

The County Durham Kite Mark

Introduction

The County Durham Kite Mark is designed to show that a volunteer involving organisation meets standards to overcome barriers to volunteering, as set out by Durham Community Action whose commitment to volunteering is actively underpinned by the County Durham Compact. Volunteering England defines volunteering as: 'an activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to close relatives. Central to this definition is the fact that volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual. This can include formal activity undertaken through public, private and voluntary organisations as well as informal community participation.'

It is important to remember that whilst a volunteer gives their time freely, volunteering is not a cost free activity.

How is the Kite Mark Promoting Volunteering in Durham?

The Kite Mark is a certificate awarded to organisations that can show how their volunteering programmes endeavour to overcome barriers to volunteering; it recognises the value of recruiting and retaining volunteers. The Kite Mark is valid for two years, after which an organisation needs to re-apply.

Why should my organisation apply?

The Kite Mark is recognised by the County Durham Partnership and Durham Community Action and shows that an organisation manages a volunteering programme where volunteers receive a high quality, positive volunteering experience. Durham Community Action will be one of the organisations promoting this Kite Mark, which will help volunteers to make informed choices about which organisation to apply to.

The application process

To apply for the certificate please complete the application form on page 3 and request to be visited by an assessor who will be approved by Durham Community Action. At the assessment visit you will be asked to provide some documented proof and/or evidence, some examples of which are on the following 'checklist'. Any assessment of an organisation will necessarily reflect the different circumstances in which it operates including funding, annual turnover, staffing levels and numbers of volunteers.

Who will be the awarding body?

Durham Community Action will be the awarding body following the recommendation of the assessor.

CHECKLIST – below are examples of suggested evidence; organisations may have some or all of the evidence listed or they may have other evidence that has been developed specifically for their organisation which is equally valid.

I. Volunteering is open to everyone & recruitment of volunteers is fair and accessible

- Organisation's equal opportunity policy
- Copy of volunteering role descriptions for each role
- Volunteer person specification
- Application form
- Short description of recruitment process
- Induction outline

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- Accessible information
- Methods of promoting volunteering opportunities
- Accessible volunteering opportunities

2. Organisations aim to deliver a positive volunteering experience

- Written / verbal description of how your organisation aims to give volunteers a quality volunteering experience and how you show they are valued within the organisation
- Recognition
- Outline of training procedures and opportunities within the organisation and how this relates to the volunteering roles
- Share good practice
- Supporting the utilisation of a Volunteer Passport (as evidence to show that volunteering work has been undertaken)

3. Organisations have appropriate policies and apply good practice when managing volunteers

- Organisation's health and safety policy
- Organisation's confidentiality policy
- Volunteer policy
- Volunteer expenses policy

4. Volunteers are supported and supervised within their role

- Short description of organisational structure showing how volunteers are supported
- Supervision records
- Mentoring
- Volunteer exit interviews
- Opportunities for volunteers to influence planning and decision making

5. Insurance, health and safety, safeguarding and other legal requirements are met

Copies of the relevant policies needed for the types of volunteering roles within the organisation

- Insurance
- HMRC guidance
- DBS checks
- Safeguarding

If you have any queries or require further information, please telephone Abby on 01388 742043.

If you wish to apply please download the separate Application Form and return it as an e-mail attachment to Abby.Thompson@durhamrcc.org.uk, or by post to Abby Thompson, Durham Community Action, 8 St. Stephen's Court, Low Willington, Crook, County Durham DL15 0BF.