
CHECKER'S HANDBOOK

YOUR DETAILS

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TEL NO:

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the CommunityCheck Project. This handbook is your guide and reference to help you gain as much out of your volunteering as possible.



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Welcome

You Are A Checker!

The CommunityCheck Project was developed by StudentForce for Sustainability from a similar scheme run by Cheshire County Council and was then adapted for Northamptonshire with support from Northamptonshire County Council, Corby Waste Not, along with others. It was extended to include Leicester in 2004. From 2005, the CommunityCheck project became part of DEFRA's Environmental Action Fund which is aimed at bringing about behavioural change for sustainable development.

The project came to a close in 2008 and as part of the exit strategy a toolkit was developed by StudentForce to aid organisations such as ours in carrying out our own CommunityCheck projects.

The project was established to increase awareness within our community of environmental issues.

As a Checker you will help to encourage people to adopt practical methods that will benefit our environment and therefore our communities. Also, you will gain benefits yourself! There are many benefits to be gained by volunteering.

The issues that the project engages include waste production, water use and energy efficiency. By increasing people's awareness of how our everyday practices affect the environment and by introducing alternative (more sustainable) practices, we can contribute to producing overall benefits to our environment.

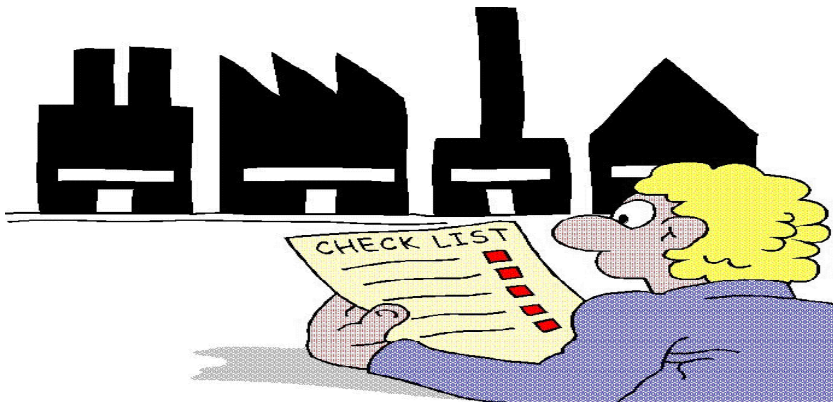


Why We Need You!

CommunityCheck visit organisations to conduct Checks. Each visit requires a CommunityCheck team, which is made up of a Coordinator or experienced checker and up to 2 volunteer Checkers. With the ever increasing numbers of CommunityChecks required, there is a great need to develop the number of Checker volunteers available to ensure our service is effective and efficient.

The aim of CommunityCheck is to build environmental awareness and save money in publicly accessible places using skilled volunteer teams. Based on a year pilot in Corby, the scheme has now been launched across Northamptonshire and Leicester.

WELCOME TO COMMUNITYCHECKS!



The benefits of volunteering

Just by being a volunteer you will enjoy many benefits. Things you can expect to enjoy are:

- Enjoy meeting new people
- Enjoy new experiences
- Enjoy the feeling of doing something worthwhile
- Enjoy having a good time!

As a Checker you will gain certain skills and qualities

- Learn about environmental issues and receive training
- Gain a letter of reference and certificates
- Gain work experience
- Gain transferable skills e.g. communication, team working, problem solving, report writing, data analysis

When you register with CommunityChecks, we take into account your motives for volunteering to ensure that you gain what you want from your volunteering experience.

What will I be doing?

As a Checker, you will work under the guidance of the project co-ordinator to provide practical and accurate environmental advice to publicly accessible organisations. You will be expected to attend CommunityCheck visits and take part in asking questions from the Checklist with a representative from the organisation. After this you will have a site tour around the building. Following the visit, the Checking team will discuss and score the organisation according to its awareness and management of their environmental impacts. You will also be required to assist with either writing the reports for the Checked organisations, or helping to market for organisations to visit, or for more volunteers.

Who will I be working with?

You will work closely with the project co-ordinator for your area, other volunteers and representatives from the Checked organisations. Occasionally there will be the opportunity to work with volunteer bureau staff, local councils and environmental agencies.

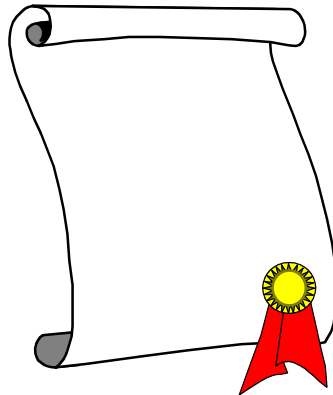
How much time will it take?

Our volunteers are expected to commit at least 20 hours of their time to the CommunityCheck Project (travel time is included); this is required due to the time invested in the half day training workshop. A CommunityCheck takes roughly 2 hours, in addition to this you will be required to either assist with report writing and marketing the project. You will also be invited to attend occasional team events (socials, visits, workshops or meetings) and phone groups.

Duties

The following section gives details of the specific tasks involved in the Checker role. Although these tasks are basic requirements we are always keen to be flexible according to your skills and needs.

- Work with the guidance of the co-ordinator
- Attend the training workshop and spend time reading the associated material
- Arrive at the agreed time for CommunityChecks and to remain for agreed hours
- Assist in asking questions from the Checklist during CommunityChecks
- Develop your knowledge of environmental issues
- Read and reply to messages (email, letters, phone messages)
- Attend team events whenever possible
- Assist with either writing reports or marketing the scheme
- Develop your range of duties when ready to be agreed by the co-ordinator
- Be an ambassador for CommunityCheck!



What we provide you

As a Checker we want you to enjoy your time with us and gain the most from your experience that you can.

As a Checker you will receive:

- An induction to the organisation
- Opportunities of learning

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Travel expenses</i>• <i>Insurance cover</i>• <i>Necessary materials will be provided</i> | <p><i>Your organisation will have to address these issues</i></p> |
|--|--|

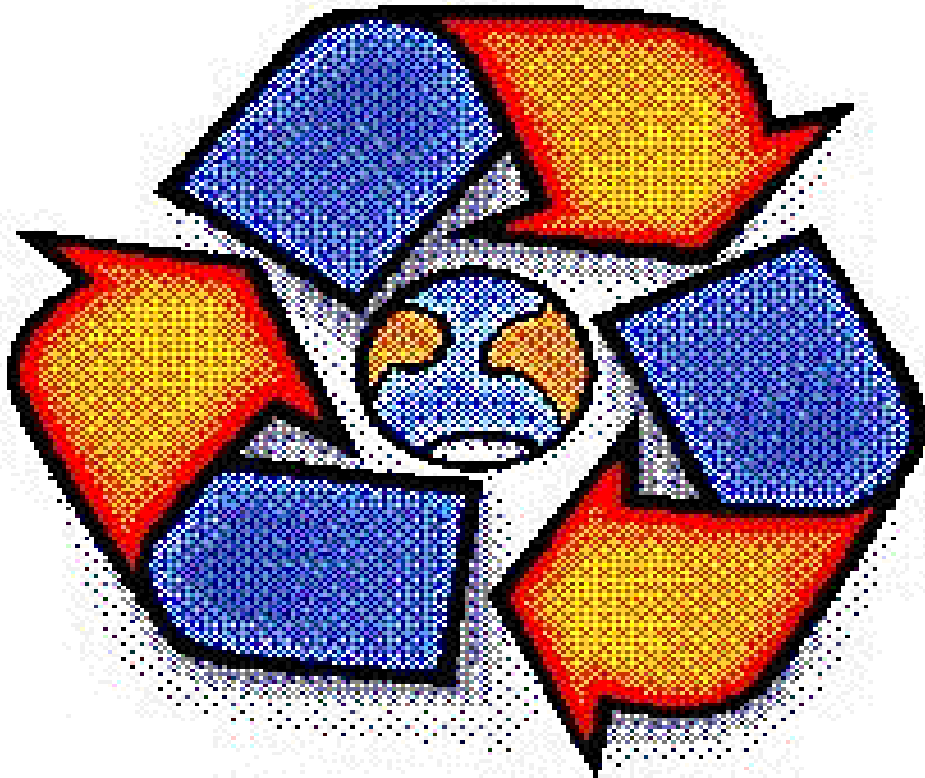
Your project co-ordinator is the person with whom you can discuss any questions or problems. You will be given a chance to do this on a regular basis. If there is any aspect of the organisation that you do not wish to be involved in, you will not feel obliged to do so.

You will also be given the opportunity to develop your skills and interests within the organisation in a manner that suits you.

Further Development

When you become a Checker, there are several opportunities open to you. You will never be forced to do anything that you do not wish to do but to add some variety to your volunteering you may wish to consider some different options.

- Become a team leader
- Become a volunteer mentor to new volunteers
- Take part in planning discussions
- Contribute to website
- Help with marketing
- Represent volunteers on the steering group



Learning

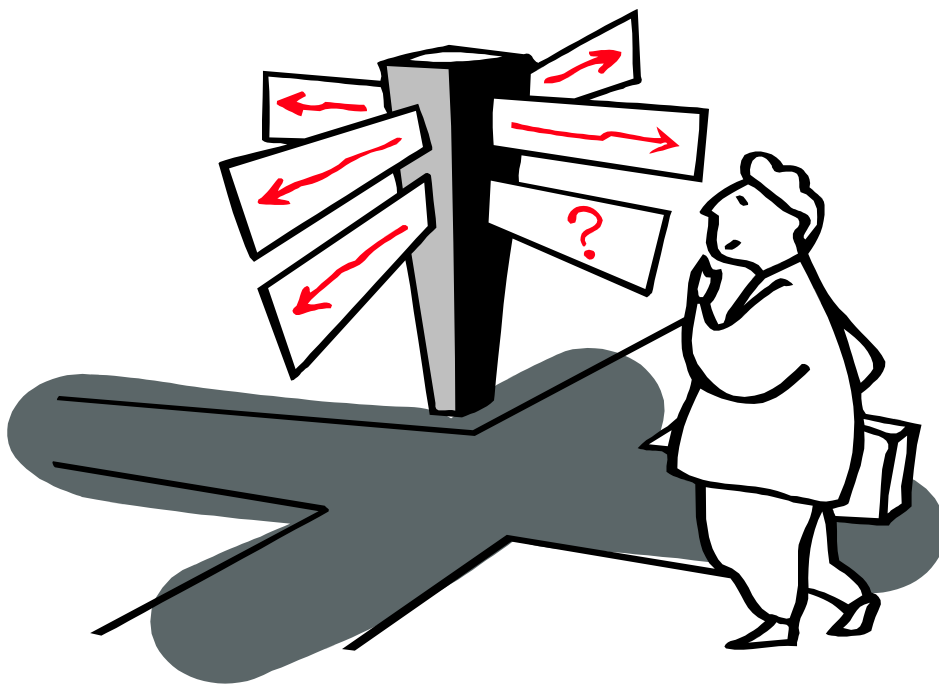
As a Checker you may want to broaden your knowledge of environmental issues or you may even wish to pursue a career in the environmental field.

There are several opportunities open to you.

If you wish to develop your learning, your volunteer co-ordinator will be happy to discuss the opportunities open to you.

Options include -

- Learning visits
- Training Days e.g. Project Management, Assertive Communication
- Guidance notes
- On Line Learning e.g. Learn Direct Courses



Your Commitment

As a volunteer it is understood that you have given up your time freely to help us and this is very much appreciated. However, we would ask that if you cannot volunteer at an arranged time,

- **to please notify your volunteer co-ordinator.**

By becoming a Checker you will also be expected to act within certain requirements. Your rights and responsibilities are defined in the Handbook.

- **Continued, unacceptable behaviour may lead to dismissal.**

Confidentiality

Clients request that any information concerning their premises remains confidential. Volunteers are expected to respect this. Similarly, any information held about volunteers will remain under confidentiality rules by the volunteer co-ordinator.

Complaints

If you feel that you have been treated unfairly or have been put at risk during your volunteering-

- Let your volunteer co-ordinator know
- Fill out the Complaints Form (found within handbook) and return it to your co-ordinator.
- Use the form to highlight any concerns over equal opportunities or health & safety.

Equal Opportunities

CommunityChecks is committed to positive action to promote equality of opportunity in its voluntary activities. In order to achieve this we have an equal opportunities policy and monitoring forms. The equal opportunities monitoring form is issued with registration but its completion is voluntary.

Health & Safety

We regard the health and safety of our volunteers as being of the highest importance. The provision of a health and safety policy along with a Duty of Care ensure that CommunityChecks are taking steps to make your volunteering safe.

[Policies are available to see on request](#)

BE SAFE!

Some things to consider whilst volunteering

- Obey any safety rules
- Only use machinery or tools with permission and after training
- Use any equipment or clothing provided to protect you.
- Report anything that seems dangerous, damaged or faulty.
- Do you know what to do if there is a fire and how to raise the alarm?
- Keep fire exits free from obstacles
- Make sure you have been given all the information you require to carry out your voluntary work safely.
- Learn to say no! Volunteer work should be enjoyable, don't agree to anything that you are not sure about.

If you have an accident –

- Tell your CommunityCheck co-ordinator
- Complete the accident reporting form located at the back of your handbook.

Volunteer Accident Reporting Form

In the event of any accident where a volunteer has been injured, please complete this form with as many details as possible and return to your volunteer co-ordinator.

Date:

Person reporting injury:

Person affected / injured:

Incident date:

Location of incident

Description of incident including cause and nature of injury

Action taken / recommendations

Signed _____ Date _____

CHECKER'S HANDBOOK

COMPLAINTS FORM

Complainant _____

The complaint

Measures taken by complainant

Office Use Only

Measures Taken

Outcome

Volunteer Informed Y/ N

Notes: