

<u>Issue #</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Approved by</u>
1	April 07	First Issue	J.Buck	J.Buck
2	May 09	Second Issue	A.Bradbury	J.Buck
3	June 10	Third Issue	H.Cooper	S.Irving

Volunteer Policy

This policy aims to clarify the role that volunteers play in Action for Sustainable Living, and outlines the mutual guidelines and commitments Action for Sustainable Living has with volunteers.

This policy will be reviewed annually taking in to consideration changes in company policy and volunteer feedback.

Action for Sustainable Living

Action for Sustainable Living supports individuals and their communities to make a difference. We believe that small steps lead to big changes.

Since 2003, Action for Sustainable Living has successfully connected people, shared resources and supported communities to live more sustainably. Our unique, tailored and holistic approach is a highly effective way for communities to respond to the challenge of climate change.

Two themes run through, and inform Action for Sustainable Living's activities:

1. The need for us all to make lifestyle changes if we are to create a sustainable future (sustainability is here defined as *"the need to ensure a better quality of life for all, now, and into the future, in a just and equitable manner, while living within the limits of supporting ecosystems"*)
2. The importance of strengthening local links so that issues of sustainability can be tackled from a local perspective. It is essentially a Human Scale approach which can be defined as "living as if people and their communities really mattered, which implies a shift towards more local decision-making, and local work, food, energy and exchange: it means people taking responsibility for themselves, those around them and the environment they share in common".

Why we involve volunteers

Volunteers' time, skills and experience all extend Action for Sustainable Living's capacity to support local people to live more sustainable lives. Volunteers are an integral part of the organisation and its future. Action for Sustainable Living could not exist and fulfil its purposes without its volunteers. Staff members and volunteers work together to:

- Directly improve sustainability locally.
- Extend Action for Sustainable Living's capacity to support local people to live more sustainable lives.

Principles informing our involvement of volunteers

- The relationship between a volunteer and Action for Sustainable Living is mutually beneficial.
- We take a flexible approach, so that volunteers can donate the amount of time that suits them, and make best use of their skills and experience. We appreciate the time volunteers give and the skills that they bring.
- We encourage volunteers to participate in planning and managing Action for Sustainable Living's support work. Local sustainability initiatives are owned and, wherever possible, led by local people.
- The tasks that volunteers do either match their current skills and experience, or are undertaken as part of a planned programme of development, with appropriate support from Action for Sustainable Living.
- Volunteers are clear about what is expected from them in each task that they undertake.

Recruiting Volunteers

- Action for Sustainable Living aims to advertise as widely as possible for volunteers in order to "reach" all sections of the community (see Equal Opportunities Policy). We use a variety of communication channels e.g. events, media, word of mouth, website and partnerships with existing groups and organisations to recruit volunteers.
- Each potential volunteer will be asked to fill out a registration form and will be invited to meet with an Action for Sustainable Living representative. She/he will be provided with an induction to the organisation and discuss any needs the volunteer may have and help decide what area of volunteering they would like to do.
- A criminal records check with the Criminal Records Bureau will be made (*if relevant*) for every volunteer who works one-to-one with anyone under the age of 18. However, volunteers are not on the whole encouraged to put themselves in these positions (please see Child, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy)
- If Action for Sustainable Living is not the right organisation for an individual we will aim to signpost them on to another organisation who may welcome their support.

Commitment

When a volunteer takes on a new role within AfSL, the volunteer will write a Volunteer Agreement with either their line manager or the Volunteer Coordinator.

The Volunteer Agreement outlines:

- The volunteer's role
- The objectives of the role (these will be objectives for Action for Sustainable Living and the volunteer to fulfil e.g. gain work experience, or build links with local press);
- A three month action plan
- The volunteer's commitment

The volunteer and Action for Sustainable Living representative then sign the agreement. It is important that staff members and volunteers are aware of the volunteer's commitment from the start as volunteers do act as representatives for Action for Sustainable Living.

Equal opportunities and diversity

- Action for Sustainable Living is committed to the provision of equal access to its services and equal treatment of all people. We are committed to developing and maintaining an organisation in which differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are fostered and valued.
- All employees and volunteers are responsible for ensuring that we provide a work environment free of harassment and discrimination and where everyone is treated with respect, fairness and equity.
- Volunteers will be expected to have an understanding and commitment to equal opportunities and diversity (See Equal Opportunities Policy).

Induction and training

- All new volunteers will have an induction session, which provides a basic understanding of Action for Sustainable Living and its future. All volunteers will be made aware of relevant policies and procedures at this session. Copies will be made available.
- We actively seek to obtain funds for additional and accredited training for a volunteer, which is relevant to their role.

Expenses

- We pay volunteers reasonable expenses (e.g. travel, telephone, materials used, subsistence) on receipt of proof of expenditure.
- We encourage volunteers to walk, cycle or use public transport wherever possible, and to share if travelling by car.
- We do not refund fuel expenses, unless:
 - The volunteer travelling by vehicle is disabled.
 - The vehicle is required to heavy or bulky equipment.
 - The vehicle is shared by 2 or more volunteers.

- We do not generally pay child care costs, but may do so for attendance at particular events or for particular pieces of work; volunteers wishing to claim expenses for child care should raise this expense with the Volunteer Coordinator.

Supervision and support

- Action for Sustainable Living will provide clear role descriptions for volunteers.
- Volunteers can expect an initial induction and those working on long term projects will have regular supervision sessions throughout their volunteering.
- Volunteers will be assigned a named line manager or mentor, with whom they can discuss potential problems, personal development and any specific support requirements (this will depend on the projects which volunteers are involved in).
- The Volunteer Coordinator will be available, should the volunteer feel uncomfortable speaking to their project line-manager or mentor.
- We actively seek to obtain funds for volunteer socials and group events for informal networking.

Insurance

- Volunteers are fully covered by Action for Sustainable Living's insurance policy whilst they are involved in Action for Sustainable Living activities as long as these comply with Health and Safety considerations – see below.

Protecting volunteers and vulnerable clients [refer to our policy].

- Action for Sustainable Living has a Children, Young people and Vulnerable Adults Policy.
- Each volunteer who is likely to work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults must be aware of Action for Sustainable Living's policies and will be asked to sign a Code of Behaviour for Involvement in Planned Activities form. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in their withdrawal from any programmes they may be involved with.
- Any volunteers working one to one with a young person or vulnerable adult will be required to have an up to date CRB Police Check.

Health and safety

- Each volunteer will be made aware of our Health and Safety Policy as part of their Induction.
- Each volunteer will be expected to adhere to our Health and Safety Policy.

Problem solving

- Problems are best solved at an early stage. Action for Sustainable Living will try to solve any problems at the earliest possible stage.
- Please refer to Action for Sustainable Living's Problem Solving Policy for our problem solving procedure and commitment.

Confidentiality

- Any private or personal information that Action for Sustainable Living holds on volunteers will be treated with confidentiality and respect and in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- All staff members, directors and volunteers are required to act in accordance with our Confidentiality Policy.

Recognition

- All volunteers will be given public acknowledgement of their work [with permission] on our website and on any pieces of work they may have contributed to Action for Sustainable Living.
- Anyone volunteering for ½ a day or more each year receives free membership of Action for Sustainable Living, including our newsletter and opportunities to influence how Action for Sustainable Living develops.
- Provided that volunteers fulfil their role a written reference from their supervisor will be provided (upon request).

Developing Action for Sustainable Living

- The role played by volunteers is hugely valuable to Action for Sustainable Living and we welcome their feedback.
- We actively seek volunteer evaluation of events and training and will consult them regularly over Action for Sustainable Living's development.
- We review our policies annually and will involve volunteers in this policy.

Declaration

I have read, understand and acknowledge receipt of the Volunteer Policy. I will act in compliance with the guidelines set out in the policy.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Printed name: _____

If you have any further questions or comments regarding this Volunteer Policy, please contact the Office Manager or your Volunteer Co-ordinator, 01612270377, office@afsl.org.uk