



Produced By  
Barking & Dagenham Volunteer Bureau

Starting Point  
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## About Us

BEST PRACTICE GUIDE FOR  
VOLUNTEERS

## ***The Volunteers Charter***

As a volunteer you can expect:

- Volunteering to be a rewarding and fulfilling experience.
- To be able to develop your area of work with the help of good support and supervision
- To know who is responsible for your support and supervision and to have regular access to this person
- To be able to play a part in the decision-making process of your organisation and to have your needs and interests represented fully
- To have a clear picture of the tasks you are being asked to perform and of the responsibilities that go with these tasks
- To be protected against any risks which may arise from your voluntary work
- Not to suffer financial loss through undertaking voluntary work
- Not to be used to replace previously paid staff
- That the relationship between volunteers and paid staff is complementary and mutually beneficial
- To have the right to join a trade union relevant to the work in which you are involved

## **Introduction**

Welcome to the Barking and Dagenham Volunteer Bureau. There are many reasons why our volunteers have joined us on their journey through life and we hope you will get as much out of this experience as the people you will be helping. As part of the BDVB extended family we are here to offer you support and guidance as well as appreciating the time and effort you put in. Thank you for choosing to volunteer with BDVB and for helping to reach out to improve the lives of people in the community.

It's important to us that anyone who gives their time to us feels valued, appreciated and proud to be a BDVB volunteer. With this in mind, this handbook has been produced to help you understand not only what is required of you but also to understand we are here to support you as you are essential to everything we do.

Joan Brandon, the Chief Executive of Barking and Dagenham Volunteer Centre is a great inspiration to everyone that is involved in volunteering. On the website there is an interview with Joan, please listen to the passion she shares and how she wants you to become part of our family of volunteers in Barking and Dagenham. <http://www.bdvb.org.uk/aboutus.html>

### **Message from Joan Brandon**

Barking and Dagenham Volunteer bureau welcomes you as a very Valuable Volunteer. We at the Bureau aim to make your Volunteering role as rewarding to you as possible. Please take time looking through our Volunteer Opportunity Directory to make sure that you choose the most suitable Volunteer Placement for you. Please ask Lynne or Kelly our Volunteer Coordinators any questions you have. If you are interested in getting Accreditation for your Volunteering please tell us. Your satisfaction as a Volunteer is of the upmost importance to us. Thank You for choosing The Bureau for your Volunteering Experience

Joan Brandon

CEO Barking and Dagenham Volunteer Bureau.

### **How to use this guide**

We have designed this guide as a useful reference guide for volunteers; if at any time you have any questions, please contact our Admin team (details below) who will be happy to help. We think it is important that you know what is expected of you but also what you can expect in return. There are health and safety guidelines in place which we ask that you adhere to and we also provided the organisations who you volunteer for with guidelines for your safety asking that where necessary they provide an induction for volunteers and where appropriate the necessary protective clothing or safety equipment. If you are unable to keep your volunteering commitment for any reason, please inform the necessary people in plenty of time so other arrangements can be made.

### **Advice and Information**

#### Location

Starting Point is the new location for the Admin team and they can be found at:-

16 Pickering Road, Barking, Essex. IG11 8PG

#### Contact information

Kelly 020 3288 2180

Lynne 020 3288 2160

020 3288 2164

020 8288 2180

Email: [bardagyb@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:bardagyb@hotmail.co.uk)

Website: [www.bdvb.org.uk/](http://www.bdvb.org.uk/)

## **Volunteer Job Description**

We request that as far as possible, all organisations should draw up a clear and written job description for each voluntary job. The job description should contain a brief outline of the aims and objectives of the organisation. The job description should also be discussed and agreed with the volunteer and any paid staff the volunteer will be working with.

The job description should:

- Define clearly the duties and responsibilities of the volunteer
- Give the volunteer status and a reference point for support and development
- Ensure that the volunteer knows to whom they are responsible to
- Clarify practical details such as insurance, expenses, hours of work, length of commitment, probationary period, holiday entitlement
- Explain opportunities for support, supervision and training
- Define grievance and disciplinary procedures of your organisation
- State the organisations Equal Opportunity Policy
- Volunteers should not be asked to undertake tasks which have not been previously agreed.

## **References and DBS checks**

If an organisation does decide to take up references or a DBS check, they must explain clearly the reasons for this and the procedures involved. They must ensure that there is a legal need for a DBS check. Please contact us if you need any advice on this.

## **Induction, Training and Development**

It is important to have in place a clear procedure for introducing new volunteers. A new volunteer should be made to feel welcomed and valued, have a clear idea of the job they will be doing, how often they will be needed and for how long and whether training is on offer. Training may be a formal course with other volunteers or 'on the job' while working alongside paid staff or volunteers.

The question of expenses will need to be clarified and procedures for claiming explained. It may be necessary to meet telephone and postage costs if a volunteer will be working from home and to supply the necessary equipment to do the role as agreed. For smaller groups that fund themselves, expenses may be difficult to offer but it is important that no volunteer should be out of pocket through doing voluntary work.

Support or more formal supervision should be available to every volunteer with opportunities to discuss problems and to review the work and make changes of necessary. Any changes should be discussed and agreed with the volunteer and paid staff working with them.

## Health and Safety

A volunteer must not be expected to work in unsafe or unhealthy conditions. They should be provided with any necessary protective clothing, such as overalls or gloves for gardening or decorating. Procedures regarding fire drill and accidents should be clearly explained. If a volunteer is visiting a client at home there can be a risk. Do make proper appointments for volunteers and follow up if necessary. This is for the protection of the client as well as the volunteer. For some voluntary work it may be appropriate to provide safe transport after dark, provide personal alarms or make training available in handling difficult situations such as verbal abuse or aggressive behaviour.

## Equal Opportunities

Everyone has the right to volunteer, Irrespective of age, race, Gender, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, ethnicity or religious belief.

It is equally important to ensure that your volunteers have a clear understanding of the meaning of equal opportunities in regard to service users, colleagues and other members of your organisation

## Volunteers on Benefits

Voluntary work can be particularly helpful for people who are in receipt of invalidity, sickness benefit or unemployed. It can provide the experience necessary to find work or be a means or gradually preparing to return to a full time paid job. Benefits should not be affected when someone undertakes voluntary work.

Job Seekers Allowance - Voluntary work will not stop you getting Job Seekers Allowance or affect the amount you get provided you are available for full time work and actively seeking work.

Income Support - Voluntary work will not usually stop you getting Income Support or affect the amount you get paid

### **provided:**

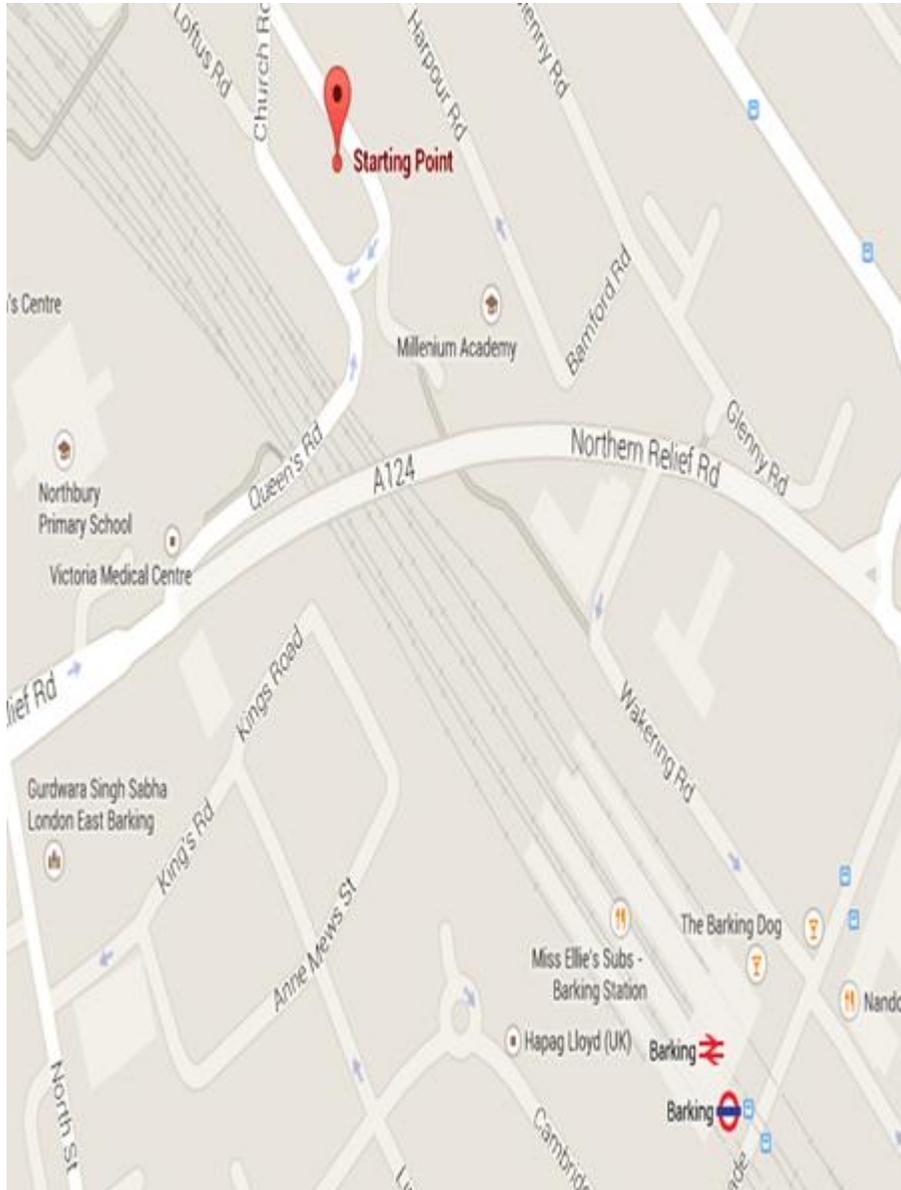
You are actively seeking work and you remain available for paid work at least 24 hours a week OR

You are not required to be available for work because for example you are pensioner or lone parent

Incapacity Benefit and Severe Disablement Allowance - These benefits cannot normally be paid to people who are working but you may be able to do some voluntary work totalling no more than an average of less than 16 hours a week.

Disability Living Allowance - This benefit is not affected by voluntary work. It is wise to advise volunteers to let their local social security office know if they intend to do voluntary work. If they experience any problems, be prepared to support and help them through this. From experience some Benefits Agency staff are not very clear about the regulations themselves or can be unwilling to help.

## How to find us



Local Public Transport Link

Barking Station

Hammersmith and city line

District line

London Overground

Buses

5,62,387,179,169,287,238,366,369

### Walking from Barking Station

Turn left out of Station, walk to Barking Dog pub, turn left into Wakering Road, walk straight down past Job Centre, and foyer building site. Walk under the bridge, past the green tower block and Starting Point is directly opposite you on the corner of the bend.

### Driving

From Longbridge Road, take the 3rd exit at the roundabout into Fanshawe Avenue. You then take the 2nd left into Tanner Street, from there you need the 3rd left, this will bring you to Church Road, if you follow that road round, and Starting Point is on your right hand side

### Opening Times

The office is manned by volunteers and staff

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 9:30am - 4pm

All volunteering opportunities can be found on the website

<http://bdvb.org.uk>

Or by contacting the admin team at the starting point office, details can be found under advice and information.