

2.3 National strategy on youth volunteering

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Existence of a National Strategy

There is no national strategy for youth volunteering in England. Responsibility for promoting social action - in support of a more cohesive, more responsible and more engaged society - is part of the portfolio of the Under Secretary of State for Civil Society, a Minister in the [Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport](#) (DCMS).

Central government is therefore responsible for and funds a number of programmes which promote and provide opportunities for young people to volunteer. However, these programmes do not represent a national strategy for youth volunteering. They do not meet the EU Youth Wiki's definition of an overarching public document: an action plan, or a set of official documents, integrating the major directions to be followed in the organisation of and policy making youth volunteering at national level.

Note, that in November 2016, the launch of a new Government youth policy statement was announced, which was later dismissed in favour of a wider [Civil Society Strategy](#) published in August 2018. Moreover, an independent review (see '[Steve Holliday Report](#)') into Full-Time Social Action (16h/week for more than 6 months) of young people has been undertaken For more information about both of these initiatives, please see

the article entitled '[Current debates and reforms](#)'.

Other official documents containing guidelines on youth volunteering

Compliance with charity legislation

Most of the organisations providing volunteering opportunities for young people are charities. Charities must comply with duties placed on them by legislation. The key piece of legislation is the [Charities Act 2011](#), which came into effect in 2012. It sets out how all charities in England and Wales are registered and regulated, and replaces most of the [Charities Act 1992](#), [Charities Act 1993](#) and [Charities Act 2006](#). In particular, they must provide value for money and have a charitable purpose which must be for the public benefit. See the section on [financial accountability](#) in the article on funding for further details.

Safeguarding

The organisations providing opportunities for youth volunteering must include safeguarding and safer recruitment in their governance and operational arrangements. This includes checking the suitability of those working with children and vulnerable adults. The [Disclosure and Barring Service](#) (DBS) helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevents unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children, through its criminal record checking and barring functions.

It is the trustees of an organisation who have primary responsibility for safeguarding within their charity. This duty is set out in statutory guidance which was updated in 2018, entitled [Working Together to safeguard children: a guide to interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children](#). The Children England guidance, [Everyone's business: Safeguarding for trustees](#), sets out responsibilities for safeguarding and protecting children and was updated in 2019.

Health and safety of volunteers

Organisations / employers using volunteers have a duty of care towards them. Assessing and managing risk is a key part of this duty. Particular duties are imposed by the [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#). The WCVA provides a [factsheet](#) on keeping volunteers safe.

Equality legislation

All public bodies are bound by equality legislation which prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, disability; sex; gender reassignment; race; religious belief; political opinion; or sexual orientation.

Volunteers are not specifically mentioned in the [Equality Act 2010](#); however, the Equality and Human Rights Commission published [advice](#) in 2016 on the legal status of volunteers.

Scope and contents

Not applicable

Responsible authority

Not applicable

Revisions/ Updates

Not applicable