



Volunteer Toolkit



A guide to help cultural organisations in the city and greater Exeter manage and engage volunteers in their activities. Prepared for Exeter Culture by RAMM, Libraries Unlimited and Exeter Cathedral with support from Arts Council England.



Contents

Welcome	04
Overview	06
Preparing for volunteers	09
Recruiting volunteers	15
Managing volunteers	22
Frequently asked questions	29
Resources	35



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Welcome from Camilla Hampshire

Museums Manager and Cultural Lead, RAMM

I am delighted to introduce this Volunteering Toolkit on behalf of our project partners, Libraries Unlimited and Exeter Cathedral. The Toolkit shares information that will help cultural organisations in the city and greater Exeter manage and engage volunteers in their activities.

Volunteers are an important part of life at RAMM (the Royal Albert Memorial Museum) and much of the guidance is based on our experience, developed over many years, but through this project refined for wider sector usage with our colleagues at the Libraries and Cathedral. The three partners hope that organisations of all sizes will find the toolkit useful in helping to get the best from their volunteers but also ensure that these committed and enthusiastic people have a great experience working with cultural organisations in the city.

Volunteering enables peoples' deeper engagement with culture and organisations' a tighter 'fit' with the communities they serve. The benefits are two way and by sharing our experience we can encourage others in the city to develop opportunities for cultural participation in all its forms.

As members of Exeter Culture (EC), all three project partners subscribe to EC's definition of culture as being 'the things people do' whether this is sports, heritage, learning or the arts. We hope therefore that the toolkit will be useful to a wide range of city organisations. If you would like to discuss volunteer management in relation to the cultural sector please contact ramm.volunteer@exeter.gov.uk

This project has been made possible by Arts Council England through the Major Partner Museum funding of RAMM and we are grateful for their assistance. Arts Council England writes:

'We are pleased to welcome the Exeter Culture Volunteer Toolkit. Volunteers play a vital role in the success of cultural organisations, supporting community engagement, increasing capacity, and acting as ambassadors for culture. Just as importantly, volunteers ensure that organisations reflect the communities within which they are located. With the help of this Toolkit, these mutually beneficial partnerships between volunteers and organisations will build a stronger cultural sector for Exeter that even more people will be able to enjoy.'

Overview



Overview

Volunteers make an invaluable contribution to service delivery. Many cultural organisations rely on volunteers to ensure that they provide the best possible service to their communities.

If you establish consistent procedures and policies to involve and develop your volunteers, you are more likely to retain them and gain the maximum benefit possible for both your organisation and your volunteers:

- It is likely to provide a better service for your visitors
- It is cost effective, saving on recruitment, training and other costs of involving new volunteers
- It gives the volunteer time to become fully competent with any new skills they are learning
- It increases a sense of team working

Careful planning is the key to successfully involving volunteers in your organisation.

It may be helpful to consider the following:

- Is everyone in your organisation aware of plans to involve volunteers?
- How will different people be affected – staff, trustees, service users, other volunteers?
- Do you have the human resources to adequately support volunteers?
- Have you budgeted for the costs of involving volunteers; such as, payment of out of pocket expenses, training, staff costs for supervision, admin costs for DBS checks where required?
- Are you able to provide roles that are rewarding for volunteers and meet the needs of your organisation?
- Do you have the necessary space and resources?
- Are you ready for the fresh ideas, enthusiasm and experience volunteers bring?
- Do you need any new policies and procedures?

Overview

Isn't involving volunteers going to take up a lot of time?

Good management of volunteers is always going to take time, but this is outweighed by the valuable contribution they can make to your organisation. Once policies and procedures are set in place, the process will be a lot simpler.

Increasingly, as people's time becomes more valuable it is important that you consider how you can recruit, support, recognise and reward one of your most valuable resources – volunteers.

Given that volunteers are essential to the effective running of most cultural organisations, it may be worth considering appointing a volunteer co-ordinator (this can also be a voluntary role). This type of role can make a big difference to the recruitment and retention of volunteers, as it ensures that the area of volunteer development is given a strong lead from within your organisation. The role of the volunteer co-ordinator could focus on the following areas:

- Identifying the volunteer needs of the organisation
- Recruiting new volunteers
- Rewarding and developing current volunteers
- Providing feedback to help volunteers to be effective in their roles

Preparing for volunteers



Preparing for volunteers

Planning, policies and procedures

Writing a volunteer policy

A Volunteer Policy will give an overall framework for volunteer involvement in your organisation. Having a policy demonstrates the following:

- Commitment
- Consistency
- Clarity

What should a volunteer policy cover?

- Introduction to your organisation
- Recruitment process
- Induction and training
- Your Volunteer Agreement (sometimes known as a Volunteer Charter)
- Expenses procedure
- Support and supervision
- Insurance
- Equal Opportunities
- Health and Safety
- Problem Solving
- Confidentiality

For an example of a volunteer policy, please see the Volunteer Handbook that's available on the Library of Downloads page.

Volunteers and the law

As an organisation, it is important that you keep appropriate boundaries between volunteers and paid staff, who have a wealth of protection under employment legislation. Volunteers do not have the same employment rights as paid staff, but in treating them fairly and consistently you may avoid the difficulties which can lead to legal issues.

Preparing for volunteers

Planning, policies and procedures

Legal issues most often arise when volunteers have made complaints against an organisation that they feel have not been properly addressed using internal processes. Some organisations unknowingly create written, or unwritten, contracts of employment in the way they engage with volunteers which may make it possible for volunteers to pursue legal action against them.

Remember though, that your organisation's health and safety, and data protection policies, apply to everyone in your organisation, including volunteers.

It is important to note that most volunteer/organisational relationships end amicably and it does not mean that all of your policies and procedures need to be rewritten: the emphasis is on your working practices and these should be reviewed to make sure they fall outside a contractual relationship.

Tips

Do what you can to make sure that volunteers are treated fairly and have access to good procedures for settling disputes

- Make it clear that the roles of volunteers are voluntary; i.e. unpaid
- Avoid using legal, or employment jargon, like 'work', 'contract' or 'job descriptions': the volunteer relationship is one of expectation rather than obligation
- Recognise that you can't require volunteers to provide a service in return for training, and ensure that training is relevant to the role carried out
- Don't pay flat rate expenses or anything more than out of pocket expenses – the occasional thank you such as a party or social outing is fine

Exeter CVS offer useful training for organisations that utilise volunteers, including a course entitled 'Volunteers and the Law'. Find out more using this link:

<https://www.exetercvs.org.uk/learn/courses/developing-your-organisation>

Preparing for volunteers

Planning, policies and procedures

Volunteer agreements

Volunteer agreements are used to set out both an organisation's commitment to its volunteer, and what it hopes for from its volunteers. A volunteer agreement can act as a reference point for the volunteers and a reminder to the organisation that it should meet the standards of good practice that it has set itself.

You may decide however to include the information in other places such as your volunteer policy or handbook, in which case a volunteer agreement may not be necessary for your organisation.

Care must be taken to set out what the organisation expects from its volunteers and how it treats its volunteers in order to avoid the creation of mutual obligations that might be regarded as a contract.

Typically in an agreement an organisation might commit to:

- Providing volunteers with a written role description
- Provide a full induction and any training necessary for the role
- Provide a named supervisor or person the volunteer can go to for support
- Reimburse out of pocket expenses where possible
- Provide a safe working environment
- Treat volunteers in line with its equal opportunities policy
- To implement good health and safety practice
- To provide insurance for volunteers
- Ask for a reference for the volunteer

Volunteers might be expected to:

- Carry out their tasks in a way that corresponds to the aims and values of the organisation
- Work within the policies and procedures of the organisation including health and safety, equal opportunities and confidentiality
- Let the organisation know if they are unable to volunteer for any reason

Preparing for volunteers

Planning, policies and procedures

In *Volunteers and The Law*, Volunteering England suggests using the following wording at the end of a Volunteer Agreement:

“This agreement is not intended to be a legally binding contract between us and may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. Neither of us intend any employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future.”

It is advised against asking volunteers to sign volunteer agreements, as this can appear contractual.

Preparing for volunteers

Planning, policies and procedures

Monitoring and evaluating your volunteer programme

It can be useful to collect statistics on volunteers in your organization for a number of reasons.

- To demonstrate the impact that volunteers have on your organisation, both in terms of their contribution and their economic value.
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- To identify areas in your volunteer programme that may need improvement.
- Funders may require you to monitor and evaluate your volunteer programme.

Baseline data that it may be useful to collect

- Total number of volunteers
- Total number of volunteer hours in a particular time frame
- The economic benefits of volunteers (time in kind)

Recruiting volunteers



Recruiting volunteers

Getting started

Know your roles

- Be sure that your volunteer opportunities are beneficial to your organisation and can help you achieve your aims
- Create clear role descriptions
- Make sure you know what each opportunity entails so that you can sell this to potential volunteers effectively

Create a good impression

- Make sure you have all of the 'Must Have' paperwork, policies and procedures in place before you start recruiting.
- Ensure that those staff likely to manage enquiries have sufficient information to deal with prospective volunteers.
- Respond as promptly as possible to enquiries – make it clear on any literature/phone messages if you are only available for part of the week, but will deal with enquiries as quickly as possible.

Make your messages user-friendly

- Produce publicity that answers volunteers' unspoken questions, for example: Why should I volunteer at your organisation?
- Answer other questions in your publicity, for example: What will I be doing? How often and when? Where?
- Reassure volunteers that they will be given training and be supported.
- Avoid using words like 'need' and 'desperate'.

Spread the word

- Consider all methods for getting your message out; e.g. word of mouth, posters, adverts, your local volunteer bureau, talks and presentations and local newsletters.

Recruiting volunteers

Volunteer role profiles

What are volunteer role profiles?

A volunteer role profile (also known as a volunteer task/role description) is a document which details the specific activities a particular volunteer is involved in.

Volunteer role descriptions form an important part of an organisations recruitment process. They help to give the volunteer an accurate idea of the work they will be doing and also ensure that the volunteer is attracted by the tasks as well as the organisation's wider aims.

Areas to think about

- Purpose of role
- Hours
- Main activities/duties
- Skills needed
- Training
- Other notes/info related to role or organisation

Recruiting volunteers

Marketing your opportunities

Where to advertise

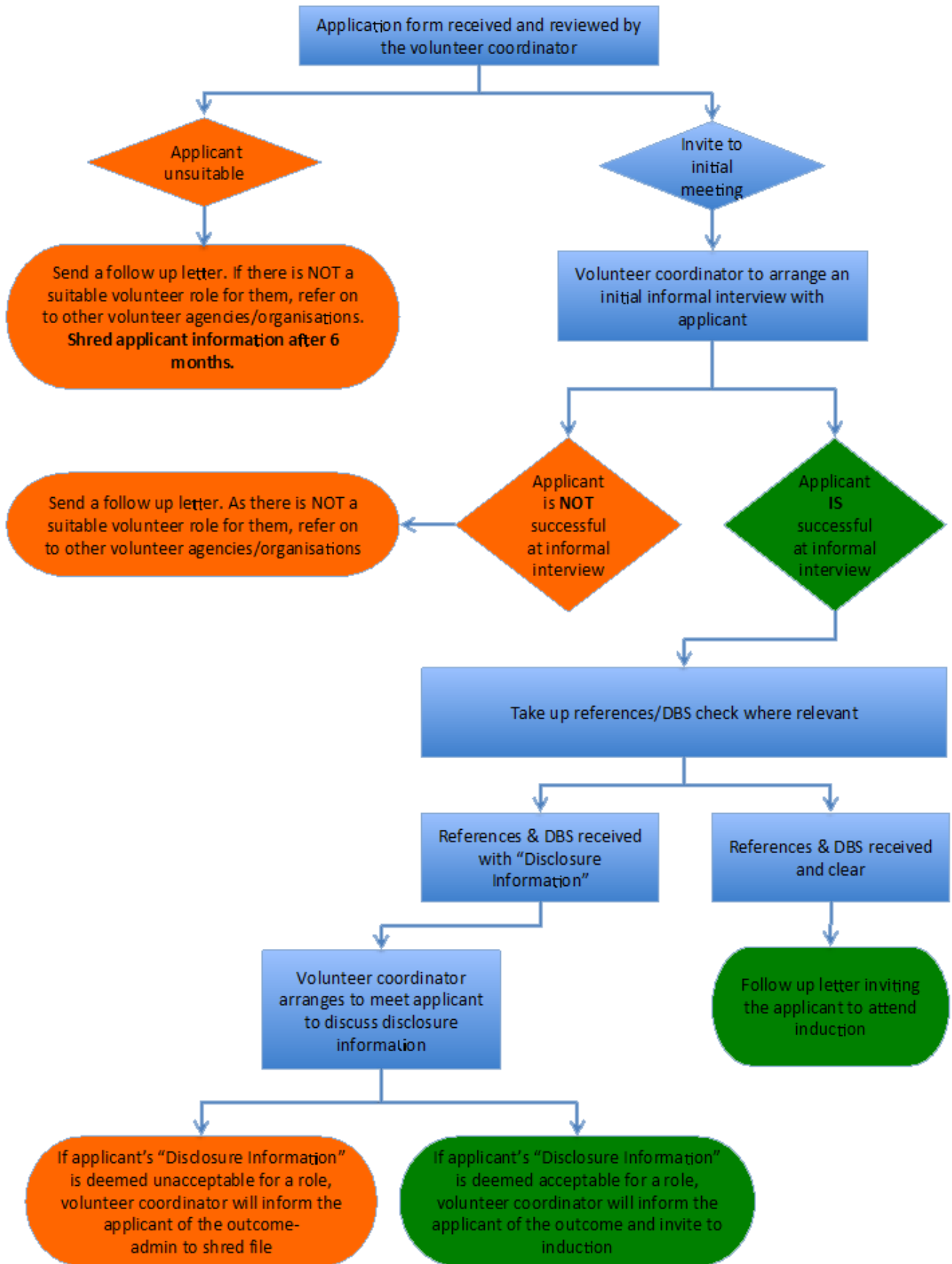
Think about the type of volunteer you want to reach and the types of roles you have available and advertise accordingly. It is important to advertise your roles regularly and to persevere when fostering relationships with other organisations.

- Schools and Colleges
- Partner agencies
- Libraries
- Town halls and other public buildings
- Playgroups
- GP and dental surgeries
- Sports, leisure centres and community buildings
- Places of worship
- Shop windows/notice boards
- Pubs
- Job centres
- Estate agents
- Local newspapers
- Clubs, societies, special interest groups and charities
- Community festivals and events

Your local volunteer bureau, Exeter CVS can advertise your opportunity, find potential volunteers and give you advice and support.

You can also make use of the following websites:

- <https://www.exetercvs.org.uk/>
- <https://do-it.org/>
- <https://vinspired.com/vinspired-for-organisations>
- <http://volunteering.thirdsector.co.uk/>



Recruiting volunteers

Application process

Designing your process

Whatever your organisation's recruitment approach, it is important to develop a system that suits your needs but also does not put off potential volunteers or place unnecessary barriers in people's way.

It is a good idea to have an information pack available to send to people interested in volunteering. An information pack would normally include a leaflet about your organisation, a covering letter, a role profile, and contact details of the appropriate person to contact.

An application pack might include a role profile, an application form, a photo consent form and emergency contact form.

Bear in mind that your funders may require you to include further information to candidates at the initial stages; e.g. equality and diversity policies.

Keeping accurate records of your current volunteers, past volunteers as well as keeping track of recruitment and enquiries is essential.

Informal chats/interviews

Even though the interview may be informal you should have a structure to ensure that you gather the necessary information and treat all volunteers fairly and equally.

- Aim to keep the meeting as relaxed as possible: it should be a two-way process and an opportunity for both parties to find out more each other.
- Set aside enough time without interruptions.
- Make sure you have everything to hand that you may need, including any forms, reports or policies that you may want to give the volunteer.
- It is good practice to interview in pairs if possible: this will allow you to consider the suitability of your candidate from more than one point of view.

Recruiting volunteers

Application process

References

It is best practice to ask for references from your volunteers. References are comments from people who know the volunteer in a work, or a professional, context; for example, an ex-employer (voluntary or paid position), a former teacher or tutor, the leader of a club or faith group or a support worker. Remember to make it clear that you will not accept references from a friend or family member, as these will lack impartiality.

DBS checks

If a volunteer role involves close and unsupervised contact with children and young people and/or vulnerable adults, then your organisation has a legal responsibility to carry out DBS checks to make sure that your volunteer is not barred from activity of this kind.

If you are unsure whether a volunteer role requires a DBS check then use these flowcharts to decide if they involve 'regulated activity', which means activity which would require you to carry out a check:

- Regulated Activity relating to children and young people
- Regulated Activity relating to adults

Unless you carry out over 100 checks a year, you will need to register with an umbrella body to carry out DBS checks. A list of these can be found using the .gov link below. DBS checks are free for most volunteers, providing they meet the list of conditions contained on the .gov website:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/dbs-check-requests-guidance-for-employers#volunteer-applications>

<https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/overview>

Do remember though, that your umbrella organisation will still charge you a handling fee. This may vary, but the current handling charge for Devon County Council's DBS checking service is £8.25 (plus VAT).

Managing & supporting volunteers



Managing & supporting volunteers

Training

Volunteer inductions

The purpose of volunteer inductions is to ensure that volunteers are able to carry out their volunteering role as effectively as possible, feeling comfortable that they fully understand your organisation, and its policies and procedures. The problem of volunteers leaving an organisation too soon after being recruited is often due to poor induction procedures.

As a minimum, you might go through your volunteer handbook with inductees; however, you may wish to supplement this process with extra information and activities, or create a PowerPoint presentation about your organisation to show to groups of new volunteers.

It can also be helpful to use an induction checklist as a record of what has been covered, for you, and your volunteer.

Examples of training

- Volunteer inductions
- On-the-job training
- Practical demonstrations
- Work shadowing
- Buddying/mentoring systems
- Visiting other organisations/inviting outside organisations to visit you
- Attending conferences, workshops, lectures, seminars, etc.
- Problem-solving exercises, group discussions etc.
- Utilise online training programmes and check to see if your local volunteer bureau can provide any free or discounted training to volunteers
- Contact staff or volunteers from other organisations who may be able to help
- Initial briefing meeting as part of induction
- Peer to peer support and buddying
- Volunteer meetings
- Informal Support
- One-to-one support
- Formal supervision
- Reviews

Managing & supporting volunteers

Giving back

Payment of expenses

Although people give their time freely they should not be out of pocket through their volunteering. However, no more than out of pocket expenses should be paid, as this could have legal implications, putting your organisation at risk of unwittingly creating a contract of employment with your volunteers.

If you can't afford volunteer expenses now, make it clear to any potential volunteers as soon as possible. Make sure you find plenty of other ways of giving back to your volunteers even if you are working on a shoestring.

Recognition of volunteers

- Make time to thank them for their contribution to your organisation
- Give them opportunities to be part of your decision making processes where appropriate
- Ask them for their input at meetings
- Offer training and progression opportunities
- Mention their contributions at meetings and in any reports you produce
- Where their role involves using equipment, make sure it is well maintained and in good working order
- Organise a social event or outing as a thank you
- Consider producing a volunteer's newsletter, or include a contribution from them in your existing newsletter

Managing & supporting volunteers

Health and safety

Your duty of care

Although health and safety legislation is designed to protect paid workers, it does require organisations to protect other people too, including service users and volunteers. It is therefore very important that you include volunteers in your health and safety policy making and procedures. An example health and safety policy statement can be found in the downloadable Volunteer Handbook.

To demonstrate that you have exercised a 'duty of care', it is sensible to assess any potential risks that volunteers may face in the course of their duties and to take steps to minimise them. Each volunteer role should be subject to a risk assessment. For further advice about health and safety, go to the Health and Safety Executive website: <http://www.hse.gov.uk>

Insurance

It is good practice to ensure that you review your insurance policies to ensure that your volunteers are covered: this would include your employer's liability insurance and/or public liability insurance.

Tips

- Your policies should explicitly mention volunteers, as they are not always automatically added to your cover.
- Check to see whether your insurer imposes upper and lower age limits for volunteers.
- Produce a risk assessment for each volunteer role: there is a downloadable template in this section.
- Inform volunteers who use their own car as part of their duties that they will need to let their insurance company know they are doing so.

Managing & supporting volunteers

Health and safety

Lone Workers

- Avoid lone working where possible.
- Know that lone working is occurring, and carry out risk assessments.
- Have contact arrangements in place, so that someone knows the whereabouts and schedule of the lone worker and can start emergency procedures if necessary.
- Advise volunteers to avoid particularly hazardous activities, e.g. using dangerous equipment or unfamiliar tasks if working alone.

Volunteer Drivers

Volunteer drivers are those that use their vehicles as part of their duties, not just to drive to and from their volunteer placement.

If your volunteers are transporting passengers for your organisation, then it is your responsibility to ensure that volunteers have an up-to-date driving licence and that their car is roadworthy. In this case, you will need to keep copies of both parts of their licence, insurance certificate and MOT certificate.

Even if they are not carrying passengers, the following applies:

- Licences should be full, not provisional.
- Volunteers should ensure their car is road-worthy and they are fit to drive.
- Volunteers should inform their insurance company that they are using their vehicle for volunteering duties: this will not normally incur extra premiums, but failure to do so may invalidate their insurance when it is being used in the course of their duties.

More information about your responsibilities when using volunteer drivers, can be found here: <http://www.drivingforbetterbusiness.com>
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg382.pdf>

Managing & supporting volunteers

Problems with volunteers

Planning ahead

You can minimise the likelihood of problems arising by ensuring that you have planned well for volunteer involvement, by regularly recognising the contribution your volunteers make and fully briefing your employees prior to recruitment.

Should problems arise, you will need clear procedures in place for dealing with them. You might consider sharing your problem-solving procedures with volunteers at induction, so that they know what to do if a problem arises.

Problems arising from either side should be dealt with informally and quickly, whenever possible. Minor issues should be dealt with during supervision sessions with the aim of resolving them without entering into formal procedures.

Problem-solving checklist

This checklist suggests how some issues can be dealt with and offers practical suggestions:

- A well thought-out induction programme with training in the specific role, should provide the volunteer with a good foundation on which to undertake their volunteering. However, you may need to remind the volunteer of the policies and procedures within your organisation and additional training may be required in specific areas.
- Check if the volunteer has training needs. Everyone learns at a different pace and in a different way. Do you need to adapt your training materials, or change the way in which you deliver training?
- Does the volunteer need extra support or supervision?
- Is the volunteer feeling unfulfilled in their current role? Have their needs changed, or would they like to use different skills to help your organisation? If so, you may be able to modify their role description or develop a completely new role for them.

Managing & supporting volunteers

Problems with volunteers

- Is the volunteer unable to cope with the demands of the role anymore? They may need to take a break from volunteering or may prefer to volunteer in another organisation.
- Always aim to find the best solution for both you, and the volunteer.

For further advice see FAQs: How do I deal with problems and complaints?

Exit Questionnaire

If a volunteer does leave your organisation, then an exit questionnaire or informal chat will help to highlight what you do really well and might reveal issues in your organisation that need addressing.

Exit questionnaires and chats are a useful tool for monitoring how you engage volunteers. Remember that people leaving your organisation are likely to be more candid than they would otherwise be.

Frequently asked questions



Frequently asked questions

How do I deal with problems and complaints?

You should have clear procedures in place for dealing with potential problems. Problems arising should be dealt with informally and quickly, whenever possible. Minor issues should be dealt with during supervision sessions with the aim of resolving them without entering into formal procedures.

Handling complaints from a volunteer

Informal discussion

A complaint from a volunteer, whether against a member of staff, your organisation generally or another volunteer, should be discussed with the volunteer. The volunteer's supervisor or manager should do this. If the issue cannot be resolved at this stage the volunteer should discuss the complaint with the area manager, or someone in a position at the next level of management responsibility.

Formal complaint

If the issue cannot be resolved at this level, volunteers should put their complaint in writing to the customer services manager, or equivalent, within one week. They should investigate the complaint and respond within four weeks of receiving the written complaint. Their decision is final.

Handling complaints about a volunteer

Informal discussion

If a complaint is received about a volunteer, the first step is to discuss the complaint with the complainant, and then the volunteer. The seriousness of the complaint will dictate the response. In some cases it may be appropriate to offer extra support, supervision and training. For more serious complaints, a formal approach may be required.

Formal resolution

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally by discussion, addressed through additional support or by further investigation by the area manager, customer services manager or equivalent, the volunteer may be given a written warning outlining the reason for the warning. In some cases, you may decide to withdraw the volunteering opportunity. The decision to do this should be a last resort.

Frequently asked questions

Right to appeal

If a volunteer has the volunteering opportunity withdrawn, they should be allowed the right of appeal to the head of your organisation/service. Their appeal should be sent in writing and can be investigated by the addressee or an officer appointed by the addressee. It is good practice to respond within four weeks of the appeal and the decision should be final. The volunteer can have a nominated person present at any meetings they are required to attend.

Dismissal of a Volunteer

Conducting the dismissal meeting

If a decision is made to dismiss the volunteer, the following guidelines might be useful:

- Be direct and explain clearly the reasons for the dismissal.
- Follow up the meeting with a letter to confirm the decision to dismiss the volunteer, outlining the reasons why. Include any information relating to their departure.
- Inform staff that the volunteer has left, but the reasons should remain confidential.

Exceptions

There are some occasions on which volunteers can be suspended immediately while an investigation is carried out. These include, but are not limited to, complaints of theft, assault, an act of violence, malicious damage, deliberate falsification of documents, harassment or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol and breaches in policy relating to the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The decision to suspend a volunteer needs to be confirmed in writing to the volunteer but in an emergency their supervisor/line manager may make the decision to suspend immediately pending written confirmation.

Frequently asked questions

What should I know about volunteers under 18?

Good practice guidelines

Good practice requires that parental/guardian consent is required for all volunteers under the age of 18 years: do check that your insurance covers this.

This shows that the volunteer's parent/guardian understands the role that the young person will be undertaking, what it involves, when and where they will be, and indicates that they consent to this.

Additional permission should be sought if the young person will be undertaking activities away from the premises where they normally volunteer.

General advice

People under the age of 18 are legally classed as minors (unless they are married) and organisations should take this into account when involving them as volunteers.

A risk assessment needs to be made, in order to decide whether placing a young person in a volunteer role would put them, or the people with whom they are working, at risk. However, by adhering to some basic principles most organisations can involve young people in their work:

- Young people should not be left unattended
- It is safer if young volunteers are supervised by two or more adults
- Potentially dangerous activities should not be undertaken

Volunteer coordinators should encourage volunteers in the under 18 age group to discuss their activities with their parents or guardians and highlight that they can be a good source of emotional support.

Safeguarding

You will need to carry out a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check on any persons who will come into close regular, unsupervised contact with under 18 year olds, or are likely develop a relationship of trust with a volunteer minor at any given time: this would typically be the volunteer coordinator/supervisor.

Frequently asked questions

It may not be necessary to perform similar checks on the entire staff, or volunteers who are unlikely to end up in a one-on-one situation with a young volunteer. Don't forget that efficient recruitment processes, training and supervision are also effective safeguarding tools when used alongside DBS checks.

Can I accept foreign nationals for volunteer roles?

Generally organisations are free to take on any individual for a genuine volunteer role; it is good practice to ask the individual to ensure that their visa gives them permission to volunteer in the UK.

European citizens

There are generally no restrictions on volunteering by people from the European Union or the European Economic Area (please consult the UK Border Agency if someone from Bulgaria, Romania or any other recently accessioned country wants to volunteer).

Refugees

Refugees are allowed to do any type of work including volunteering.

Asylum Seekers

Since 2014, asylum seekers can volunteer at any stage of the asylum process for registered charities, voluntary or public sector organisations, providing that the role 'is not a substitute for employment (i.e. fulfilling a role that a salaried worker would normally fulfil)'. (Home Office)

This should not be regarded as a substitute for immigration or legal advice. The UK Visas and Immigration can advise on any issues.

See the Home Office Asylum Policy Instruction: Permission to Work for further details:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/583192/Permission-to-work-v7.pdf

Frequently asked questions

Can someone volunteer while on benefits?

It is compulsory for volunteers to notify benefit advisers of their volunteering activities, but organisations working with volunteers cannot force the issue if a volunteer decides not to disclose this information. Organisations working with volunteers do not have a duty to inform the job centre who is volunteering for them.

The GOV.UK website states that you can volunteer and claim benefits if 'the only money you get from volunteering is to cover expenses, like travel costs' and 'you continue to meet the conditions of the benefit you get.'

Contact Jobcentre Plus for up to date information.

What if we can't afford to pay our volunteers' expenses?

If you can't afford volunteer expenses now, make it clear to any potential volunteers as soon as possible. Consider costing them into future funding applications, or applying for a small grant specifically to cover volunteer expenses.

You may not have enough money to cover travel, but are you able to reimburse volunteers for phone calls, stationery etc. Or are you able to supply tea and biscuits? Small rewards like this can go some way to showing appreciation for your volunteers.

What should be in a volunteer handbook?

Think about it from the perspective of someone outside your organisation. What do they need to know to help them perform their role safely and effectively?

Areas covered could include the following:

- Background information on your organisation
- What does your organisation do and why?
- Day-to-day life in your organisation
- Expenses
- Practical health and safety information
- Policies and procedures

Resources



Useful contacts and resources

Volunteering England

<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering>

Support and resources for all aspects of volunteering

Devon Voluntary Action

<http://www.devonva.org/volunteering>

Support for volunteers and organisations that wish to use them

Arts Council England

<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/>

Support and funding for cultural organisations

Civil Society

<http://www.civilsociety.co.uk/home>

Where civil society organisations share knowledge and spread best practice

Information Commissioner's Office

<https://ico.org.uk>

Information rights body

SW Federation of Museums and Art Galleries

<http://www.swfed.org.uk>

Resources and support for museums and art galleries

Do-it: Volunteering Organisation

<https://do-it.org>

UK national volunteering database

Vinspired

<https://vinspired.com>

Volunteering awards for 16-25 year olds

Volunteers' Week

<http://www.volunteersweek.org.uk>

Annual celebration (June) of the work that volunteers do

Volunteering Matters for our Community

<http://volunteeringmatters.org.uk/>

National charity leading volunteering policy and practice

Disclosure and Barring Service

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

Information about DBS checks

Health and Safety Executive

<http://www.hse.gov.uk>

Regulatory body for health and safety

National Council for Voluntary Organisations

<https://www.ncvo.org.uk>

Connects, represents and supports voluntary organisations

Exeter CVS: Council for Voluntary Service

<https://www.exetercvs.org.uk>

Help and training for volunteers and organisations



Last revised December 2018
www.exeterculture.com