20
15

THE NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

Volunteering
AUSTRALIA

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Contents

Introduction

Volunteer involvement is a critical part of Australian society. It contributes to civil society and active participation in building strong, inclusive, and resilient communities. It underlies innovation and social change, our responses to community need and community challenges, and it brings together and supports the local strengths and assets of communities.

There are important benefits to both organisations and to volunteers when volunteers become involved in organisations.

Volunteer involvement can contribute to, and extend the capacity of, organisations to meet aims and goals. Volunteers can provide the time, skills, expertise and points of view that enable an organisation to pursue programs and activities that benefit the community.

For individuals, volunteering provides an opportunity to be involved in activities reflecting their interests and using their skills. Meaningful activity in turn promotes a sense of belonging and general wellbeing. Volunteering can also be a way to develop skills, potential pathways to employment, or a way to contribute existing skills for the common good.

Volunteer involvement is a two-way relationship, providing an opportunity for organisations to achieve their goals by involving volunteers in their activities, and for volunteers to make meaningful use of their time and skills, contributing to social and community outcomes.

The National Standards – Aims and Principles

The **National Standards for Volunteer Involvement** (the National Standards) replace the **National Standards for Involving Volunteers in Not-for-Profit Organisations**. The National Standards have been developed in consultation with the volunteering sector to support the involvement of volunteers and act as a resource for organisations in which volunteers are involved. They provide a framework for organisations to consider the role of volunteers within the organisation and the impact effective volunteer involvement can have on achieving the strategic goals and aims of the organisation.

The National Standards have been designed to help organisations:

- incorporate the values and maximise the benefits of volunteer involvement
- develop effective volunteer involvement strategies and practices
- involve volunteers in meaningful and useful activities that contribute to the outcomes of the organisation's work
- ensure the rights of volunteers are protected and that they are supported to carry out their roles and responsibilities.

The National Standards incorporate the following principles:

- Volunteer involvement should be a considered and planned part of an organisation's strategic development, aligning with the organisation's strategic aims and incorporated into its evaluation framework.
- Effective volunteer involvement requires organisational leadership, and a culture and structure that supports and values the role of volunteers.
- Volunteers have rights, which include the right to work in a safe and supportive environment with appropriate infrastructure and effective management practices.
- Volunteers have responsibilities, which include acting responsibly, being accountable for their actions to the organisation, and respecting the organisation's values and practices.

Using the National Standards

The National Standards allow organisations to make use of simple, practical criteria across a broad range of volunteering situations.

There are 8 standards addressing the key areas of volunteer involvement:

1. Leadership and management
2. Commitment to volunteer involvement
3. Volunteer roles
4. Recruitment and selection
5. Support and development
6. Workplace safety and wellbeing
7. Volunteer recognition
8. Quality management and continuous improvement

Each standard contains the intent of the standard, a statement that defines the scope of the standard and the criteria against which the level of achievement of that standard can be assessed.

This document provides the content of the National Standards and details of the types of practices and evidence that an organisation might need to meet the standards. More detailed explanations, examples and tools are provided in a separate set of implementation resources.

The National Standards are primarily for the use of organisations that include volunteers in their personnel. They are not intended to apply to the activities of volunteers themselves. Organisations that do not have any paid employees, or groups of volunteers coming together to organise their own activities, may find the National Standards useful for guiding some of their work, or for working towards a more formal organisational structure, but it is not intended that volunteer groups meet the National Standards.

Guidance on applying the National Standards in volunteer run organisations is included in the implementation resources.

Organisations can use the National Standards in a number of ways:

- as a general guide to good practice;
- as an audit tool that provides a picture of how well the organisation is performing against best practice for volunteer involvement;
- as a guideline or checklist to help identify opportunities for making improvements;
- as a framework of reference to assist in planning and establishing a new volunteer service;
- as a baseline from which progress in making improvements can be monitored and measured;
- as a way of gaining formal recognition for good practice from Volunteering Australia by meeting the National Standards.

An organisation that is able to demonstrate compliance with the standards is well positioned strategically to recruit and retain more volunteers, as well as attract funding or sponsorship for new initiatives.

The standards are intended to be flexible enough to apply to different sizes of organisations with varying levels of resources, in both rural and urban settings, led by employees or by volunteers.

Some standards or criteria may only apply to particular volunteering situations. A full guide to applying the National Standards is available as part of the implementation resource materials.

20 15

THE NATIONAL
STANDARDS FOR
VOLUNTEER
INVOLVEMENT

STANDARD 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governing body and senior employees lead and promote a positive culture towards volunteering and implement effective management systems to support volunteer involvement.

1.1 Responsibilities for leading and managing volunteer involvement are defined and supported.

1.2 Policies and procedures applying to volunteers are communicated, understood, and implemented by all relevant staff across the organisation.

1.3 The organisation's risk management processes are applied to the organisation's volunteer involvement.

1.4 Volunteer involvement records are maintained.

1.5 Processes are in place to manage relationships with partner agencies in collaborative volunteer activities.
(This criteria only applies to organisations working with other organisations in a collaborative activity involving volunteers and/or sharing responsibility for particular volunteers).

STANDARD 2: COMMITMENT TO VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

Commitment to volunteer involvement is set out through vision, planning and resourcing, and supports the organisation's strategic direction.

2.1 The organisation publicly declares its intent, purpose and commitment to involving volunteers.

2.2 Volunteer involvement is planned and designed to contribute directly to the organisation purpose, goals and objectives.

2.3 Resources (including time, funds, equipment and technology) are allocated for volunteer involvement.

STANDARD 3: VOLUNTEER ROLES

Volunteers are engaged in meaningful roles which contribute to the organisation's purpose, goals and objectives.

3.1 Volunteer roles are designed to contribute to the organisation's purpose, goals and objectives.

3.2 Volunteer roles are appropriate for the community, service user or stakeholder groups with which the organisation works.

3.3 Volunteer roles are defined, documented and communicated.

3.4 Volunteer roles are reviewed with input from volunteers and employees.

STANDARD 4: RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Volunteer recruitment and selection strategies are planned, consistent and meet the needs of the organisation and volunteers.

4.1   If the organisation recruits volunteers, it uses planned approaches to attract volunteers with relevant interests, knowledge, skills or attributes.

4.2   Potential volunteers are provided with relevant information about the organisation, the volunteer role and the recruitment and selection process.

4.3   Volunteers are selected based on interest, knowledge, and skills or attributes relevant to the role, and consistent with anti-discrimination legislation.

4.4   Screening processes are applied to volunteer roles that help maintain the safety and security of service users, employees, volunteers and the organisation.

STANDARD 5: SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

Volunteers understand their roles and gain the knowledge, skills and feedback needed to safely and effectively carry out their duties.

5.1   Volunteers are provided with orientation relevant to their role and responsibility.

5.2   Volunteers knowledge and skills are reviewed to identify support and development needs.

5.3   Volunteers knowledge and skill needs relevant to their roles are identified, and training and development opportunities are provided to meet these needs.

5.4   Volunteers are provided with supervision and support that enables them to undertake their roles and responsibilities.

5.5   Changes to the involvement of a volunteer are undertaken fairly and consistently.

STANDARD 6: WORKPLACE SAFETY AND WELLBEING

The health, safety and wellbeing of volunteers is protected in the workplace.

6.1   Effective working relationships with employees, and between volunteers, are facilitated by the organisation.

6.2   Processes are in place to protect the health and safety of volunteers in their capacity as volunteers.

6.3   Volunteers have access to complaints and grievance procedures.

STANDARD 7: VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

Volunteer contribution, value and impact is understood, appreciated and acknowledged.

7.1   The governing body and employees understand how volunteers benefit the organisation, service users and the community.

7.2   Volunteers are informed about how their contributions benefit the organisation, service users and the community.

7.3   The organisation regularly acknowledges contributions made by volunteers and the positive impact on the organisation, service users and the community.

7.4   Volunteer acknowledgement is appropriate to the volunteer role and respectful of cultural values and perspectives.

STANDARD 8: QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Effective volunteer involvement results from a system of good practice, review and continuous improvement.

8.1   Policies and procedures are implemented to effectively guide all aspects of volunteer involvement.

8.2   Volunteer involvement is regularly reviewed in line with the organisation's evaluation and quality management frameworks.

8.3   The organisation's performance with volunteer involvement is monitored and reported to the governing body, employees, volunteers and stakeholders.

8.4   Opportunities are available for volunteers to provide feedback on the organisation's volunteer involvement and relevant areas of the organisation's work.

Standards criteria and evidence

The following section provides a guide to the types of practices and evidence that will demonstrate that an organisation meets a standard. Not all evidence would apply to every situation or organisation, and the specific requirements for a formal recognition of meeting the standards will depend on an organisation's size, resources, complexity and types of volunteer involvement.

Resources and tools for organisations using the National Standards for self-assessment, or to apply for formal recognition, are provided in the implementation resource materials.

20 15

THE NATIONAL
STANDARDS FOR
VOLUNTEER
INVOLVEMENT

STANDARD 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governing body and senior employees lead and promote a positive culture towards volunteering and implement effective management systems to support volunteer involvement.

Effective leadership ensures the aims and values of volunteer involvement are promoted within the organisation, and that there is clear accountability for the implementation of volunteer involvement.

Effective management ensures that processes and systems are in place to implement positive volunteer involvement.

Meeting this standard assists the organisation to provide clear direction and guidance for the work of volunteers, as well as understand and mitigate any risks related to involving volunteers.

1.1	**Responsibilities for leading and managing volunteer involvement are defined and supported.**
Evidence	Specific responsibility for providing leadership and managing the implementation of volunteer involvement is assigned.
	Volunteer involvement responsibilities are documented through position descriptions, delegation authorities, policies and procedures.
	Employees and governing body members understand and action their volunteer involvement responsibilities.
	Employees with direct responsibility for volunteer involvement have relevant qualifications, skills or experience for the role.
1.2	**Policies and procedures applying to volunteers are communicated, understood, and implemented by all relevant staff across the organisation.**
Evidence	Employees, governing body members and volunteers receive information, orientation and training on the organisation's volunteer policies and procedures.
	Compliance with volunteer policies and procedures is regularly monitored and improved.
1.3	**The organisation's risk management processes are applied to the organisation's volunteer involvement.**
Evidence	Risk management systems are in place to identify, assess and respond to risks relating to volunteer involvement.
	Volunteer risk management is overseen by management and the governing body.
	Volunteers are informed of potential risks and are supported to manage or mitigate risk factors.
1.4	**Volunteer involvement records are maintained.**
Evidence	Required information to be collected from volunteers is identified.
	Information from screening checks for volunteers are documented and kept secured.
	The organisation has documented and implemented processes that comply with privacy legislation for securely managing volunteer personal and confidential information.
	Records of volunteer contribution, achievements and acknowledgement are maintained by the organisation.
1.5	**Processes are in place to manage relationships with partner agencies in collaborative volunteer activities.** *(This criteria only applies to organisations working with other organisations in a collaborative activity involving volunteers and/or sharing responsibility for particular volunteers).*
Evidence	Agreed frameworks and practice principles for co-design of volunteer involvement are documented.
	Expectations of volunteers and agreements about respective roles of the parties are documented.
	Procedures for evaluating progress and outcomes are documented.
	Arrangements and agreements are reviewed on a regular basis.

20
15

THE NATIONAL
STANDARDS FOR
VOLUNTEER
INVOLVEMENT

STANDARD 2: COMMITMENT TO VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

Commitment to volunteer involvement is set out through vision, planning and resourcing, and supports the organisation's strategic direction.

Setting out its commitment to volunteer involvement ensures that the organisation has a clear idea of why it is involving volunteers, the values and principles it will apply in its work with volunteers, and how the involvement of volunteers will enhance and support the work of the organisation.

Meeting this standard assists the organisation to approach the involvement of volunteers in a planned manner, making sure that resources are allocated and that it is accountable for the way it works with volunteers.

2.1	**The organisation publicly declares its intent, purpose and commitment to involving volunteers.**
Evidence	A formal statement, endorsed by the governing body, articulates the organisation's philosophy, direction and broad objectives for involving volunteers.
	The benefits to the work of the organisation of involving volunteers is recognised through its planning processes and documents.
	The organisation's commitment to volunteer involvement complies with legislation, industry standards, guidelines and codes of practice.
2.2	**Volunteer involvement is planned and designed to contribute directly to the organisation's purpose, goals and objectives.**
Evidence	The organisation's broader planning processes incorporate volunteer involvement.
	Volunteer involvement planning identifies strategies for recruitment, recognition, management and development of volunteers.
	Proposed volunteer involvement is assessed to ensure appropriateness and benefit.
	Volunteer involvement plans align to the organisation's purpose, goals and objectives and volunteer activity contributes directly to these.
	The organisation is open to opportunities for collaborating with other agencies in involving volunteers.
2.3	**Resources (including time, funds, equipment and technology) are allocated for volunteer involvement.**
Evidence	A budget is allocated and used for volunteer involvement planning, operations and review.
	The governing body, employees and volunteers dedicate time to plan, discuss and manage volunteer involvement.
	Equipment, materials, communication technology and space are provided which support volunteers to undertake their roles.
	A policy and procedure exists for reimbursement for volunteer out of pocket expenses.
	Staff with volunteer involvement responsibilities are provided with training, supervision and resources to effectively undertake this role.

20
15

THE NATIONAL
STANDARDS FOR
VOLUNTEER
INVOLVEMENT

STANDARD 3: VOLUNTEER ROLES

Volunteers are engaged in meaningful and appropriate roles which contribute to the organisation's purpose, goals and objectives.

Volunteer roles ensure that the work done by volunteers is defined, and that it meets both the needs of the volunteer and the objectives of the organisation.

Meeting this standard assists the organisation to match volunteers with appropriate work roles, provide relevant and satisfying activities for volunteers and ensure that involvement of volunteers contributes to the organisation.

3.1	**Volunteer roles are designed to contribute to the organisation's purpose, goals and objectives.**
Evidence	Descriptions of volunteer roles indicate how the role contributes to the organisation's purpose, goals and objectives.
3.2	**Volunteer roles are appropriate for the community, service user or stakeholder groups with which the organisation works.**
Evidence	Volunteer roles reflect current developments in volunteering, volunteer availability and ways of involving volunteers.
	Volunteer roles and activities are designed to attract people with relevant attributes, and a diversity of experience and interest.
3.3	**Volunteer roles are defined, documented and communicated.**
Evidence	The relationship between volunteer and employee roles is defined.
	Volunteer roles meet the requirements of the *Fair Work Act*, or subsequent legislation addressing volunteer work.
	Volunteer roles have written descriptions that include duties, responsibilities, and accountabilities.
	Current volunteer role descriptions are distributed and readily available to all relevant employees and volunteers of the organisation.
3.4	**Volunteer roles are reviewed with input from volunteers and employees.**
Evidence	Feedback from current and exiting volunteers is sought and used to review the relevance and appropriateness of volunteer roles and activities.
	The governing body, management and staff contribute to the development and review of volunteer roles.

STANDARD 4: RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Volunteer recruitment and selection strategies are planned, consistent and meet the needs of the organisation and volunteers.

Recruitment and selection ensures that the organisation is effective in attracting appropriate volunteers and in screening to maintain safety and security.

Meeting this standard helps the organisations ensure prospective volunteers are provided with information to make informed decisions about working with the organisation and to implement consistent procedures for assessing, selecting and placing new volunteers.

4.1	**If the organisation recruits volunteers, it uses planned approaches to attract volunteers with relevant interests, knowledge, skills or attributes.**
Evidence	Recruitment and selection of volunteers is guided by the organisation's broader plan for volunteer involvement.
	Targetted methods are used to advertise and communicate volunteer opportunities.
4.2	**Potential volunteers are provided with relevant information about the organisation, the volunteer role and the recruitment and selection process.**
Evidence	Information is readily accessible to potential volunteers about the organisation and volunteer roles.
	Details of volunteer roles, organisation expectations of the role, and the recruitment and selection process are provided in print, electronically and/or face-to-face.
	An identified person is available as a contact for potential volunteers throughout the recruitment and selection process.
	Volunteer applicants are informed of recruitment and selection outcomes and offered feedback, as relevant to the role.
4.3	**Volunteers are selected based on interest, knowledge, skills or attributes relevant to the role, and consistent with anti-discrimination legislation.**
Evidence	A documented selection process is followed to match volunteer interest, knowledge, skills or attributes with suitable roles.
	Volunteer recruitment and selection complies with anti-discrimination legislation.
4.4	**Screening processes are applied to volunteer roles that help maintain the safety and security of service users, employees, volunteers and the organisation.**
Evidence	Volunteer screening requirements are documented, applied and meet legislative requirements.
	Volunteer reference checks are undertaken as appropriate to the role.
	Guidelines are applied to determining the types of convictions or disciplinary actions that preclude people from becoming volunteers, and to informing people about how their personal history may be used for decision making.

STANDARD 5: SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

Volunteers understand their roles and gain knowledge, skills and feedback needed to safely and effectively carry out their duties.

Support and development ensures that the organisation has processes to equip volunteers to perform their roles well and in line with the organisation's needs.

Meeting this standard assists the organisation to identify and provide orientation, skill development and ongoing support needed by volunteers, and to manage situations fairly and consistently where a volunteer may not be meeting the requirements of their role.

5.1	**Volunteers are provided with orientation relevant to their role and responsibility.**
Evidence	Orientation requirements for all volunteer roles are documented and implemented.
	Volunteer orientation includes information about the organisation, their role and how it contributes to organisation's goals and objectives.
	Volunteers are made aware of their rights and responsibilities related to the role and to the organisation.
	Volunteers understand and agree to a code of conduct and/or rights and responsibilities statement.
	Relevant policies, such as reimbursement of out of pocket expenses, are explained to volunteers.
5.2	**Volunteers' knowledge and skills are reviewed to identify support and development needs.**
Evidence	Processes are in place to regularly review volunteers' knowledge and skills in relation to the roles they undertake.
	New roles and development opportunities are offered to existing volunteers where appropriate.
	Volunteers' knowledge and skills are reviewed when new roles and duties are implemented.
5.3	**Volunteers' knowledge and skill needs relevant to their roles are identified, and training and development opportunities are provided to meet these needs.**
Evidence	The organisation's workforce development planning incorporates the needs of volunteers.
	Where appropriate, volunteers receive practical instruction on how to perform their roles and responsibilities safely and effectively.
	Relevant training and development opportunities are offered to volunteers to meet their knowledge and skill needs for the roles they undertake.
5.4	**Volunteers are provided with supervision and support that enables them to undertake their roles and responsibilities.**
Evidence	Volunteers are assigned organisation supervisors and support contacts appropriate to their role.
	Volunteer supervision and review is conducted for individual and/or teams of volunteers, matched to the roles.
	Discussions are held with individual and/or teams of volunteers on achievements and areas for development.
5.5	**Changes to the involvement of a volunteer are undertaken fairly and consistently.**
Evidence	Fair and transparent procedures are in place for changing the role or nature of the involvement of a volunteer.
	Fair and transparent procedures are in place for ending the involvement of a volunteer, for whatever reason.
	Volunteer performance or misconduct issues are promptly identified, recorded and addressed in line with principles of natural justice.

STANDARD 6: WORKPLACE SAFETY AND WELLBEING

The health, safety and wellbeing of volunteers is protected in the workplace.

Workplace safety and wellbeing ensures that the organisation includes volunteers in its health and safety procedures, and recognises its duty of care to volunteers.

Meeting this standard assists the organisation to meet its obligations for the health and safety of volunteers, manage risk and provide a supportive and responsive workplace for volunteers.

6.1	**Effective working relationships with employees, and between volunteers, are facilitated by the organisation.**
Evidence	Structured processes are in place for relevant staff to communicate and/or meet with volunteers.
	Where requested, volunteers are provided with opportunities and resources to meet collectively regarding their work with the organisation.
6.2	**Processes are in place to protect the health and safety of volunteers in their capacity as volunteers.**
Evidence	Health and safety management policies and procedures include volunteers.
	Volunteers are insured for personal injury and liability.
	Volunteers have access to the same post-incident debriefing and support provided to employees.
	Expectations and limits of volunteer roles, including time commitments and any designated hours are agreed with volunteers, and individual workloads of volunteers are monitored and managed.
6.3	**Volunteers have access to complaints and grievance procedures.**
Evidence	Volunteers are given information about how to make a complaint or raise a concern within the organisation and to relevant external bodies.
	Grievances from volunteers are managed consistently, transparently, equitably and in line with principles of natural justice.

STANDARD 7: VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

Volunteer contribution, value and impact is understood, appreciated and acknowledged.

Volunteer recognition ensures that the organisation understands the contribution made by its volunteers and that it lets them know that this contribution is appreciated.

In assessing the impact of volunteer contribution, the organisation should consider the results of the work performed by volunteers, the value to the organisation, and less tangible benefits such as volunteer contributions to change and innovation.

Meeting this standard assists the organisation to develop and maintain a respectful relationship with its volunteers, ensuring that volunteers are encouraged to actively participate in the business of the organisation, provide feedback and appreciate the way their work benefits the organisation.

7.1	**The governing body and employees understand how volunteers benefit the organisation, service users and the community.**
Evidence	People at all levels of the organisation are informed of, and can articulate, the organisation's reasons and benefits for involving volunteers.
	The governing body, employees and volunteers are involved in the evaluation of volunteer involvement.
7.2	**Volunteers are informed about how their contributions benefit the organisation, service users and the community.**
Evidence	Volunteers are informed of the organisation's reasons and benefits for involving volunteers.
	Volunteers are provided with feedback on the impact and value of their contribution to the organisation and its work.
7.3	**The organisation regularly acknowledges contributions made by volunteers and the positive impact on the organisation, service users and the community.**
Evidence	The organisation plans and schedules activities to acknowledge the contribution, value and impact of volunteers at individual and group level.
	References and statements of service are provided to volunteers as appropriate.
	The governing body and management take an active role in volunteer acknowledgement.
7.4	**Volunteer acknowledgement is appropriate to the volunteer role and respectful of cultural values and perspectives.**
Evidence	Volunteers are consulted on appropriate acknowledgement.
	Volunteer acknowledgement is provided in a variety of formats appropriate to the volunteer role and volunteer.
	Activities that acknowledge volunteers align with the volunteer's culture and perspectives.

STANDARD 8: QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Effective volunteer involvement results from a system of good practice, review and continuous improvement.

Quality management and continuous improvement ensures that the organisation has a way of monitoring how well its involvement of volunteers is working, and of identifying and implementing ways of improving the outcomes for both volunteers and the organisation. This includes monitoring and reviewing:

- how well volunteer recruitment and management systems are working for volunteers and the organisation;
- the extent to which volunteer involvement is providing a positive impact on the organisation outcomes;
- how effectively volunteer time is being used.

Meeting this standard assists the organisation to follow good practice in its policies and procedures, implement processes for review and evaluation, and systematically make ongoing positive change.

8.1	**Policies and procedures are implemented to effectively guide all aspects of volunteer involvement.**
Evidence	Volunteer involvement strategies, policies and procedures are informed by current best practice and meet legislative requirements.
	The organisation's policies and procedures effectively guide volunteer involvement practice.
	All employees and volunteers are made aware of and understand policies and procedures relating to volunteer involvement.
	Volunteer involvement policies and procedures are reviewed and improved on a regular schedule.
	Processes are in place for identifying, implementing and communicating required changes to volunteer involvement policies and procedures.
8.2	**Volunteer involvement is regularly reviewed in line with the organisation's evaluation and quality management frameworks.**
Evidence	Quantitative and qualitative performance data is used to monitor, review and improve the organisation's volunteer management systems, effectiveness of volunteer contribution and impact on outcomes.
	Feedback from volunteers, employees and other stakeholders is used to inform improvements to volunteer involvement.
8.3	**The organisation's performance with volunteer involvement is monitored and reported to the governing body, employees, volunteers and stakeholders.**
Evidence	Quantitative and qualitative performance data relating to the organisation's volunteer involvement objectives are identified, collected and analysed.
	Performance data is used to regularly evaluate the organisation's volunteer involvement.
	Targeted reports on the organisation's volunteer involvement performance are communicated to the governing body, employees, volunteers and stakeholders on a regular schedule.
8.4	**Opportunities are available for volunteers to provide feedback on the organisation's volunteer involvement and relevant areas of the organisation's work.**
Evidence	Feedback and input from volunteers about their experience as volunteers is regularly sought.
	A range of methods is used to gain volunteer feedback, appropriate to volunteers and their roles.
	Volunteers are provided opportunities to contribute to the review and development of the organisation.
	Data is collected, analysed and used to evaluate volunteer role satisfaction.

Glossary

Audit: Examination of an organisation's data and processes to determine performance against criteria, specific procedures or standards. An audit may be undertaken by the organisation and/or an independent authority.

Comply/compliance: Meeting and/or fulfilling official requirements, particularly in relation to government and industry legislation, regulation and standards.

Continuous/quality improvement: Ongoing review and adaption to improve services, processes or products. Improvements may be incremental over time, or significant stand-alone advancements.

Criteria: The specific requirements that need to be met.

Data: Information collected for use in planning, decision making or evaluation.

Employees: Paid personnel (see 'Staff').

Evaluation: The formal process of assessing how successful an activity, program or plan has been.

Evidence: Documents, reports or other information that demonstrate compliance or performance.

Governance: The legal authority of a corporate governing body to make decisions and establish policies and plans.

Governing body: The group of people legally responsible for governance of the organisation (usually a Board of Directors or members of a management committee).

Members of the governing body are usually voluntary (not paid) but are not defined as volunteers for the purposes of the National Standards.

Monitor: To check, supervise, observe critically, or record the progress of an activity, action or system on a regular basis to identify change.

Objectives: Results or outcomes that an organisation wants to achieve with its planned activities. Sometimes the term 'objective' is used interchangeably with the terms 'goal' or 'aim'.

Organisation culture: The commonly held beliefs and attitudes within an organisation.

Policy: Concise formal statements which outline what the organisation adheres to and aims to achieve on particular matters.

Procedure: Details and steps of how an organisation's policy is to be applied and achieved.

Qualitative: Relating to the quality of something rather than its quantity.

Quality: The standard of a service, process or product.

Glossary

Quality management: Organisational processes for maintaining and improving desired levels of service delivery and operational standards. The intent of quality management for the organisation in working towards its strategic goals is to provide the best possible experience and outcomes for service users, staff, governing body members, and stakeholders.

Quantitative: Relating to a measure or number – how many, how long, times.

Risk: The chance of something happening that will have an adverse impact on an organisation's objectives. Risk is measured in terms of likelihood and consequences.

Risk management: Ongoing identification, analysis, assessment and control or elimination of risk to the organisation.

Staff: People employed by the organisation to undertake defined roles and responsibilities; includes both paid personnel (employees) and unpaid personnel (volunteers).

Stakeholders: Any person or organisation with an interest in the operations of a particular activity or organisation.

Standards (industry or service standards): Specific procedures or outcomes that organisations can follow to meet requirements or implement good practice within an industry area.

Strategic/Strategic directions: Planned course of action based on an analysis of the organisation's operating environment and internal resources.

Verification: Checking of evidence to ascertain compliance.

Volunteers: Unpaid personnel (see 'Staff').

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20 15

April 2015