



Southend Association of Voluntary Services
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Minutes of Volunteer Organisers Forum Wednesday 14th September 2011

In Attendance:

Teresa Clark & Garry Moore, Alzheimer's Society (teresa.clark@alzheimers.org.uk);
Alannah Maeh, Volunteers in Southend Schools (amaeh-viss@live.co.uk);
Emily Middlemast, SAVS (yb@savs-southend.co.uk);
Rachel Rooks, SAVS, Supported Volunteering Project (svproject@savs-southend.co.uk);
Ashley Smith, Salvation Army Training Centre (ashley.smith@salvationarmy.org.uk);
Dan Turpin, SAVS (info@savs-southend.co.uk);
Kayley Fletcher, Southend Hospital (kayley.fletcher@southend.nhs.uk);
Sharon Wheeler, Southend Borough Council (sharonwheeler@southend.gov.uk);
Sue McAninch, Safer Places (Susan.mcaninch@saferplaces.co.uk);
Sarah Swain, SOSDAP (sswain@sosdap.org);
Emma Wylie, Christ Church (emswylie@aol.com);
Gill Ioannis, Storehouse (ellie@southendvineyard.org.uk);
Richard Thomson, Campaign for the Protection of Rural Essex (office@cpressex.org.uk);
Sandra Allen, Cruse (sandra@intune.me.uk);
Margaret Haydon, EarlsHall Baptist Church Community Support Scheme (Margaret@earlshall.co.uk);
Cheryl Higgins, EarlsHall Baptist Church Community Support Scheme (office@earlshall.co.uk);
Barry Millar, EarlsHall Baptist Church Community Support Scheme (office@earlshall.co.uk);
Lee Moorton, EarlsHall Baptist Church Community Support Scheme (office@earlshall.co.uk);
Tracey Brownlow, Trustlinks/ Growing Together (office@trustlinks.org);
Deborah Baker, Havens Hospices (dbaker@havenshospices.org.uk);
Faye Kadesh, Havens Hospices (fkadesh@havenshospices.org.uk);
Audrey Rigg, Amigos Integrated and Support Service (audreyrigg@southend.gov.uk);
Anne-Marie Betts, Safer Place's (ann-marie.betts@saferplaces.co.uk);
Kate Harriss, SOSDAP (kharriss@sosdap.org);
Louise Harris, Southend Vineyard (louise@southendvineyard.org.uk);
Hilary Davison, The Salvation Army Leigh-on-sea (hilary.davidson@salvationarmy.org.uk);
Louise Powell, WRVS (louise.powell@wrvs.org.uk);
Brenda Bowers, WRVS (Brenda.bowers@wrvs.org.uk);
Emma Skinner, Batias (emma.skinner@batias.com);
Ron, DIAL (info@dialsouthend.org);
Fiona Abbott, Southend on sea Borough Council (fionaabbott@southend.gov.uk);
Adam Jones, St Laurence Councillor (cllrjones@southend.gov.uk);
Rosemary Scofield, AGE Concern (enquiry@acsos.co.uk);

Apologies:

Andrew Woodley, Wyvern Community Transport (manager@wyvernct.co.uk);

Dawnette Fessey, Southend Carers Forum (info@southendcarers.co.uk);

Hilary Scarnell, Volunteers in Schools (hscarnell-viss@live.co.uk);

Robert Gray, Boscats (mrgoldbury@hotmail.com);

Susie Tyer, Parkwood Healthcare (Susie.tyer@parkwoodhealthcare.co.uk);

Simon Wallace, Southend Central Library (simonwallace@southend.gov.uk);

Graham Freeman, Jewish Care (gfreeman@jcare.org);

Triss Norman, Trustlinks/ Growing Together (office@trustlinks.org);

Welcome and Introduction – Emily Middlemast – Volunteer Centre Co-ordinator

Emily Middlemast, Volunteer Centre Co-ordinator from SAVS, welcomed all and advised of health & safety procedures. She introduced the option of ordering from the newly launched 'Ssh Secret Café' for anyone wanting to eat before leaving the forum!

Emily began by discussing the common factors that most Forum attendees share:

- They involve volunteers within their organisations or are interested in doing so;
- They value volunteers

Emily's role not only matches volunteering opportunities with volunteers, it also focuses on improving good practice within organisations. This forum brings about a chance for us to learn from each other and share our volunteering experiences.

The area of debate today is Recruitment and Induction, the process an organisation goes through in order to achieve the goal of finding and keeping quality volunteers. We know that the most affective way to do this is to get the 'Induction' all the way through to 'end of trial period' right. Then your volunteers will be happy, loyal and dedicated. First impressions count and the work that is put in prior to meeting the volunteer, is just as important as what happens when the volunteer comes for interview.

10 Minute Activity – Dan Turpin – Information and Communications Officer

Dan Turpin organised the forum participants into 5 groups for a 10 minute activity:

The groups were each given an envelope of procedures with regard to volunteer recruitment. The object was to put each procedure in order, according to when (in 7 steps) on the recruitment scale it should be done e.g.

Before Recruitment (1st step)

- *Develop Volunteer Policy*
- *Develop Volunteer Handbook/Welcome Pack*
- *Insurance*
- *Risk Assessment*
- *Budget for cost of a volunteer*
- *Develop Induction Process*
- *Role Description*

(For a full list of recruitment procedures (all 7steps) used by the SAVS team when recruiting volunteer receptionists – <http://www.savs-southend.org/files/The%20Recruitment%20Process.pdf>)

This activity got groups talking about the recruitment process and gave a good insight into procedures that may be useful to introduce if not already in action within organisations. This particular model is in use at SAVS but may vary according to the organisation and role or opportunity.

A few points to remember from this activity are:

- *Explain the number of trial days and times for shadowing clearly, first*
- *Don't overload volunteers with information very early on*
- *Training can be introduced after the first trial session*
- *CRB checks and references can be obtained after the trial sessions as you want to be sure you and your volunteer are compatible*

Information sharing

Emily asked "What do you think is the most important reason for why a volunteer stays with your organisation?" Participants also give updates on their organisations.

1. Gill Ioannis – Storehouse

Flexibility and understanding with volunteers is very important at Storehouse. Some volunteers may need extended time off but if they return to us we welcome them back. We show our appreciation regularly and find it very beneficial if we give plenty of supervision.

2. Deborah Baker – Havens Hospices

We have many volunteers, approximately 650. We feel it is vital to understand their motivation for volunteering with us, so that we can help them find the right role.

3. Rosemary Scofield – AGE Concern

People come to us for various reasons and we think it important that our volunteers feel constantly valued.

4. Richard Thomson – Campaign for the Protection of Rural Essex

I think volunteers need a good reception, an induction and training and the feeling of being part of the organisation/ community.

5. Teresa Clark – Alzheimer's Society

We have some long standing volunteers within our organisation and valuing them is the most important factor. Keep them involved with what we do, incorporate their ideas and realise they have a lot to give.

6. Emma Wylie – Christ Church Community Cafe

We are a church run organisation just getting started with regards to volunteering. We are trying to formalise volunteer roles and job descriptions and also trying to remove any boundaries that may prevent people from getting involved.

7. Anne-Marie Betts – Safer Places

We are here to learn about involving volunteers. As an organisation it is a new prospect.

8. Kate Harris – SOSDAP

For our volunteers, training is vital. We feel it very important to invest in them with time and money, ensuring they are able to cope safely in a face to face situation and a professional role. We offer a 12 week accredited course, which is affiliated with Rape Crisis England and Wales.

9. Emma Skinner – Batias
We feel Risk Assessment is the most important factor. Understanding your volunteers and what they want helps us to get it right.
10. Tracey Brownlow – Trustlinks/ Growing Together
It is important to value volunteers and give plenty of training.
11. Adam Jones – St Laurence Counsellor
Adam is new to his role. Part of his remit is to meet with volunteers. He wants to encourage volunteer wardens in Southend's green places and pass on the 'shared vision' of the community. He is here today to learn from SAVS and other organisations.
12. Margaret Haydon – Earls Hall Baptist Church Community Support Scheme
Our scheme responds to the needs of the community. Because we are a church run organisation people do 'help' out a lot but it is difficult to get them to see themselves as volunteers. We are trying to encourage people to accept support and change the culture enough to develop these volunteer roles. We feel it is important to show our volunteers they are valued.
13. Alannah Maeh – Volunteers in Schools
In order to retain volunteers we find it essential to find out right at the interview stages of volunteering what people are looking for. This enables us to put them into suitable roles.
14. Sharon Wheeler – Southend Borough Council
We are currently working on our volunteer policy and it is about to be launched. Matching a volunteer to an opportunity is important. We also need to ensure there will be good communication as the council has many areas in which to place volunteers.
15. Sandra Allen – Cruse
We try to take every opportunity to reward our volunteers and show them they are appreciated. Many work in isolation, with roles that involve visiting people but not necessarily with other colleagues from Cruse. We find giving plenty of learning options and supervision important because we don't get to see everyone regularly.
16. Fiona Abbott – Southend on sea Borough Council
With the increasing opportunity to volunteer within the council, I am here to learn more about working with volunteers.
17. Audrey Rigg – Amigos Integrated and Support Service
It is important to have some sort of structure in place to support volunteers.
18. Kayley Fletcher – Southend Hospital
We have about 400 volunteers so it is quite difficult to keep up with them all. We do have supervisor roles but could do more to listen to our volunteers and be more hands on.
19. Ashley Smith – Salvation Army Training Centre
We must listen to our volunteers and give them plenty to do (if they want it) in order to prevent them getting bored and leaving.

20. Brenda Bowers - WRVS

WRVS has 60 volunteers and 38 paid staff. They seem to have a very happy balance as their volunteers stay! Their oldest is 93yrs old. Brenda feels the volunteers really make her job enjoyable and she lets them know how much they are appreciated.

21. Louise Powell - WRVS

Louise has been a volunteer with SAVS and although now working on a new project with WRVS, has first hand experience of happy volunteering! She says being thanked regularly is vital but also to feel part of the team making friends and being valued makes all the difference.

22. Hilary Davidson – Salvation Army, Leigh-on-sea

It is very important to make sure a volunteer knows what they are doing.

Guest Speaker – Deborah Baker – Havens Hospices

Emily introduces today's guest speaker. Deborah is responsible for some 650 volunteers for Havens Hospices and we are very grateful to her for coming in to share 'lessons learnt' with everyone here today.

Havens Hospices must be doing something right with the recruitment and retention of volunteers as their numbers keep growing. The organisation has 11 departments, 16 shops, 200 paid staff and approximately 650 volunteers. They are currently working on 'Investors for Volunteers' through Volunteer England. Deborah begins by discussing their affective volunteer programme.

Havens have 3 paid staff and 4 volunteers to work part-time to drive the programme. They define a volunteer as someone '**willing without pay to undertake an agreed task**'.

Having a recruitment procedure demonstrates a commitment to the programme and their volunteers. It is very important to maintain fairness and consistency in the treatment of all volunteers.

Given the nature of the Hospices it can be a difficult place for a person grieving to volunteer. Therefore it is important Havens have policies in place to ensure the programme remains consistent:

- To not allow any volunteer to work in the hospices if they have lost a loved one within the last 2 years.
- Keep confidential records and ensure all volunteers understand the need to respect others privacy.
- Havens pay travel costs if needed to make it possible for people from all walks of life to volunteer should they want to.
- Tight recruitment procedure – to find out what the volunteer is looking for to develop a role that will be satisfying for them.
- Appointing a volunteer co-ordinator
- Volunteer Agreement

Recruitment follows several steps, including a form to fill in, an interview that consists of a friendly chat in a relaxed environment and the appointing of a volunteer coordinator as contact for each volunteer. Depending on where the volunteer will be placed, a CRB check will follow and obtain 2 references.

If for some reason a person is not suitable for Havens, they try to refer the volunteer back to the volunteer centre to help them find something else.

There is a Volunteer Agreement to sign at the point of start date with introduction and training with volunteer coordinator.

Volunteers are also invited to the Corporate Induction held for all staff.

One key factor that has become apparent over the years of working with volunteers is that they do not want unnecessary money spent on them. It is vital we try to show our thanks and appreciation for what they do without appearing to waste money. We feel Communication is essential and we have come up with a document to outline ways to give recognition to volunteers.

Please see following links documents <http://www.savs-southend.org/files/Working%20with%20Volunteers.pdf> and <http://www.savs-southend.org/files/Recognition%20Rules.pdf>

Guest Speaker – Lynette Adams – Southend Adult Community College

Emily introduces the subject of training. It is important for everyone, whether volunteer manager or volunteer. It is important that any volunteer organiser assesses the training needs of its volunteers, usually this is discussed during their supervision sessions and it is equally important that those managing volunteers have had some training in this area too. There are some big differences between managing volunteers and managing paid staff.

Lynette Adams from Southend Adult Community College talked about some opportunities available at the local college.

We have various facilities at the college to cater for volunteers from all areas. We can offer classroom/ learning support: confidence building and mentoring. Literacy; numeracy; ICT; ESOL. We can also support students with learning difficulties. Our courses already in practise are based on a 4 week introduction for new volunteers but the opportunity is there to create bespoke courses.

Currently we are developing training for organisations such as SBC Children and Learning Placements; South Essex Homes. We are happy to create a specific course and it could be worth communicating with other similar organisations to ensure places are filled.

We are accredited using NOCN and are included in IIP Investors in People.

For more information please contact Sarah Jane Holmes sarah-janeholmes@southend-adult.ac.uk
Alternatively contact Chris Buchan 01702 445720

Or ask Emily at SAVS.

Any Other Business – Emily Middlemast

Emily reminded all attendees about the 3R Promise and asks organisations to sign up and get involved. Information can be found on the Volunteering England website. See link below

<http://www.volunteering.org.uk/WhatWeDo/Policy/Volunteer+Rights+Inquiry/Volunteer+Rights+Inquiry+3R+Promise?knownurl=http%3a%2f%2fwww.volunteering.org.uk%2fWhatWeDo%2fPolicy%2fVolunteer%2bRights%2bInquiry%2f>

A day to put in your diaries is 30th October – Make a Difference Day. This is the UK's single biggest day of volunteering. Find out more by visiting www.csv.org.uk or calling FREEPHONE 0800 284 533

We are now recruiting the Essex Ambassadors for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Do spread the word to your volunteers. For further details and application forms visit www.essexlegacy.org

Emily concluded the meeting by thanking all guest speakers and attendees. If you would like to talk to Emily about developing any new volunteering opportunities or indeed any issue around volunteering please do call her on **01702 356060** and she will be happy to hear from you.

The next Volunteer Organisers' Forum will be held on **Wednesday 15th February 2011** – and we look forward to seeing you there!