Your volunteer policy will need to be based on a clear set of values around the involvement of volunteers. It is a good idea to begin the policy development process by agreeing on a value statement. The value statement may be based on your organization's historical perspective, its wider values and ethos, and/or your reasons for involving volunteers. While developing your policy framework, you should consider the ideas below.

- **Definition of volunteering**

- **Insurance for volunteers (health, accident)**

- **Reimbursement for volunteers' expenditures**

- **Contribution of volunteers (how much time and for how long)**

- **Anti-discriminatory policies (to and in between volunteers with regards to gender, age, cultural background, etc.)**

- **Equal opportunities (for each volunteer)**

- **Right to denial (when can a volunteer reject a job?)**

- **Participation of volunteers in decision-making processes (does a volunteer have the right to raise an issue and speak/advocate for it?)**

- **Suspension of volunteers (is it possible? when, why, and how?)**

- **Who will represent the organization?**

- **Conflicts of interest in the organization.**

- **Training of the volunteers (including professional development)**

- **Providing support and supervision to volunteers**

- **Feedback system for volunteers (is there a structure for this? are outcomes shared?)**

- **Evaluation of volunteers**

1. The policy should value the distinctive contribution that volunteers can make.
"Anytown Community Project values the involvement of volunteers in our work because they help reflect the interests, needs, and resources of the community we aim to serve and bring a unique perspective to all our work."

2. The policy should recognize the status of volunteers as a legitimate and complementary resource to that of paid staff.
"Anytown Community Project recognizes volunteers as a core part of our team, with a distinctive but complementary role alongside paid staff."

3. The policy should acknowledge that volunteering is a beneficial experience for both volunteers and the organization as a beneficiary.
"Insofar as Anytown Community Project benefits from the skills, experience, and enthusiasm of volunteers, we believe that volunteers should be able to gain personal benefits from the experience too. We are committed to managing volunteers in a way that ensures that the needs of both parties are met."

4. You should also include a statement in this section on the organization's beliefs about quality, equal opportunities, diversity, etc. and how they apply to volunteer involvement.
"Anytown Community Project strives to create a diverse and inclusive organization within a diverse and inclusive community. Therefore, we are committed to ensuring equality of access to high quality volunteer opportunities and equality of treatment for our volunteers in all our policies and practices."

Preparation and planning

The next areas that the policy should address are those actions and systems that need to be put in place before the organization is ready to actually involve volunteers. Even if volunteers are already active in your organization, it is important to discuss the reasons for involving volunteers with staff, existing volunteers, beneficiaries, trade unions, etc. and agree on the nature and purpose of the volunteer involvement.

5. The policy should identify the ways in which the work of the organization can be extended by the involvement of volunteers and ensure that these opportunities complement rather than substitute the work of paid staff (if applicable).
"Anytown Community Project identifies roles for volunteers which extend the work of the organization. Volunteers are involved at every level of the organization in roles which complement, but never substitute, the work of paid staff."

6. Furthermore, the policy should make clear the position of volunteers in any staff dispute or action.
"Volunteers will not be used in times of industrial action to do the work of paid staff. They may continue with their regular tasks, but will not be asked to undertake additional duties."

7. The policy should specify how volunteer roles would be defined, including the purpose of each role and the tasks involved.
"All volunteers are provided with a written role description, outlining the purpose, tasks, and main expectations of their role. This role is reviewed at least once a year with the volunteer's supervisor."

8. The policy should clarify what protection volunteers can expect from the organization in terms of insurance.
"Volunteers with Anytown Community Project are fully protected by the organization's public liability and personal accident insurance. However, drivers using their cars in connection with their voluntary work must inform their own insurance company to ensure adequate and continued cover."

9. The policy should state the organization's position on the reimbursement of expenses to volunteers including what expenses can be claimed, and how to make a claim.
"Anytown Community Project reimburses volunteers' out of pocket expenses for travel and dependent care when claims are submitted on a standard Expenses Claim Form and accompanied by proof of expenditure."

10. It is essential that the policy commits the organization to providing volunteers with adequate resources to do the work for which they were recruited.
"Anytown Community Project endeavors to provide adequate and appropriate facilities, equipment, and resources to enable volunteers to fulfill their roles."

10. The policy should make clear where the responsibility for day-to-day management of volunteers lies, specifying a member, or members, of staff as appropriate and making a clear commitment to providing such staff with appropriate training.
"The Project Manager is responsible for the overall management of volunteer involvement, including overseeing the implementation of this policy and dealing with any complaint or grievance relating to volunteers. The volunteer's designated supervisor provides support and supervision, identifies training requirements, countersigns expenses claims, etc. All staff required to undertake such duties are provided with training in the management, supervision, support, and training of volunteers."

Recruitment and selection

While attracting and selecting volunteers is a different process from staff recruitment, you should still aim to provide a fair, effective, and transparent process that is truly inclusive. Although you may wish to keep the procedures fairly informal in practice, it is still vital to spell out the minimum requirements clearly in your policy to help ensure that they are consistently implemented.

12. The policy needs to clarify the organization's approach to volunteer recruitment, stating how volunteer opportunities will be made accessible to all sections of the community.
"Anytown Community Project is committed to serving and representing all the people of Anytown and wishes to see all sections of the community represented among our volunteers. Volunteer opportunities are widely promoted throughout Anytown, and we will endeavor to make recruitment and selection materials available in a format accessible to any individual or group, upon request. Furthermore, Anytown Community Project regularly reviews the make-up of the volunteer team to identify and target any under-represented group(s)."

13. The organization should have an agreed upon recruitment and selection procedure for all volunteers that is appropriate to the role and that reflects best practice in relation to equal opportunities.
"Anytown Community Project implements a fair, effective and open system in the recruitment and selection of volunteers and treats all information collected in this process confidentially.
All potential volunteers will go through a recruitment and selection process that is appropriate to the role offered. Anytown Community Project uses registration forms, references, and informal chats/interviews. Additional measures may be implemented depending on the nature of the volunteer role, and police records checks are conducted where appropriate.
The process is conducted by appropriately briefed/trained staff and aims to allow both parties to give and receive sufficient information to assess whether the volunteer opportunities available match the potential volunteer's skills, qualities, and interests.
If unsuccessful, individuals will be offered an opportunity to discuss the outcome of the recruitment process and identify possible alternatives within or outside of Anytown Community Project."

Management of volunteers

This section will specify how you intend to manage volunteers once they have become involved in your organization. Goodwill alone is not enough to guarantee success and a proactive approach is essential both to achieve the organization's objectives and to ensure that volunteers' interests and motivations are met. Remember the voluntary nature of the relationship between volunteers and the organization as you develop this section and try to ensure that the policy holds benefits for both parties.

14. The policy should outline how the expectations of both parties are to be agreed and communicated.
"Volunteers are provided with a written letter of welcome, which outlines the expectations and responsibilities of both the volunteer and Anytown Community Project. This agreement may be reviewed at any time with the consent of the volunteer and his/her supervisor, including during the initial review meeting at the end of the settling in/taster period (see point 16)."

15. Volunteers will need to be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken, and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform them with confidence. The policy should commit the organization to an appropriate induction procedure.
"All volunteers are provided with an induction within six weeks of commencing their voluntary work. The induction: provides background information on Anytown Community Project; explains its structures and procedures; describes the volunteer role and the work team and outlines how s/he will be supported, including practical information e.g. on expenses.
During the induction period volunteers will be provided with written information on relevant legislation, organizational policies, and codes of practice. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss any of the issues with the Project Manager and/or supervisor."

16. A settling in period is helpful in providing an opportunity to assess the suitability/progress of the placement, and allowing any problems to be resolved at an early stage. A policy statement should help ensure consistent implementation of the procedure and reassure new volunteers as to the reasons for such a measure.
"All volunteer placements are subject to a settling in period, the length of which depends on the nature and hours of the voluntary work. During this period volunteers are given additional support and a review meeting between the volunteer and his/her supervisor is held at the end of the settling in period to ensure that all parties are satisfied with the arrangement."

17. Access to regular support and supervision is key to maintaining effective and motivated volunteers. While the level of support and supervision needed will vary for different volunteers and different volunteer roles, the policy should commit the organization to providing each volunteer with a named individual to provide this.
"All volunteers are allocated a named member of staff as their supervisor (although the Project Manager can also be contacted in case of an emergency or if the designated supervisor is unavailable). This individual can provide day-to-day help and guidance on any issue related to the voluntary work and is responsible for providing regular support to, and supervision of, the volunteer. The frequency, duration and format of this support and supervision is agreed upon between the volunteer and his/her supervisor at the end of the settling in/taster period."

18. Training will enable volunteers to develop their capabilities and personal competence. The organization must decide on what basis training will be offered, and to whom. A clear policy statement will ensure fair and equal access to these opportunities.
"Anytown Community Project is committed to improving the effectiveness of volunteers. Volunteers may choose to attend any in-house training course that they feel is relevant to their voluntary work, subject to the approval of their supervisors and the availability of places.
Volunteers may also apply to the Project Manager for financial and practical support to attend external courses, where they can be shown to have a clear relevance to the voluntary work. Volunteers attending approved training courses, internal or external, may do so within their normal hours of voluntary work and may reclaim out-of-pocket expenses."

19. The organization must make arrangements to deal with any difficulties with the volunteer or their work in a fair, open, and effective way. Equally, volunteers should have access to an equivalent process to address grievances about any aspect of their work or how it is managed. The aim of such a policy is to protect all concerned while maintaining good relationships and effective volunteers where possible.
.   "Anytown Community Project aims to reflect the voluntary nature of our relationship with volunteers in all our policies and procedures for managing their involvement. Therefore, the volunteer's designated supervisor deals with minor complaints or grievances about or by volunteers or their work through the usual support and supervision procedures, in the first instance.
However, we recognize our duty to protect the wellbeing and interests of all our stakeholders and therefore operate a formal complaints procedure in the case of more serious complaints. In the case of particularly serious offenses, as specified in the Code of Practice, this process may be bypassed and/or the subject of the complaint asked to leave. Where a criminal offense is suspected, the matter will be handed over to the police."

Planning volunteer involvement

20. Volunteers should, as far as possible, be fully integrated into the organization. You may want to include a commitment in your policy to specific communication systems to keep volunteers informed, special measures to recognize and publicize their contributions, opportunities to take part in decision-making, etc.

"Anytown Community Project recognizes the core role that volunteers fulfill at every level of the organization. It endeavors to communicate with volunteers in appropriate ways, including bulletin boards, e-mail, and the monthly `Volunteer Update' news sheet.
It also recognizes the importance of seeking volunteers' ideas and opinions at regular intervals and conducts an annual volunteer survey and provides suggestion boxes at each site. Feedback from volunteers is always welcome and any volunteer may make representations to the monthly meeting of the Management Committee."

21. Records should be kept of the work done by volunteers, to enable their involvement to be monitored effectively.

"In order to effectively monitor the work that volunteers do and how they are managed, a personal file is maintained for all volunteers, which includes: contact details and other relevant personal information; details of the application and selection process; agreements made; hours worked; records of support and supervision activities; trainings undertaken and any complaints or grievances made or received. Some of this information and other relevant information may also be recorded in computerized records. All such information is treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998) and volunteers are entitled to inspect all such information pertaining to their own involvement."

SOURCE:
http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/