken by the Corporate Working Group in 2001;
- volunteers give of their time freely with no thought of reward;
- the Scottish Executive in its Active Communities strategy is urging local authorities to play their part in promoting volunteering within their areas and this policy is a useful tool towards achieving its aims of bringing about more positive attitudes to volunteering locating volunteering at the hear of the policy and increasing the numbers and broadening the range of people involved in volunteering throughout North Ayrshire;
- different services are at different stages and compliance with the terms of the policy will not be possible for everyone immediately. This is understood but services will on an annual basis require to demonstrate their efforts in implementing the policy and in 2005 a full audit will be undertaken against which the 2001 audit baseline will be compared;
- as well as providing initial training which will be available to all those involved in managing and supervising volunteers, ongoing help will be available to all services from the Corporate Working Group (per Shona King within the Chief Executive's Office, 324127) and from the Volunteer Centre in North Ayrshire (18/20 Countess Street, Saltcoats, 471876).

Contents

1. Introduction to the Guidance Manual “Managing Volunteers”
2. A sample advertisement seeking volunteers
3. The preparation, content and display/publication of an advertisement
4. Volunteer's Application/Registration form
5. The construction of a Volunteer specification
6. The construction of a Task Description
7. Request for names of referees
8. A sample letter requesting references
9. Interviewing volunteers
10. Some problems in interviewing
11. Criminal Record checks and the Rehabilitation of Offenders
12. Insurance arrangements
13. Induction checklist
14. A. Out of pocket expenses claim for reimbursement - form
B. Out of pocket expenses claim for reimbursement – advice note
15. A. Review form
B. Reviews - advice note
16. Support and supervision
17. Facilitating volunteer forums
18. Recognising and Valuing Volunteers' contributions
19. Terminating a volunteer's engagement
20. Exit Interview form
21. Volunteers' Personal Files - Service Arrangements

SAMPLE ADVERT

We are looking for a volunteer (volunteers) within our
..... (service) to become involved in
..... (activity) at
..... (location) for (time –
hours/days)

**For effect you could use your own
photograph or
illustration in this section of your advertisement**

You may be the very person who could fill that role and thereby make a valuable contribution to the work which we do.

If you would like to express an interest in this volunteering opportunity we can send you a form (just call (name) at tel. no. or alternatively if you want an initial chat (name and tel. no. if different) will be more than pleased to talk to you about it.

The Preparation Content and Display/Publication of an Advertisement

- **At the outset think carefully about the language being used in the advert to ensure that some people are not "put off"**
- **Adverts should only contain essential information such as -**

the name of the service recruiting volunteers
what you are looking for in a volunteer, and
a contact number/address

although you may also wish to state that out of pocket expenses are paid, and mention any training being provided

- Make your advert stand out and ensure that the type is clear
- Keep any pictures to a minimum
- Colour adverts stand out more effectively
- Make sure the advert is specifically targeted to the type of volunteer required
- Display your advert in places with public access, Navigate website and staff notice-boards (and send a copy to the Volunteer Centre, 18/20 Countess Street, Saltcoats)
- Ensure the advert is kept up-to-date and that any old adverts are removed

Note

IN some instances individuals may turn up "on doorstep" looking for a volunteering opportunity rather than responding to an advertisement. In this event they could be considered for existing "openings" by following the procedures described in the manual or if there are none they can be referred to the Volunteer Centre, 18/20 Countess Street, Saltcoats (Tel: 01294 471876).

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Volunteer's Application Registration Form

Name:

Date of Birth:

Address

Postcode

Tel No:

(Day)

(Evening)

Fax:

Email

Please summarise any useful training or education details

Do you have a driving licence YES/NO Do you have access to a car YES/NO

Please provide your reasons for wishing to volunteer with us and the kinds of voluntary work you are most interested in

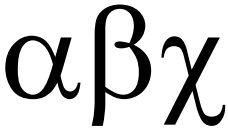
When are you available to volunteer eg during the day, at weekends, or evenings?

Please write here anything else you want us to know about you eg experience, skills, hobbies, interests.

Please sign and date the form on completion
Name Date

Please note:-
Certain volunteering roles working with children, young people and vulnerable adults will require a Disclosure check. Where appropriate, this will only be sought with your consent at the final stage of the recruitment process for successful applicants. The Code of Practice and further information is available from
.....

Thank you for taking the time and interest in applying for a Volunteer Placement with North Ayrshire Council.



The Construction of a VOLUNTEER SPECIFICATION

Are there any specific requirements for this voluntary position (e.g. driving licence, ability to lift heavy objects, climb stairs etc)?

What could the benefits be for the volunteer?

What particular knowledge/skills/experience/qualities are required?

- new friends

- leisure interests

- being useful

Which of these are essential?

- a chance to get involved

Which of these are desirable?

- enhanced employment chances

Will there be antisocial hours?

- updating/learning new skills etc

Does the volunteer need his/her own transport?

Does the volunteer need to work as part of a team?

Does the volunteer need to deal with administration?

Does the volunteer need to deal with money?

In what practical ways will the volunteer need support?

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The Construction of a Volunteer Task Description

Title

What is the volunteering opportunity called?

Location

Where is the voluntary work located?

Purpose of the Position

What are the objectives of the position?

Beneficiaries of the Voluntary Work

Who will the volunteer work with?

Range of Tasks

What will the volunteer be required to do?

Support and Accountability

Who will support/supervise the volunteer?

What are the different elements of the voluntary work?

Who will the volunteer be accountable to?

What are the key tasks?

What training will be necessary and available?

What aspects of the voluntary work are challenging?

Recognition

In what ways will the volunteer be given recognition within North Ayrshire Council.

Commitment

How many hours will the voluntary work require?

What if anything is expected of the volunteer by way of initiative, independence and teamwork?

What options are available to volunteers?

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North Ayrshire Council Volunteers Request for names of referees

Please write below the names of two people who could provide us with references. One of your referees should, if possible, be someone you know in a professional capacity eg present or previous employer or someone you have volunteered for.

Referee's Name

Address

Tel No/Fax/Email

Capacity known to you

Referee's Name

Address

Tel No/Fax/Email

Capacity known to you

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CONFIDENTIAL

Dear

Re:

The above person has applied to North Ayrshire Council expressing an interest in becoming a Volunteer within _____ and has given your name as a referee.

I have enclosed a copy of the task description for this volunteering opportunity and a stamped addressed envelope for your reply.

Your comments as to the suitability of the above named person to do this type of volunteering work will help us to make a more informed decision, and enable us to provide a good service to our customers. Your comments might cover (if appropriate): length of service with you, the positions held and for how long, the main duties, the competence in positions held, attendance record, time-keeping, and any other relevant comments and views you feel able to express that relate to the above named person's suitability for this volunteering task.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

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INTERVIEWING VOLUNTEERS

1 Attendance

Invite the prospective volunteer for interview - preferably by letter.

2. The Interview Room

Ensure that you have prepared a suitable place, where you won't be disturbed.

3. Warmth

Make the person feel relaxed, at ease and welcome, especially if they are nervous, or have had difficulties finding the meeting place.

4. Attention

The person must feel you are happy to spend this time with him/her. Therefore, discourage interruptions, phone calls etc.

5. Listening

Give your complete attention. Hear what is hidden, and may not be said out of fear/nerves. Be aware of areas which are avoided.

6. Prompting

Encourage the person to say something that they find difficult e.g. "Are you saying that you would rather not have anything to do with young people?"

7. Questions

Ask 'open' rather than 'closed' questions. An example of an open question is "How do you feel?" When interviewing for work with children, young people or vulnerable adults further consideration should be given to the questions asked.

8. Conversation

Engage in conversation! Let the other person speak, even if you are bursting to say your bit.

9. Recording

Write down any salient points but obtain permission first. Explain that practical details need to be recorded e.g. dates, times, phone nos. etc..

10. Instinct/Intuition

Your instinct/intuition can often be a real clue to something that is not said, or known. You must decide whether to follow it or not. But be careful that your instinct does not reveal any prejudice.

11. Next Steps

Round off the interview by making sure you and the interviewee know what is happening, and what the next step is likely to be and give an estimated time of contact e.g. next week/tomorrow.

12. Thanks

Thank the person for attending the interview and offer reimbursement of any travel costs.

Some problems in INTERVIEWING

Problem	Possible Solutions
1. Volunteer talks too much	Wait to see if this abates. If not, then make a positive intervention.
2. Quiet volunteer	Don't talk too much. Try open-ended questions
3. Rushed interview	See if you can postpone the interview till later.
4. Prior knowledge of prospective volunteer	Do not allow this to prejudice your judgement, but take this into account.
5. Volunteer not suitable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Do not adopt the 'no vacancies' line. b) Be honest, but tactful - give reasons for non-acceptance. c) Provide details of the Volunteer Centre where the volunteer can register for alternative volunteering opportunities.
6. Pressurised volunteer	Help the person to evaluate the volunteer situation with reference to how much time he/she has.
7. Interested in everything.	Try to help the person select the most suitable activity, or arrange another interview.
8. Interested in nothing specific.	Inform the person of the range of available voluntary activities.
9. Volunteer with extra support needs.	Accept or turn down honestly. Talk through possible changes that could be made to volunteer's tasks and identify support that could be made available to the volunteer.

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Criminal Record Checks and the Rehabilitation of Offenders

The purpose of checking the criminal records of Volunteers is to help organisations to make the right choices as part of their selection and recruitment procedure. These checks are an additional safeguard to be used when in the course of their engagement, Volunteers are:-

- ❖ In regular contact with, or regularly caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of persons under 18 years or vulnerable adults

The decision as to whether it is appropriate to check a Volunteer's criminal record is based on the volunteering role and task in question. A volunteer can be asked to complete a criminal declaration form, but is only obliged to record 'unspent' convictions, unless the form is clearly marked to inform them that due to the Volunteer role and task they are applying for, the engagement is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. In this case the Volunteer must declare all previous convictions - regardless of whether they are spent or unspent. If the Volunteering role requires the Volunteer's criminal record to be checked, the Volunteer must be made aware of this.

The decision about whether it is appropriate to police check and which roles and offences are exempt from the 1974 Act, can be complex. Further guidance is available from Volunteer Scotland's publication "Protecting Children", which is available through contacting Volunteer Scotland at shirley.bwye.vds.org.uk or telephone 01786 479593

Further information on individual cases can be obtained from:

CRBS Tel: 01786 479593 (Central Registered Body in Scotland)

APEX Tel: 01382 525032 (Starting Work, Stopping Crime)

Requests for disclosure of a volunteers criminal record should only be made after a person has been selected as the favoured candidate, but before appointment. Information obtained from disclosures must be treated in confidence. Copies of the enrolment form and disclosure form are available on Volunteer Scotland's web-site at www.vds.org.uk but before setting things in motion for the first time an initial check should be made with the Head of Service or Personnel to ascertain how this procedure is already operated within the service.

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Volunteers – Insurance Arrangements

This guidance outlines the Council's arrangements for insurance in respect of volunteers and their activities and any actions that are required to ensure that suitable cover is in place. The statement is expressed in general terms. The circumstances of particular cases should be discussed with the Council's Insurance Officer who should also be advised of the introduction of volunteer schemes (contact number 01294-324515).

1. Volunteers Assisting North Ayrshire Council

North Ayrshire Council has **Public Liability** insurance cover for accidental injury, death and loss or damage to property of anyone other than employees that come into contact with the Council. The policy applies to volunteers, is in respect of legal liability and provides cover only where the incident results from negligence.

Public Liability cover also applies to actions of volunteers if these actions result in loss to third parties or damage to their property.

The policies will always be subject to the conditions that the volunteers' actions have been reasonable and that they have been adequately trained and supervised, having regard to the activities and duties in which they are involved.

Professional Indemnity insurance covers the Council in respect of legal liability for injury, damage or financial loss that results from giving incorrect advice or information. Volunteers should be aware that the Council does **not** have general **Professional Indemnity** insurance cover in place. Accordingly, volunteers should not provide advice or information outwith the limits of any training received.

Volunteers who use their own vehicles in the course of their volunteering activities must ensure that their own **Motor Insurance** policy provides business cover for this purpose. They should advise their insurance company of the use of their vehicle and that they will receive only a reimbursement of expenses. While this policy extension is normally free of charge, the Council will not meet any cost of providing additional cover.

In order to comply with the conditions of the Council's **Motor Insurance** policy, volunteers asked to drive a Council vehicle must first be accredited as an authorised driver by the Council's Transport Manager.

2. North Ayrshire Council Assisting External Organisations

If an employee of North Ayrshire Council, **representing the Council** provides advice within his or her professional sphere, then North Ayrshire Council has Professional Indemnity and Public Liability insurance cover in place. These will cover the employee and the Council for any advice or actions that result in loss, damage or injury.

3. North Ayrshire Council Employees Assisting External Organisations

If a member of staff of North Ayrshire Council **acting in a personal capacity** provides assistance or advice in any sphere to an external organisation, then no insurance cover is available from the Council to cover loss, damage or injury to the employee, the external organisation or third party.

The employee acting in a personal capacity must ensure that the organisation has in place adequate cover for all aspects of their activities.

4. Services

Any Service that encourages staff to undertake voluntary work or instructs them to act with an external organisation should be certain of the basis of their involvement and ensure that appropriate insurance arrangements are in place.

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Volunteer Induction

Checklist

Name:

Date:

	Signature & Date Met	Further Action Required
Welcome session with Manager/Supervisor		
Introductory talk about organisation		
Health and safety within working environment		
Confidentiality policy explained		
References and Police Check (if applicable)		
Discussion of tasks to be assigned		
Availability of time commitment		
Welcome Pack given (if applicable)		
First supervision date set		
Introduced to staff and any other volunteers		

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**NORTH AYRSHIRE
COUNCIL**

**VOLUNTEER – OUT OF POCKET EXPENSES
CLAIM FOR REIMBURSEMENT**

Name of Volunteer

Volunteer Location

Date	Detail of Expense	Amount
Total		

I claim reimbursement of the expenses detailed above.

I confirm that these were incurred by me in carrying out my volunteer duties

Volunteer's Signature

Date

Supervisor's Signature

Date

I confirm I have received the total shown above as reimbursement of expenses

Volunteer's Signature

Date

Account Code/Cost Centre _____

North Ayrshire Council

.....
Volunteer – Out of Pocket Expenses
Claims for Reimbursement

North Ayrshire Council will reimburse out of pocket expenses that have been necessarily incurred by the volunteer in carrying out their duties.

Details of the expenses incurred while volunteering should be shown on the claim form (14A) and any receipts obtained attached to it. The volunteer's supervisor must certify the claim and the volunteer should keep a copy.

Reimbursement will normally be in cash and the volunteer should sign to confirm receipt of the total sum shown on the claim.

In exceptional circumstances, expenses may be reimbursed by cheque.

Expenses may include:-

- ❖ Travel costs to and from the place of volunteering
- ❖ Travel costs in the course of volunteering
- ❖ Public transport should be used. Where the use of a vehicle is unavoidable or necessary to carry out the volunteering duties, the Council will reimburse costs at the essential SNJC user rate per mile travelled.
- ❖ Meal expenses including tea breaks where the period of volunteering is four hours or more, or over meal times. Meal expenses must have been incurred and receipts provided.
- ❖ Other expenses agreed in advance with the volunteer's supervisor.

Note that to avoid any tax liability falling on either the volunteer or the Council, only expenditure necessarily incurred will be reimbursed and any mileage payments limited to the rate shown above.

Review Form

Volunteer's Name Period Covered.....

..... months ago you began working as a volunteer with

.....
.....

You are now invited to review your experience and to identify your goals for the next months.

In doing this exercise you should refer to your current task description.

In relation to your work over the past months:

(a) What aspects of your work do you consider to have been of most value?

(i) to the service

(ii) to yourself

(b) What aspects of your work do you consider to have been of least value?

(i) to the service

(ii) to yourself

(c) Do you feel that you receive adequate support?

(d) Do you wish to amend your current time commitment to volunteering? If so, please detail.

(e) Would you like to propose any changes to your voluntary work? If so, please detail.

Action Points	To be actioned by	Timescale for action
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Signed (Volunteer) Date

Signed (Supervisor) Date

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Review Advice Notes

General:

Six monthly reviews are considered to be a maximum timescale between reviews. Supervisors may consider undertaking reviews more frequently, or if requested by the volunteer, especially in the early stages of a placement.

Questions (a) and (b) – primary consideration should be given in terms of benefit to the service.

Questions (d) and (e) – volunteers should be realistic in terms of time and other commitments.

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Support and Supervision

North Ayrshire Council is committed to providing ongoing support to volunteers.

Aims of Support:

The aims of supporting volunteers are to:

- ❖ Encourage their development in volunteering activity
- ❖ Maintain their involvement in voluntary activity
- ❖ Enhance service provision

Aspects of Support:

Supervision is continuous and takes many forms. Volunteers are supported when they are given:

- ❖ a warm welcome
- ❖ information about the service/Council
- ❖ a named supervisor who will be available to provide support/guidance/supervision
- ❖ periodic reviews of their duties (See Review Advice Note)
- ❖ a clearly written task description
- ❖ an induction/training programme which helps them to acquire the knowledge and skills to accomplish the tasks involved
- ❖ help not to over-commit themselves in the early stages of volunteering, but to take on work gradually

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Facilitating Volunteer Forums

Volunteers really value the opportunity to get together with other Volunteers. This is especially true when the group of Volunteers are all involved in a similar capacity. This provides an opportunity to discuss approaches to difficulties which may have been experienced, receive and give informal support, share good practice and enjoy a chance to be able to network in a social environment with others who are giving their time and energy freely, because they believe in the project or service they are volunteering for.

This type of forum should be encouraged by those engaging the volunteers.

As a minimum - make a suitable space available at a regular time for a specified period (agreed with the Volunteers) with refreshments available (just tea/coffee/water is fine). Encourage the Volunteers to utilise this opportunity. Not only will they benefit individually and enjoy their volunteering more, your service will also reap the benefits as they share good practice, feel more like a 'team' and discuss ideas that could further enhance the service.

Volunteers who are encouraged to make use of this type of support, report that they feel really valued and enjoy the chance to chat with other Volunteers so much, that it enhances their experience of volunteering and makes it likely that they will stay with services longer than they would otherwise have done.

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Recognising and Valuing Volunteers Contributions

Volunteers give their time and energy freely. They believe their contribution makes a positive difference to the community of North Ayrshire. The Volunteers who are engaged by North Ayrshire Council believe in the service being provided by the Council so much that they give their valuable time without payment.

Although no financial reward is given to Volunteers there are lots of other ways to show that your service appreciates their input. For those who work alongside Volunteers and are responsible for them, the challenge is in being innovative about how to show that their contribution is recognised and valued in non-monetary terms.

As a minimum - On an annual basis arrange to attend a meeting of the Volunteers (their regular forum meetings would be ideal) and make a short presentation about their contribution and its positive effects on the service.

Other Possibilities?

There are thousands of other ways to show your Volunteers you value them. Here are just a few suggestions:-

- ❖ Make sure other staff are aware of the benefits Volunteers bring and behave accordingly in all their dealings with Volunteers
- ❖ Put up a Volunteer suggestion box
- ❖ Invite to a staff meeting
- ❖ Afford participation in planning
- ❖ Welcome to staff coffee/lunch breaks
- ❖ Enlist to train other Volunteers
- ❖ Have a reception with certificates of recognition
- ❖ Provide a current 'reference' for those seeking employment
- ❖ Celebrate outstanding achievements
- ❖ Celebrate Volunteers who are retiring
- ❖ Nominate for Volunteer awards
- ❖ Provide positive written feedback
- ❖ Plan staff and Volunteer social events
- ❖ Provide opportunities for attending conferences
- ❖ Provide appropriate training opportunities
- ❖ Promote a 'Volunteer of the month/year' programme
- ❖ Write about your Volunteers and their value in your newsletter
- ❖ Say "thank you" at every opportunity

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Termination of Volunteer Engagement

If Termination is Instigated by the Volunteer

It would be good practice in this case for the Volunteer's supervisor to conduct an exit interview. This would allow the service to evaluate the way in which they engage with Volunteers and any comments (both positive and negative) can then be used to improve the volunteering experience within the service. The Volunteer should be thanked for their input.

If the Volunteer did not announce their intention to terminate their engagement, but simply stopped coming in to volunteer, an exit questionnaire asking about their experience could be sent to them to help review and evaluate the volunteering experience.

If the Volunteer has been with the service for a long time and/or had a particularly valuable input, it may be appropriate to mark their leaving with a 'recognition event'. This could range from an informal tea to a public event to mark their contribution. Each situation will be different and therefore the appropriate event should be decided by the service which engaged the Volunteer.

If Termination is Instigated by North Ayrshire Council

If the termination of engagement has arisen through the changes taking place within a service, it may be possible for the Volunteer's skills to be used in a different way or at a different location. This possibility should be explored between the Volunteer and their supervisor. If this is not possible, they could be encouraged to contact - the Volunteer Centre (01294 471876) to register for alternative Volunteer opportunities. It would be good practice in this case to write to the Volunteer confirming the action that has been taken or is about to be taken and the reasons.

If however the engagement is to be terminated due to inefficiency or negative behaviour by the Volunteer in their role and task, the following procedure should be followed:

If the behaviour was not serious, every effort should be made to reach a mutually satisfactory outcome. A supportive approach would be helpful in trying to assist the Volunteer in addressing the issues. In the first instance the Volunteer's supervisor, should meet with the Volunteer to outline the behaviour that is causing concern. The Volunteer should be given the opportunity to explain any contributory factors. If the Volunteer agrees to address the behaviour, a further meeting should be held within 28 days to re-assess the situation. If the required improvement has not been reached, then the Volunteer should be informed that their engagement is to be terminated. At all times be open and honest with the Volunteer.

If the behaviour was deemed serious, the Volunteer would be told that their engagement was to be terminated immediately, and the reasons this action was being taken explained.

Where a Volunteer feels that they have been treated unfairly in these circumstances they should refer to North Ayrshire Council's Customer Comments Scheme "Listening and Learning".

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Exit Interview Form

Date:

Volunteer:

Interview Conducted by:

1. On a scale of 1 – 10 (1 being the lowest) – please rate your overall satisfaction with your volunteering here at North Ayrshire Council.

2. Please list below any areas that made your time volunteering with the Council particularly worthwhile

3. Please list below any areas that you found particularly difficult while volunteering with the Council

4. What prompted you to decide to terminate your volunteer engagement here with the Council?

5. Were there any areas within the power of the Council, where changes may have facilitated your continued volunteering with us?

6. Are there any additional comments you would like to make?

Interviewer Notes (Recorded with Volunteer present)

Volunteer

Signed:

Date:

Interviewer

Signed:

Date:

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Volunteers' Files: Service Arrangements

- ❖ Volunteers' personal files should be kept up to date
- ❖ Volunteers can have access to their file if required
- ❖ If a volunteer should change services their supervisor should arrange to pass on the volunteer's file
- ❖ On cessation of a volunteer's placement arrangements should be made by their supervisor to have that file updated and held for a minimum period of 12 months in a manner which is appropriate to that service.

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