

What exactly is Volunteer Friendly?

The Volunteer Friendly Award is a simple, user-friendly quality standard designed by Volunteer Dundee to support, recognise and reward groups who are good at involving volunteers.

How does Volunteer Friendly fit into the local landscape?

The Volunteer Friendly Award designed and used by the Volunteer Dundee has been acknowledged as a successful model for recognising organisations that are good at working with volunteers. The programme was selected as a Change Champions project and received funding to roll it out across the rest of Scotland through SCVO's Supporting Voluntary Action programme, which is funded by the Big Lottery. A programme of start-up sessions started in June 2010 and ran until September 2011. This introduced interested Volunteer Centres to the Award and trains staff to use the Volunteer Friendly Checklist and Toolkit and has been developed into an online training package available through the Volunteer Friendly Website. Nineteen of the Volunteer Centres that took part in the training have now been granted licences to take organisations and groups in their area through the Volunteer Friendly Award process.

How does Volunteer Centre Dundee fit into the picture?

Using their many years of experience working with volunteers and organisations involving volunteers, staff from the Volunteer Centre Dundee put together a checklist and accompanying toolkit to recognise, or if necessary develop, best practice in working with volunteers. After working through the checklist, successful organisations are given the Volunteer Friendly Award. This scheme has been acknowledged as a successful model for recognising organisations that are good at working with volunteers and has been rolled out to the rest of Scotland through SCVO's Supporting Voluntary Action programme, which is funded by the Big Lottery. A Volunteer Friendly (Scotland) Project Coordinator and Project Administrator were funded to work with Volunteer Centres across Scotland from their base at the Volunteer Centre Dundee from April 2010 - September 2011. Volunteer Centre Dundee staff continue to support their colleagues in other areas with advice and materials to deliver the Volunteer Friendly Award in their local area.

How does Volunteer Friendly tie into Investing in Volunteers?

Volunteer Friendly is based very closely on liV and uses basically the same indicators to measure how groups work with volunteers. However, Volunteer Friendly does not go into the same depth as liV, and the nine criteria of liV have been condensed into five strands in the Volunteer Friendly model. Volunteer Friendly can be used as a stepping stone for your organisation to go on to do liV at a later date - as the criteria are closely related, any evidence collected for Volunteer Friendly can be used for liV. Click [here](#) to see how Volunteer Friendly maps to liV.

What is the purpose?

Volunteer Friendly is about recognising that groups are good at working with volunteers. It's about supporting organisations to expand on what they do well and develop best practice. And it's about rewarding organisations for all their hard work with volunteers.

Who benefits from Volunteer Friendly?

Anyone who uses a group's services, its volunteers and paid staff, its funders, its management committees. Everyone should benefit from Volunteer Friendly.

How does a group go about applying for the Volunteer Friendly Award?

Organisations or groups interested in applying for the Volunteer Friendly Award should contact their nearest Volunteer Centre.

How long will it take?

After being introduced to the Volunteer Friendly Checklist and Toolkit by its local licensed Volunteer Centre, each organisation will work through the programme at its own pace. Some organisations may complete the programme within three months; others will require a bit more time.

What does it involve?

Each organisation needs to work through the Checklist, looking at what it does in relation to volunteers and the way it does it. The Checklist has five strands and sets tasks focused on a particular area: the organisation has to provide evidence that shows how it works with volunteers. The evidence could be a policy or an example of a form or even a photo - whatever is appropriate for the group. The Toolkit provides guidance as well as examples and templates, to help groups who want to improve their procedures or fill in any gaps. The evidence can be collected in a paper version or in an e-portfolio. Once the evidence is complete and has been verified by the local Volunteer Centre, the organisation is granted the Volunteer Friendly Award.

What is the time commitment?

Some organisations will have more work to do than others, some will want to achieve the award as quickly as possible and others will allocate less time over a longer period, so it really depends on the organisation.

Who needs to do the work in the organisation?

Although the work of collecting evidence in the organisation will involve volunteers, staff and committees, to ensure consistency and continuity there should be a named person or persons who will be instrumental in taking the work forward.

How is the evidence assessed?

Once the evidence has been gathered it will be examined by trained assessors.

Where is the information or evidence gathered stored?

The organisation undertaking the award will normally keep the evidence it is gathering at its office, either in a folder or in an e-portfolio. The Volunteer Centre which assesses the evidence will normally return the folder to the organisation. However, in order to improve the resources of the online Toolkit, permission may be requested to use particularly good examples of documents or of good practice in other ways.

What are the benefits?

Working through the Volunteer Friendly Award gives a group the opportunity to revisit its volunteer management practices and to review its procedures. The online Toolkit will provide groups with examples of best practice and templates for any paperwork that may need to be updated. Groups which have achieved the Volunteer Friendly Award will be able to use the Volunteer Friendly logo on its stationery, etc. so potential volunteers and funders can see that it is recognised as having excellent standards in its volunteer management practice.

How might Volunteer Friendly help with funding?

Nowadays most funders are looking for evidence of good practice in managing volunteers. Having a Volunteer Friendly Award will show potential funders that your practices have been examined and found to be of a high standard.

What is the cost for groups to sign up to Volunteer Friendly?

Check with your local Volunteer Centre. Where possible, the Volunteer Friendly Award is offered to groups free of charge. However, from April 2012, there may be a small charge for groups to sign up for the Award and receive the plaque and certificate once they achieve the Award.

When can we start if we want to go ahead?

Please Contact Karen Miller or Kim Cameron at Engage Renfrewshire for further details.

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