

Thames Valley Partnership

Volunteer Policy

(May 2007)

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1. Thames Valley Partnership

The Thames Valley Partnership is a not-for-profit charity which brings people and organisations together to create stronger and safer communities. We are looking for longer term and sustainable solutions to the problems of crime and social exclusion. We work with criminal justice partners, local authorities, voluntary and community organisations and the private sector. Crime and social exclusion are complex problems, and in order to tackle them you need to look at the bigger picture and bring in a wide range of people and skills.

We work in three key ways – first, through brokerage and creating opportunities for joint working, secondly, supporting innovation and thirdly through dissemination of new ideas and the lessons learned. We have three broad programmes of work:

- **Never Too Early** – promoting earlier preventative work with families, communities and children at risk and encouraging citizenship and responsibility in young people.
- **Never Too Late** – working with offenders to support resettlement, rehabilitation and reintegration into local communities.
- **Close To Home** – recognising that violence and abuse often comes from those closest to us and that we all have a responsibility for our own safety and for the safety of those around us. This programme includes the Stop It Now! Thames Valley campaign – the prevention of child sexual abuse.

Further information on the work of the Partnership can be found on:-

www.thamesvalleypartnership.org.uk and www.stopitnow.org.uk

2. Volunteer Roles

Volunteers support the aims and ethos of the Thames Valley Partnership in all their work. The wide ranging skills and experience of volunteers enhance the work of the Partnership. There are a range of volunteer roles, and the current list of available, and forthcoming, roles can be found in Appendix I.

3. Volunteer Recruitment

Volunteers will generally be recruited via the Thames Valley Partnership website and through local volunteer Centres whereby volunteer roles may be advertised through their own networks, publications and web-sites. In addition volunteers may be approached through specialist organisations, be personally recommended or approach the Partnership themselves through its extensive networks within the field of community safety within the Thames Valley (the three counties of Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire and including Milton Keynes).

Following first contact, prospective volunteers will normally be contacted by phone for an informal discussion about a particular volunteer role. Potential volunteers will then be invited to attend an informal meeting to discuss the role of volunteers within the

Partnership's work and the particular role in which they are interested. Suitable volunteers will be asked to complete a single registration form, provide two character references, and, depending on the role, may need a Criminal Record Bureau check.

If it is felt that there is no current volunteering opportunity suitable for the potential volunteer, then the volunteer will be guided to alternative appropriate providers of volunteer roles.

4. Benefits for Volunteers

Volunteering with the Thames Valley Partnership can bring many benefits to volunteers:

For those at the start of their working lives, volunteering can offer exposure to and experience of a variety of organisations, projects and programmes in the field of wider Community Safety. Volunteers can trial different roles, make personal contacts and connections, and gain a greater insight into the world of work. Volunteers will gain experience of an office environment and office systems, IT and administrative skills, and this will add strength and depth to a CV.

For those wishing to return to paid employment after a break, volunteering can be a useful bridge back into employability. Volunteering offers the ability to renew and improve office, administrative and IT skills, to take responsibility for a particular role within a project or programme, and to gain current experience within a professional environment. This will make the volunteer a much more attractive prospect for paid employment.

For those wishing to volunteer at the end of a period of paid employment, volunteering offers the opportunity to maintain skills and expertise, to make good use of previous experience for the good of the community and to be part of a supportive team environment. Volunteering can be flexible, to fit around your other commitments.

For those able to volunteer on an ongoing, regular basis, for example, in term times, or on a particular day each week, volunteering offers the opportunity to become closely involved with, and take responsibility for, particular aspects of the Partnership's work. With ongoing training, and the build up of experience, volunteers can not only make a significant contribution to increasing safety and security in local communities, but can experience considerable personal satisfaction and enhancement of skills and experience.

The Partnership aims to support and encourage the personal goals of each volunteer, including the development of new skills, to enable them both to contribute meaningfully to the work of the Partnership and to fulfil their own personal ambitions and objectives.

5. Induction & Training

The Thames Valley Partnership is committed to providing high quality training and appropriate on-going support to all its volunteers.

All accepted volunteers will be invited to an induction meeting, where they will visit the Partnership's offices at Chilton, have a general introduction to the work of the Partnership, meet their administrative contact, project manager and other members of staff and discuss any questions they may have.

Training, appropriate to the specific role of the volunteer, will be provided free of charge and volunteers will be supported in the completion of the agreed training programme. If the training has an accreditation attached, volunteers will be helped to achieve that accreditation.

The Partnership will support volunteers in achieving their training requirements and mentoring opportunities with their project manager will be provided.

6. Expenses

The Thames Valley Partnership is a charity and therefore funding is at a premium. It is anticipated that volunteers will usually work locally to where they live and therefore expenses will be at a minimum. Reasonable out of pocket expenses i.e. economical local travel where necessary, will be paid in accordance with standard Partnership policy.

7. Contact and Reporting

Volunteers will be invited and encouraged to attend quarterly team meetings at the Partnership's offices, where reports on their work, suggestions and proposals will be welcomed, both about their particular work and across the wider work of the Partnership.

Volunteers will be invited and welcomed to team social events, usually including a summer 'outing' and a Christmas party.

Volunteers will receive regular updates on the wider work of the Partnership through the volunteer pages on the website.

8. Probation

Volunteer appointments will be subject to the satisfactory completion of a term of three months probation.

9. Supervision & Support

Volunteers will be supervised by the appropriate Project Manager at the Partnership according to their role. Volunteers will have regular supervision meetings, at agreed intervals with their Project Manager.

In addition, volunteers will be assigned an administrative contact to whom they may address day to day issues. It is anticipated that they will also receive regular mailings of information appropriate to their work, and a regular newsletter.

Details of the work and progress of the volunteers will be included in regular briefings to the Trustees of the Partnership, as with all other project work undertaken by the Partnership.

10. Insurance

Volunteers when visiting the Partnership offices at Chilton or engaging in Partnership activity will be covered by the Partnership's general Public Liability Insurance. Volunteers should check car insurance cover, where appropriate, covers Partnership activity.

11. Equal Opportunities

Volunteers will be covered by the Equal Opportunities Policy that currently exists at the Partnership (copy attached – Appendix II).

12. Diversity

Our organisation is firmly committed to diversity in all aspects of its work. We believe that we have much to learn and profit from diverse cultures and perspectives, and that diversity will make our organisation more effective in meeting the needs of all our stakeholders.

We are committed to developing and maintaining an organisation in which differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are fostered and valued and where those with diverse backgrounds and experiences are able to participate and contribute.

We will regularly evaluate and monitor our progress towards diversity.

13. Health & Safety

Volunteers whilst at the Partnership's premises at Chilton will be covered by the Health & Safety policy currently prevailing. A copy of the Health & Safety manual will be made available to volunteers on their induction session. Volunteers working at home will not be covered by the Partnership's Health & Safety or insurance policies.

Volunteers should be aware of Health & Safety requirements (which will be outlined at induction) when undertaking voluntary work for the Partnership.

14. Grievance & Disciplinary Procedures

Should any grievance on behalf of the volunteer or any disciplinary matter on behalf of the Partnership arise during the undertaking of voluntary work with the Thames Valley Partnership – the following procedure shall be adopted.

1. At the first instance any volunteer grievance or disciplinary matter should be raised with and then be the subject of a discussion between volunteer and Project Manager. Every effort should be made at this stage to resolve the matter.
2. If the volunteer is not satisfied and wishes to take the matter further, they may request in writing a meeting with the Chief Executive of the Thames Valley Partnership to endeavour to resolve the matter.
3. If the volunteer is still not satisfied with the outcome of these discussions, he/she may request that the matter be placed before the Board of Trustees of the Thames Valley Partnership and will be entitled to meet with a representative of the Trustees to discuss the matter further.

15. Confidentiality

Volunteers will be subjected to the same confidentiality requirements as paid members of staff at the Thames Valley Partnership.

Appendix I – Current Volunteer Roles

Title:	
Role:	
Reporting To:	
Date:	

Title:	
Role:	
Reporting To:	
Date:	

Appendix II – Equal Opportunities Policy

The Thames Valley Partnership aims to be of relevance to all the diverse communities in the Thames Valley and to be open and accessible to interested organisations and individuals in the community. We seek to involve representatives from all sections of the community to advise and steer our work through our trustees and the various steering and advisory groups that we convene. We will actively seek the advice of groups representing minority interests where relevant and ensure that all of our work addresses issues of diversity and discrimination.

The Thames Valley Partnership seeks to promote a safer community for all within the Thames Valley but also recognises that some sectors of the community are particularly vulnerable to crime or discrimination. Our programmes will continue to seek ways of addressing crime and the fear of crime as it specifically affects these groups, and to promote responses that strengthen communities to deal with crime in a positive way, based on principles of citizenship, tolerance and shared responsibility.

The Thames Valley Partnership also aims to be an equal opportunity employer. As a small team with a significant proportion of our employees seconded from other organisations we accept that we will have difficulty in developing a team which reflects the diverse communities of the Thames Valley. However we take seriously the need to recruit, train and support staff to ensure that all our posts are open and accessible to all members of the community regardless of their racial origin, gender, sexuality orientation age or disability.

Wherever possible all vacancies will be advertised externally. Selection criteria, job description and employees specification will be kept under review for each post to ensure that they are justifiable for the effective performance of the job and do not discriminate against any particular group. Short listing will be against clear criteria and any selection panel will have a clear understanding of equal opportunities. The reasons for the selection and rejection of individual applicants for vacancies will be recorded.

We recognise that our building is not easily accessible for those with disabilities. We will continue to be alert to the needs of people with mobility problems and ensure that meetings etc. are located appropriately – using other venues where necessary. All conference venues that we use will be fully accessible and will cater for the necessary dietary requirements.

We aim to maintain flexibility in our working hours and working practices and actively encourage part-time working and flexible arrangements to suit each individual member of the team.

The Chief Executive is responsible for the effective implementation of these principles.

This equal opportunities statement will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees.

February 2007

