

Recruiting and Welcoming Volunteers

The recruitment process for volunteers will depend on your organisation and the volunteering role. Some organisations will need tighter procedures due to the nature of the volunteer role and the client group the organisation works with. For example, if your organisation supports under 18 year olds or vulnerable adults, volunteers will need to undergo additional checks and safeguarding policies need to be in place. The procedures you have in place need to suit your organisation, whilst being fair and welcoming.

Here are some suggestions to consider when recruiting and welcoming volunteers into your organisation.

Communication

Follow up on any interest in volunteering promptly. People expect things to happen quickly and so even if the process to becoming a volunteer may take longer, giving clear timescales for the next steps may help to keep people interested.

Volunteer Policy

A volunteer policy provides a framework for your volunteer programme. Writing a policy or checking through an existing policy will enable you to think through the process of involving volunteers and can help to ensure your organisation is ready to involve volunteers. Please see factsheet and example volunteer policy for more information about developing a volunteer policy.

Role Descriptions

Before recruiting volunteers make sure you have worked out what you want volunteers to do. Having clear role descriptions will simplify the recruitment process and let potential volunteers know exactly what will be expected of them. However, do keep in mind there should be some flexibility with roles. Please see our factsheet and role description template for more information about writing role descriptions.

Promoting Your Volunteer Opportunities

It is useful to consider how and where you promote your volunteer opportunities as this will help you to recruit a diverse team of volunteers. Please see our factsheet on promoting volunteer opportunities for more information about this.

Safeguarding

Organisations that involve volunteers need to ensure they have procedures in place to protect their beneficiaries (e.g. clients, service users, and participants), volunteers and staff. For more information about safer recruitment and safeguarding please see our safeguarding and volunteers factsheet.

Recruiting and Welcoming Volunteers

Your recruitment process may include some or all of the following:

Application/ Registration Forms

If you use application forms, make sure they are brief, clear and accessible in order to avoid putting people off. Only ask for the information you need. Please see our template application form for more information about what to include.

Introductory Chat

Remember this is a two-way process and is as much about the volunteer deciding whether the organisation and role is right for them. Do not treat it like a job interview. Keep it more informal and person centred. This way you may learn more about the skills and experience the volunteer has to offer.

References

References can be useful and are strongly advised if volunteers will be supporting children or vulnerable adults. However, references can be a barrier for some people and you may want to consider what your policy will be if a volunteer has genuine difficulties obtaining a reference. Also, think about a broader range of people the volunteers could get references from, for example, a tutor, job centre coach, support worker, friend or colleague. Please see our reference request template for what to include.

DBS Checks

Whether or not you carry out a Disclosure and Barring Service check depends upon the type of role being undertaken by the volunteer, the nature of the organisation and the client group they will be volunteering with. Only certain roles are eligible for DBS checks and so before advertising a volunteer role you need to find out if the role needs a check. This is very important because an organisation is breaking the law if they submit an application for a check if the role isn't eligible. There are also different levels of check and so you need to make sure that you are applying for the correct level. For more information go to [DBS eligibility guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/db-eligibility-guidance).

This handy tool can help you determine the correct level of check
<https://www.gov.uk/find-out-dbs-check>

You can also contact our main office number on 0161 787 7795 and ask to speak to one of our admin team who can advise on DBS checks or email us at dbs@salfordcvs.co.uk.

Recruiting and Welcoming Volunteers

Induction

Giving volunteers a warm welcome will help people to settle into their role and feel part of the organisation. An induction can help with this and can help volunteers to feel more prepared and comfortable in their role. The induction is an opportunity to go through practicalities, answer questions and go through any policies volunteers need to be aware of and where to access them. This can help volunteers to fulfil their role safely. Please see our example of an induction checklist for more information on what to include. For further ideas on how to run an induction go to [Running a volunteer induction | NCVO](#)

Volunteer Handbook

A volunteer handbook is a useful guide that can help to support volunteers in their role. There can be a great deal of information to take in when joining an organisation, having a handbook to refer to can help volunteers answer any questions they may have and to learn more about the organisation at their own pace. A volunteer handbook should outline all the different information that volunteers need to know. Please see our example volunteer handbook for more information about what to include.

Saying No to a Volunteer

In some instances, you may have to say no to a volunteer. You might not be actively recruiting or there may be another reason why they are not suited to the opportunity at your organisation. If you do have to say no to a volunteer, it is better to deal with this quickly and sensitively. It is important not to ignore them, as for some people volunteering is a significant step and to contact your organisation and go through the application process may have taken a great deal of courage. Make sure you thank them for their interest in your organisation and explain your decision sensitively. Reassure them there are other volunteering opportunities they might want to do. You can refer them to the Volunteer Centre Salford to explore other opportunities.