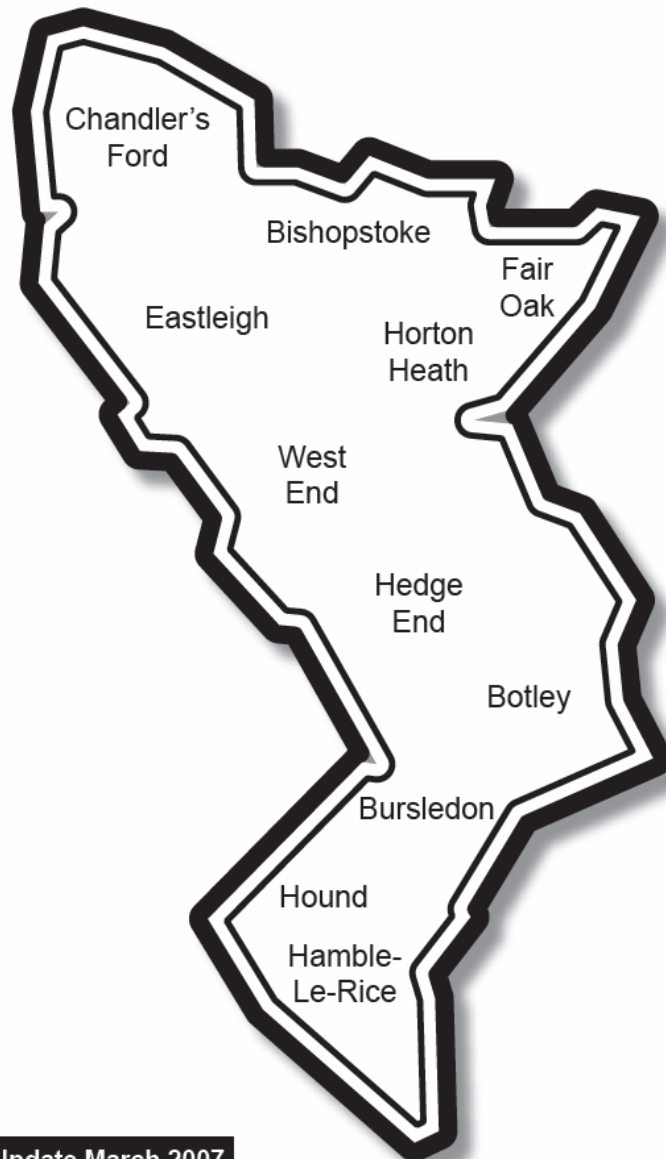


Code of Good Practice in Volunteering



Update March 2007

A partnership between Eastleigh Borough Council,
One Community and the Voluntary and Community Sector

If you would like this document in a different format or language please contact:

Helen Coleman
Community Development Manager
Health and Community Team
Eastleigh Borough Council
Civic Offices, Leigh Road
Eastleigh, SO50 9YN

Tel: 023 8068 8017

Email: helen.coleman@eastleigh.gov.uk

Fax: 023 8068 8257

Text: 07797 877001

Minicom: 023 8068 8499

EASTLEIGH COMPACT

Code of Good Practice in Volunteering

1. Introduction

1.1 This document sets out the guidance which, if followed, will lead to the establishment of Good Practice in the use of Volunteers in support of the local communities through the Eastleigh Council area. It has been developed in accordance with the aim of establishing a Code of Good Practice in Volunteering as required by Section 6 Para 6.1 of the EASTLEIGH COMPACT launched in March 2004. The Eastleigh Compact sets out the general principles of the agreements between the Council and Voluntary and Community Organisation. In this document they are together referred to as 'Organisations'

1.2 The Code of Good Practice is designed to clarify responsibilities on both sides. It is not intended to provide a bureaucratic check list, but rather to give guidance to those within the Eastleigh Council area, who volunteer to provide services for others, and those who involve them so they know that by so doing they will be adopting 'Good Practice'. It also states the general responsibilities of the Council in supporting, and in some cases funding, organisations using volunteers.

1.3 Each year Eastleigh Borough Council allocates about £300k of taxpayers' money to Voluntary and Community Organisations working within the Borough. These organisations are supported because the Council recognises the benefits they bring to the community. So that misunderstandings and difficulties do not arise, it is important that both the Council and the organisations have a common understanding of the nature of Voluntary support, and of current best practice where Volunteers are used to provide services in the Borough Council area.

1.4 The lead in this work is the Community Development Manager at Eastleigh Borough Council as Chair of the Eastleigh Compact Steering Group, who will review and if necessary revise this 'Code of Good Practice in Volunteering' at least annually.

1.5 The Eastleigh Compact and the Codes of Good Practice derived from it should apply to any organisation working within the Council area. Although not legally binding, organisations will be encouraged to sign their acceptance of the principles in the Compact and their commitment to working towards the Good Practice Codes.

1.6 This paper states the principles and obligations by which Eastleigh Borough Council will provide support to organisations that use Volunteers, and the principles and obligations which the Volunteers themselves must adopt to receive support from Eastleigh Borough Council. Together this constitutes Good Practice.

2. What is The Eastleigh Compact?

2.1 The Eastleigh Compact is an agreement between public sector agencies and voluntary and community organisations in Eastleigh. It outlines how all parties will work together and provides a framework for working together in the future. While the compact establishes the framework the codes of good practice give further detail about specific issues. In addition to this code there is the volunteering code, funding code and the consultation code.

The compact and codes are not legally binding. They are a set of mutually agreed documents that have been jointly created and consulted upon.

3. Principles Of Good Practice

3.1 This document has been drafted following extensive consultation between members of staff of the Council, (in this paper referred to as 'The Council') and representatives of voluntary and community groups (in this paper referred to as 'Organisations')

3.2 Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community. It can take many forms. It is freely given, by choice, without concern for financial gain. Four features apply:

- a. **Choice.** Volunteers choose to help. They must not be coerced, the freedom to volunteer equally implies the freedom not to be involved as well.
- b. **Diversity** is recognised, respected and valued. Volunteering should be open to all irrespective of race, religion, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation. Barriers can be reduced by working with others.
- c. **Reciprocity.** Giving voluntary time and skills must be recognised as establishing a reciprocal relationship in which the volunteer also receives. Volunteers gain a sense of worthwhile achievement, useful skills, experience and contacts, sociability and fun, and inclusion in the life of the organisation and the wider community.
- d. **Recognition.** Society recognises and values the work of volunteers. While this is usually tacitly accepted, it is always of benefit if organisations and others provide outwardly visible awards for good work. These can range from 'thanks' to recognition ceremonies.

3.3 In this context, volunteering does not include help given to close relatives.

3.4 Volunteering makes a major contribution to all aspects of life in the local community, in health, social welfare, education, arts and in the environment.

3.5 Action taken by the public sector authorities and by voluntary

organisations will impact each on the other.

3.6 It is to be expected that all concerned with providing services for the public through their organisations, employees or volunteers, accept the need for a consistent and appropriate approach, operating to what is understood to be current good practice.

4. The Council's Undertakings for Good Practice in Volunteering

4.1 In support of Good Practice the Council will:

- a. Seek to ensure that all proposed new Council policies and procedures are assessed for their impact on voluntary organisations, to ensure that barriers to voluntary practice are not imposed without adequate reason and necessary consultation.
- b. Undertake to signpost all voluntary and community sector groups to One Community whenever appropriate.
- c. Assess the contribution made by voluntary and community organisations to local statutory policies and programmes and give public credit to them.
- d. Aim to ensure that organisations can rely on long term policies and sustainable long term funding from statutory agencies.
- e. Work with established organisations rather than set up new ones.
- f. Recognise that voluntary organisations are independent but that local organisation often work to, and are responsible to, higher level organisations. Locally imposed conditions must not conflict with the rules imposed by a higher authority.
- g. In consultation with all voluntary organisations, provide guidance on best practice in volunteering.
- h. Encourage volunteering by actively providing or supporting media campaigns where the contribution of volunteers is highlighted.
- i. Encourage volunteering by actively publicising opportunities for voluntary service in as many ways as possible.
- j. In consultation with all voluntary organisations, provide guidance and help on reporting all voluntary activity to the Council so that accurate statistics of voluntary effort, in all forms, can be compiled.
- k. In consultation with voluntary organisations, seek to improve the effectiveness of voluntary and community activity by providing information, advice and support.

5. Voluntary And Community Organisations Undertakings For Good Practice In Volunteering

5.1 In seeking good practice, by working under the guidance of Eastleigh Borough Council and by accepting funding from the Council, organisations will undertake to meet the provisions stated below, to the best of their ability, and within the terms of their Governing Bodies (if applicable):

- a. Recognise the importance of high standards and good management when dealing with volunteers. Staff (paid or unpaid) who recruit, induct and manage volunteers should have this work recognised as a proper part of their role and should receive appropriate training and support.
- b. Assist potential volunteers to find volunteering opportunities to fit their needs, interests and abilities.
- c. Provide appropriate induction and training for volunteers to enable them to fulfil their volunteered role. Resources must be budgeted to support volunteers, including enough for their management, peer support, equipment and, if appropriate, office space.
- d. Ensure that the nature, extent and value of volunteering is acknowledged in Annual Reports.
- e. Where appropriate, encourage volunteers to seek credit, qualifications and accreditation for the skills they acquire from their voluntary roles.
- f. Give support to volunteers who actively seek further opportunities to advance themselves e.g. paid employment.
- g. Recognise that volunteers should be given acknowledgement for their contribution and that they should be treated and supported appropriately.
- h. Reimburse actual 'out of pocket expenses' incurred by volunteers, including consideration of care costs. This should be a priority for funded voluntary organisations and public sector agencies (see 6.5 below)
- i. Ensure that volunteers have the same protection under health and safety considerations and for public liability as is given to paid employees.
- j. Recognise the importance of Trustees as they carry out specific roles and ensure that they receive appropriate training and support.
- k. Develop systems to ensure that no volunteering potential is lost if a 'volunteering relationship' is ended. Organisations might refer volunteers back to the Volunteer Centre, Eastleigh.
- l. Ensure that procedures are in place to refer volunteers for Criminal Record Bureau checks and references where necessary.

Volunteer Centre Eastleigh

It is recognised that Volunteer Centre Eastleigh operates as the local Volunteering Development Agency (VDA). It has the following objectives, in common with Volunteer Centres throughout the country:

- I. Brokerage – VDA's primary function is to offer potential volunteers support and advice matching their motivation to volunteer with appropriate volunteering opportunities and to hold information on a comprehensive range of opportunities.
- II. Marketing Volunteering – VDA's stimulate and encourage local interest in volunteering and community activity. This

- may include promoting and marketing volunteering through local, regional and national events and campaigns.
- III. Good Practice Development – VDA's promote good practice in working with volunteers to all volunteer involving organisation, through training and support.
 - IV. Develop Volunteering Opportunities – VDA's work in close partnership with statutory, voluntary and community groups and faith groups to develop local volunteering opportunities. VDA's work with private sector agencies to encourage employer supported volunteering.
 - V. Policy Response and Campaigning – VDA's identify proposals or legislation that may impact on volunteering. It will lead and/or participate in campaigns on issues that affect volunteers or volunteering. VDA's campaign proactively for a more volunteer-literate and volunteer-friendly climate.
 - VI. Strategic Development of Volunteering – As the local experts on volunteering VDA's inform strategic thinking and planning at a regional and national level.

6. Joint Undertakings and Agreed Principles

6.1 Voluntary and community sector organisations will use the Charter as a basis to develop good practice within their organisations. Please refer to Charter Appendix 1.

6.2 Within the Eastleigh Council area those who volunteer and those who involve them should agree to work together to identify and then dismantle any barrier preventing volunteering or involvement in the community.

6.3 It is agreed by the public sector employers and by volunteers and community organisations that public funding should be used to create a modern and dynamic infrastructure where volunteers are adequately and legally supported.

6.4 Organisations and the Council will work together to establish practices to enable people from socially excluded groups to become involved in the community.

6.5 Organisations and the Council will work together to establish an area wide consistency towards the reimbursement of the expenses of volunteers (see 5.1 above)

7. How to use this code

7.1 This document is intended to safeguard relationships and actions of both the voluntary and community, and public sectors in Eastleigh. It is a good practice document and if there are disagreements we will undertake to find a mutually agreed resolution. If no such resolution can be agreed, the matter will be taken to an independent mediator.

7.2 The Eastleigh compact working group will promote this code throughout Eastleigh. It will review how it is used and will encourage local groups to participate in Compact events.

7.3 All of the Compact documents will be reviewed by the compact working group. This is an open group and if you would like to come to compact working group meetings please contact Nikki or Helen at the addresses below.

For further information please contact:

Nikki Matthews
Head of Voluntary Sector Support
One Community
023 8090 2456
nmatthews@ecs-vol.org

Helen Coleman
Community Development Manager
Eastleigh Borough Council
023 8068 8017
helen.coleman@eastleigh.gov.uk

Acknowledgements

This Code has been derived from many sources for which the authors are most grateful. Thanks go to the Eastleigh Compact Working Group who have all made a positive contribution to this document.

Membership of the Eastleigh Compact Working Group consists of:

Hedge End Retirement Club, Bursledon Village Hall, Eastleigh Southern Parishes Older Peoples Forum, Sencit Club Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh Borough Council, Adventure Club for Young People, Bishopstoke Community Centre, Eastleigh Age Concern, One Community, Parentline Plus, PASAC, The Salvation Army.

Appendix 1

The Volunteers Charter

Signatories of Eastleigh Compact Volunteering Code of Good Practice have adopted this charter, and will use it as a basis for developing good practice within their own organisations.

Volunteers should:

- Be given a clear idea of their tasks and responsibilities within the organisation.
- Be given the name of someone in the organisation who will look after their interests and who will offer them appropriate support and supervision on a regular basis.
- Be assured that any personal information shared with the organisation is kept confidential.
- Be given the same protection under health and safety regulations and public liability as paid employees.
- Be offered opportunities for training and skills development, appropriate for the voluntary tasks involved.
- Not be exploited. Volunteers should not:
 - Be used to replace paid workers.
 - Have unfair demands made on their time.
 - Be asked to do something which is against their principles or beliefs.
- Be given the chance to play a part in decision making within the organisation.
- Not be out of pocket through doing voluntary work. Travel and other expenses should be offered by all funded organisation.