



Planning for Volunteers

Acknowledgements

North West Network (NWN) Volunteer Management Team would like to give a big thank you to the following members of the Consultation Group:

Siddika Ahmed	1North West
Karen Ashley	Routes to Employment
Barbara Bleeker	Trafford Council for Voluntary Service
Cathy Jackson	North West Volunteering Forum
Shona Murphy	Chorlton Workshop
Dorothy Shears	Hyndburn & Ribble Valley CVS
Sue Vickers	Volunteer Centre Tameside
Elaine Wood	Calico Housing, Burnley

The Group's guidance and contribution to the development of SAM Volunteer Management has been outstanding.

We would also like to thank our colleagues at NWN, especially Jane Stanistreet and Denise Marriott for their assistance in the administration and printing of SAM Volunteer Management.

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Foreword

Who are North West Network (NWN)?

NWN is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. It is a regional infrastructure voluntary sector network with a ten year established track record in delivering programmes of support to Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations within the North West region.

These include ESF and ERDF Technical Assistance and Capacity Building for volunteer involving organisations. NWN is also the accountable body for 1 North West (Regional Black & Ethnic Minority Voluntary and Community Sector Network), secretariat for North West Volunteering Forum and provides representation for the voluntary sector on European funding issues.

Background to SAM Volunteer Management

The project has evolved from NWN's role as a Millennium Volunteers (MV) Development Agent which supported organisations (Host Projects) through the MV Process and the MV Quality Framework.

NWN introduced a process of intense practical support through self assessment, planning, implementation and review, to ensure Host Projects had a sustainable volunteering programme after MV had finished.

NWN found that through the process, Host Projects had a greater awareness of the importance of future planning and were able to self assess their own performance, enabling them to make changes in order to meet their own objectives and become sustainable.

NWN improved it's own service through knowledge gained and realised that this process could be adapted for generic application to assist the voluntary and community sector in the North West to develop, enabling them to achieve sustainability and improve the quality of service they offer to the community in which they work; this includes volunteers, service users and networks.

How SAM Volunteer Management was Developed?

In 2004, NWN successfully applied for funding from Government Office for the North West, Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Regional Early Spend Fund to further develop its generic capacity building programme by

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producing a self assessment manual (SAM Volunteer Management) for volunteer involving organisations.

To ensure organisations working with volunteers could benefit from SAM Volunteer Management, NWN recruited a Consultation Group made up of regional and local infrastructure and delivery organisations, as shown in the acknowledgements, to steer the design and implementation of the project.

The National Compact

*The Compact (published November 1998) is an agreement between the Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector to improve relations for mutual advantage. There are a series of five codes designed to make the Compact operational:

- Compact code of good practice on Community Groups
- Funding: a code of good practice
- Consultation and Policy Appraisal: a code of good practice
- Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community Organisations: a code of good practice
- Volunteering: a code of good practice

(*information taken from The Compact website: www.thecompact.org.uk)

SAM Volunteer Management has where possible, incorporated these codes, especially the Volunteering Code of Good Practice to ensure that volunteer involving organisations will be in a better position to work with public agencies in the future.

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Introduction

Volunteer Involving Organisations do excellent work, but find it hard to take time out to look at the work they do, how well they do it and areas in which they can improve. This can be time consuming, difficult to start and difficult to maintain.

SAM Volunteer Management is designed by voluntary organisations for voluntary organisations to help you overcome the barriers to development.

SAM Volunteer Management will assist your organisation to develop by helping you look at the way you do things, understand why you do them and why you do them in a particular way.

SAM Volunteer Management is designed to be thought provoking. There are no wrong answers and you are not being judged.

What is SAM Volunteer Management?

SAM Volunteer Management is **not**:

- A self assessment built around quality standards
- Going to give you a quality mark
- An encyclopaedia of volunteering
- Designed by academics outside of the voluntary sector
- Designed to be used in isolation
- Something you will want to leave on the shelf

SAM Volunteer Management **is**:

- Truly a self assessment
- A friendly manual which will help your organisation develop
- Jargon free
- Non judgemental
- Something that allows you to look at the basics to re-evaluate what you do, how you do it and why you do it
- Designed to be thought provoking
- About allowing you time to think
- Designed by voluntary organisations for voluntary organisations
- Designed to be used with support
- Something you will use again and again

Why would you use SAM Volunteer Management?

- If you want to know where you are today
- If you want to develop volunteering within your organisation

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- As the first steps towards quality standards
- If you are an individual working with volunteers
- If you want to look at what you do, why you do it and how you can improve

Your copy of SAM Volunteer Management is confidential – you decide who you show it to and what you do with your findings. North West Network will support you to complete SAM Volunteer Management and help you act on your findings.

How to use SAM Volunteer Management?

SAM Volunteer Management is divided into four small manuals called sections :

- Planning for Volunteers
- Recruitment and Selection
- Supporting Volunteers
- Monitoring and Evaluation

You can start and complete a section, in any order, without the daunting task of working through a large manual.

North West Network will support you to complete SAM Volunteer Management and help you act on your findings.

Each section of SAM Volunteer Management is a questionnaire that will help you to explore, what you do now, identify what you do well and what else could you do to improve your volunteer project.

In order for you to benefit from SAM Volunteer Management it is important that you are honest. SAM Volunteer Management is designed to ask questions about your volunteering project in a non-threatening, friendly manner.

Stages of SAM

Each section of SAM Volunteer Management is a questionnaire that is split into five parts:

Part A - Background

Part A helps you to look at the unique features of your organisation that may influence your volunteering project.

Part B – Individual's Feelings

SAM Volunteer Management recognises that individuals take forward the development of an organisation. Part B explores your feelings around certain areas of volunteer management.

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Part C – Scenarios

Part C gets you to think about what you would do or what may happen within your organisation by completing a set of working examples (scenarios). This is to make you think about the processes and procedures within your volunteering project.

Part D – Your Findings

Part D allows you to record your initial thoughts after completing Parts A-C of SAM Volunteer Management, this includes what areas you do well and what areas you would like to improve on.

Part E – Legislation

Part E is repeated in all sections of SAM Volunteer Management. Completing Part E will not ensure that your organisation is complying with current legislation. It is there to give you a taster of the type of legislation you should be aware of.

Parts F & G – Areas You Think You Do Well and Areas You Would Like To Improve On

Parts F and G will help you to explore in more depth why the areas in which you do well are successful and why the areas you have identified as needing improvement are less successful. Parts F and G are the last stages of self assessment and provide a basis for you to move forward, using what you do well, to plan and implement improvements to your volunteer project with support from NWN.

Planning for Volunteers

Every Volunteer Involving Organisation plans before work is carried out. Some start at the beginning, some in the middle and some at the end. Some carry this out verbally some have a detailed work plan and many will not realise they are planning.

Planning is the most important task organisations do, but it is the hardest thing to make time for when you have so much to do today.

This section will look at the way you plan your work. It will allow you to go back to basics to understand what your organisation does and why, why you have volunteers, how your organisation helps you plan, how you feel about planning, how and why you plan.

The questions are designed to be thought provoking which will help you identify what you do well and areas in which you feel you could improve.

When completing this section it is important to be honest. Remember, only you have the answers, there are no wrong answers.

North West Network (NWN) is committed to making information and services accessible to everyone. NWN will strive to ensure the content of SAM (Self Assessment Manual) Volunteer Management and the support you receive is appropriate to your individual needs. NWN welcomes any ideas or comments that may help to improve SAM Volunteer Management.

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SAM Volunteer Management was
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