

## Legal Issues affecting Volunteering

The law doesn't have a say about volunteering. This is because volunteering is a concept that has never been properly legally defined. The only rights volunteers have are the rights they have as ordinary citizens. These include data protection, health and safety, the duty of care.

### The duty of care

Organisations/groups have a duty of care to avoid carelessly causing harm to their volunteers. This means that organisations/groups should be able to show that they have taken steps to lower the risk of harm coming to their volunteers (organisational policies and procedures will apply here).

Risk assessments and taking reasonable steps to lessen possibility of harm should be in place and extra supervision or training should be applied when needed.

### Volunteer Role Risk Assessments

The purpose of the risk assessments is to:

- ◆ Identify the level of risk to a volunteer;
- ◆ Make recommendations that should be made to lessen the risk;
- ◆ Identify the level of risk to the organisation;
- ◆ Identify the member of staff responsible for overseeing the risk to the volunteer.

