

Thames Valley Partnership

Volunteer Policy

January 2006



Contents

	Page
1. Thames Valley Partnership – Background	3
2. Recruitment	3
3. Volunteering Roles	4
3.1 Stop It Now! Ambassador	
4. Diversity	5
5. Induction & Training	5
6. Expenses	6
7. Supervision & Support	6
8. Insurance	6
9. Equal Opportunities	6
10. Health & Safety	7
11. Grievance & Disciplinary Procedures	7
12. Confidentiality	7

Appendix 1 – Equal Opportunities Policy

1. Thames Valley Partnership

The Thames Valley Partnership 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 – through brokerage and creating opportunities for joint working, supporting innovation and 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 programmes 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. Recruitment

Volunteers will generally be recruited via local volunteering bureaux and will 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).

Upon initial application, prospective volunteers will be expected to complete and submit a straightforward application form. Potential volunteers will then be invited to attend an informal meeting to discuss the role of volunteers within the Partnership's work and the contribution they are offering. Suitable volunteers will be expected to provide two character references.

3. Volunteering Roles

Volunteers will support the aims and ethos of the Thames Valley Partnership in all their work. The wide ranging skills and experience of the volunteers will enhance the work of the Partnership.

3.1 Stop It Now! Ambassador

Stop It Now! UK & Ireland is a national campaign which aims to prevent child sexual abuse by engaging with the public and making it possible for adults to recognise the signs of actual or potential abusive behaviour in people they know or in themselves. It challenges all adults to take responsibility for preventing child sexual abuse and protecting children.

The campaign was initially established in April 2001 and has a national strategic director based in Birmingham. Local Stop It Now! projects run independently in different regions across the country. The Stop It Now! Thames Valley campaign is currently run by the Thames Valley Partnership from their offices based in Chilton, Bucks.

Nationally Stop It Now! has a Freephone Helpline which offers a confidential advice and support service to adults who suspect that someone they know presents a risk to a child and to those seeking help to stop their own abusive thoughts and behaviour.

Volunteers will be responsible for managing the Stop It Now! campaign within their own local area. Duties will include:-

- Distribution of Stop It Now! publicity materials to local agencies and venues.
- Take responsibility for the appropriate display of materials and check that publicity is maintained.
- Take advantage of local events and liaise with the local media to ensure adequate coverage of the campaign. Training and relevant material will be provided.
- Promotion of the Stop It Now! help line via available publicity materials.

- Contact with local agencies to introduce the Stop It Now! message.
- Maintenance of a list of local contacts and those interested in the campaign.

- Undertake the accredited training and complete a training portfolio.

- Offer awareness raising training sessions to local agencies e.g. Health Centres, Family Centres, School Teachers, PTA's, Governors, ACPC's, Social Care, Voluntary Sector etc

- Communicate with other volunteers to provide a co-ordinated regional approach.
- Adhere to the ethos of the Stop It Now! campaign.
- Act as ambassadors for the campaign.

- Attend progress meetings with Thames Valley Partnership as required.
- Provide administrative feedback and reports to the Stop It Now! co-ordinator (usually monthly).
- Develop and maintain a list of local services available for victims and agencies that work with offenders.

Volunteers will ideally commit between several hours and one full day per week to the campaign, although total hours can be subject to negotiation. Completion of hours can be at the volunteers discretion and is flexible, although some hours will have to be committed during the Monday – Friday working week.

Full accredited training will be provided for all suitable volunteers in all aspects of the Stop It Now! campaign. In addition there will be education on the dynamics of child sexual abuse and offender profiles, skills in delivering presentations and providing effective training sessions and full details of the role undertaken and the work anticipated. The training consists in total of three full days although it may be delivered on a sessional basis. The achievement of the accreditation will involve pre-course preparation work, homework, creation of a portfolio and delivery of an observed awareness raising session. Due to the essential training needed for this volunteering role, it is anticipated that volunteers will commit to a longer term of volunteering.

Volunteers will need to be English speakers and have reading and writing skills. No specific educational attainments are required, but good communication skills would be an advantage. Volunteers will need to commit to the ethos of Stop It Now! and have the ability to communicate this message to others. We actively encourage volunteers from all parts of the community and from diverse backgrounds to help with this campaign, as it will be most effective when it can reach all neighbourhoods and social groups.

4. 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.

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 a group induction morning, where they will have the opportunity to 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 expected to complete the training programme assigned to them. If the training has an accreditation attached, volunteers will be expected to seek that accreditation.

The Partnership will support volunteers in achieving their training requirements and mentoring opportunities with their tutor 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 be expected to 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 by the Partnership.

7. Supervision & Support

Volunteers will be supervised by the appropriate Project Manager at the Partnership to their field of work. E.g. Stop It Now! volunteers will be supervised by the Close to Home project manager. Volunteers will have regular supervision meetings, at agreed intervals with their supervisor.

In addition volunteers will be assigned an administrative contact to which they may address day to day problems. It is anticipated that they will also receive regular mailings of information that is appropriate to their work.

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

8. Insurance

Volunteers when visiting the Partnership offices at Chilton will be covered by the Partnership's general Public Liability Insurance.

9. Equal Opportunities

Volunteers will be covered by the equal opportunities policy that currently exists at the Partnership (copy attached – Appendix 1).

10. 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 should be aware of Health & Safety requirements when undertaking voluntary work for the Partnership.

11. 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 supervisor. 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, they 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.

12. Confidentiality

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

Appendix 1 – 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.

November 2005

