

18 April 2023

PAPER CLASSIFICATION: OPEN

Board of Trustees

THE PRINCIPLES OF VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT IN CHANGE

(Paper by the Volunteer Engagement Board, written by Alex Taylor, IET Head of Strategic Engagement. If you have any questions on this paper before the meeting please contact Alex Taylor by email alextaylor@theiet.org)

1. Issue

To embed awareness and adoption across the IET of the principles relating to how and when volunteers should be involved in discussions around changes that may impact their areas of work with the IET.

2. Timing

Board of Trustees meeting, 4 May 2023.

3. For Note

The Board of Trustees is invited to note the principles of volunteer involvement in change which were approved by the Volunteer Engagement Board in 2022.

4 Background

4.1 The IET is an ever-changing environment, and this is particularly the case at the moment as we focus our work on delivery of the IET Strategy 2030, align our outputs to the societal challenges, and seek financial sustainability post-COVID.

4.2 Change impacts all areas of the IET yet given the part-time nature of the engagement most of our volunteers have with the IET, communicating with them on changes that impact their work needs time and care to ensure they are able to contribute where necessary. This is particularly important in areas where we have large volunteer populations such as professional registration, education, policy and insight, and communities.

4.3 In 2022, the VEB agreed a set of principles that should be applied to ensure that volunteers are involved consistently across the IET in discussions about changes to their areas of work. The paper that refers to this is VEB(22)20. It was originally classified as 'private and confidential' but has subsequently been re-classified as an open paper (it is included at Appendix A).

4.4 In the longer term, the Volunteering Vision will embed support and engagement with volunteers in a more structured way, following benchmarked best practice. However, in the short-term these principles should be used across the IET to engage volunteers and ensure that their experiences and views are considered.

- 4.5 The language has been changed slightly since the original paper was written to make the principles more accessible. Primarily the word 'consultation' which carries connotations of formal legal process has been replaced.
- 4.6 Support and guidance about how to apply the principles can be obtained from the Volunteer Support Unit located within the Governance and External Engagement Directorate.

5. Principles of Volunteer Involvement

- 5.1 If a volunteer or member of staff, is considering a change or new initiative that would impact anyone in our volunteering community then the following principles should be considered when deciding how and when to engage volunteer stakeholders:
- (a) Where volunteer involvement is required the process and timescales for engaging volunteers should be outlined at the earliest opportunity.
 - (b) The Board, Committee or Group within the IET that is ultimately responsible for approving the final decision should be identified.
 - (c) Key volunteer and staff groups that maybe directly or indirectly impacted by the change or initiative should be identified and agreed.
 - (d) All elements of the process should remain open and be well documented, unless there is confidential or sensitive information relating to individual volunteers or members of staff.
 - (e) Guidance should be followed to ensure consistency across volunteer groups and the guidance should be regularly reviewed.
 - (f) The Board, Committee or Group with ultimate responsibility should ensure that decisions are well documented to support future audit and understanding.

6. Risk

Volunteers have a range experiences and skills that can support and inform change within the IET. Without a consistent approach to engagement around change there is a risk that volunteers will not support changes to their volunteering roles and will cease giving their time. There is also a risk that volunteers who feel they have not been adequately involved in discussions will raise complaints, which might include instigating a Special General Meeting.

7. Resources

There are no resource implications related to producing the guidance and making it available to the staff and volunteers across the IET. However, depending on the extent of changes being planned, engagement with volunteers might necessitate additional or refocused resources.

24 May 2022

PAPER CLASSIFICATION: OPEN

Volunteer Engagement Board

THE PRINCIPLES OF VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT IN CHANGE

(Paper by Simon Edwards and Alex Taylor. If you have any questions on this paper before the meeting please contact Alex on +44 (0)1438 767442 or by email alextaylor@theiet.org)

1 Issue

To discuss the requirement for guidance on consultation with volunteers and the outline principles for such guidance.

2 Timing

For discussion at the Volunteer Engagement Board meeting on 9 June 2022.

3 Reason for Paper Classification

This paper was originally marked Private and Confidential because it contained information which, if disclosed, may have resulted in premature publicity of courses of action that may not, in the end, have been followed. It has subsequently been reclassified as Open.

4 For Discussion

The Volunteer Engagement Board is invited to discuss the background context for the proposed guidance and the direction of travel of the outline principles should the guidance be developed.

5 Background

5.1 The IET is an ever-changing environment, and this is particularly the case at the moment as we focus our work on delivery of the IET Strategy 2030 and align our outputs to the societal challenges.

5.2 Change impacts all areas of the IET yet given the part time nature of the engagement most of our volunteers have with the IET, communicating with them on changes that impact their work needs time and care to ensure they are able to contribute where necessary. This is particularly important in areas where we have large volunteer populations such as local and technical networks, our education officers, young professionals, and our policy and insight panels.

5.3 Recently a group of volunteers raised concerns about changes that had been made to processes that directly affected their IET work. They felt that they should have been consulted on these changes and been able to contribute to the discussions on the developments. As we looked into the issues they raised it became clear that different areas of the IET are approaching consultation in different ways.

5.4 This lack of consistency is contributing to a perception that there is a lack of transparency about the process used, and a lack of clarity about how decisions on changes are made,

who is making the decisions, and what checks and balances are in place. There is a need for consistency of approach so volunteers know what to expect and who will be engaged.

- 5.3 The Volunteering Vision in the long-term will help support and improve engagement with volunteers but in the short-term it is proposed that guidance might be helpful in supporting these conversations.

6 Outline Principles

- 6.1 If a volunteer or member of staff, is considering a change or new initiative that would impact on others then the following principles should be considered in consulting:

- (a) Where volunteer consultation is required the process for consultation should be outlined at the earliest opportunity.
- (b) The Board, Committee or Group within the IET that is ultimately responsible for approving the final decision should be identified.
- (c) Key volunteer and staff groups that maybe directly or indirectly impacted by the change or initiative should be identified and agreed.
- (d) All elements of the process should remain open and be well documented, unless there is confidential or sensitive information relating to individual volunteers or members of staff.
- (e) Guidance should be followed to ensure consistency across volunteer groups and the guidance should be regularly reviewed.
- (f) The Board, Committee or Group with ultimate responsibility should ensure that decisions are well documented to support future audit and understanding.

- 6.2 The VEB is invited to discuss the overall need for such guidance and if supported the direction of travel of the outline principles.

7 Risk

Volunteers have a range experiences and skills that can support and inform change within the IET. Without a consistent approach to consultation or change there is a risk that volunteers will not support changes to their volunteering roles and will cease giving their time.

8. Resources

There are no resource implications related to producing the guidance and making it available to the volunteer community, however the consultation process might require additional or refocused resources.