

Other Volunteering Information Sheets

Other Information Sheets in this series include:

- Creating Volunteer Roles, Descriptions and Person Specifications
- Writing a Volunteer Policy
- Volunteer Risk Assessments
- Volunteer Insurance
- Marketing your Volunteering Opportunities
- Recruiting Volunteers
- Recruiting Trustees
- The Criminal Records Bureau and Screening of Paid Staff and Volunteers
- Induction of Volunteers
- Dealing with Volunteer Problems
- Volunteer Expenses
- Volunteering and State Benefits
- Useful Resources for Trustees

There are also Information Sheets for Support of Trustees

- Roles and Responsibilities of Trustees
- Induction of New Trustees
- Trustee Liability– and how to reduce the risks



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How can the Volunteer Centre help?

If you are a voluntary organisation or community group operating in southern Bedfordshire, we can help by:

- promoting your volunteering opportunities and signposting volunteers to your organisation
- providing information, guidance and training in all aspects of good practice and volunteer management.

Please give us a call on 01525 850559 or email volunteer@action-centralbeds.org.uk to arrange a meeting.

Voluntary and Community Action

Setting Up and Managing a Volunteer Programme

Volunteering Information Sheet No.14

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There are many things to consider before bringing volunteers into an organisation. Before you start to recruit for a new project/organisation you need to do a little homework to make sure that you are ready to take on new volunteers.

Volunteering Information Sheets

The Volunteer Centre has produced a series of Information Sheets on:

- marketing your volunteer opportunities
- recruitment and development of volunteers and trustees.



They are available to download from our website or by contacting the Volunteer Centre (details on back page).

Spend some time thinking about:

- what you want your volunteers to do
- what resources you have to manage them and meet their expenses
- how you will make them feel welcome and able to contribute fully.

Developing a volunteer programme is an excellent way to prepare for volunteer recruitment. It involves developing a Volunteer Policy and building in adequate resources to support the volunteer.

Developing a Volunteer Policy

While volunteering is very much about flexibility, it is still important to have procedures and rules in place to cope with the day-to-day situations that crop up.

A Volunteer Policy enables people to look at the benefits and challenges that come with working with volunteers, clarifies their role within the organisation, and helps lay the foundations for a successful volunteer programme.

Please see information sheet: Writing a Volunteer Policy.

Creating Volunteer Roles, Role Descriptions and Person Specifications

Writing a task or role description allows you to sit down and work out exactly what role volunteers will play in an organisation and what tasks you need them to do. Task descriptions may seem more suited to paid posts than to volunteer roles, but they are an important part of how you work with volunteers in your organisation. You should involve the volunteer co-ordinator and staff who will be working with and/or managing the volunteers.

Person specifications exist to make it easier for both volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations to realise what skills and abilities volunteers have or need. The person specification should come about as a result of the volunteer role description.

See our separate Information Sheet: Creating Volunteer Roles, Role Descriptions and Person Specifications





Recruiting and Appointing Volunteers

Finding the right volunteers for the opportunities that will exist in your organisation will be crucial. You will need to write an effective message(s) that sells the opportunities you have. You will also need to consider how and where you are going to advertise your opportunities.

See our Separate Information Sheet *Marketing Your Volunteering Opportunities*.

You will also need to design and develop a Volunteer Application process that is fair and appropriate; this will depend very much on your organisation and work that volunteers undertake within it. If you are working with children, young people and vulnerable adults you will also need to undertake CRB checks (known as disclosures) through a registered body.

Please see Information Sheet: *Recruiting Volunteers*.

You should also think hard about your organisation's induction process for new volunteers. Inductions should not consist of just giving volunteers policies to read and introducing them to the other volunteers and staff.

Please see our separate Information Sheet: *Induction of Volunteers*.

Whilst the involvement of volunteers is usually a positive experience for everyone, it is important to be aware that sometimes things can go wrong within a volunteer programme, and you may find that a volunteer has a complaint about another volunteer, a member of staff or

the organisation itself. You may also find that a volunteer's performance has declined or that someone else has complained about a volunteer's work, attitude or conduct. You will need to design or adapt procedures for dealing with such circumstances.

See our separate Information Sheet *Dealing with Volunteer Problems*.

Support and Supervision

Involving volunteers will also have an impact on your paid staff (or management committee) too. All volunteers need support and supervision. The form that this takes will vary wildly; volunteers at a one off event will need different support to a long term volunteer. What is important is that it is appropriate to the role, and the individual volunteer.

Some volunteers will need a lot of help and support from their organisation, perhaps due to a disability or mental health issues. Don't prejudice what support someone might need, ask them. Some people may need a little extra training or on the job coaching. Other volunteers may lack confidence and need reassurance that they are doing things correctly. Managing volunteers is a skill: staff who will be managing volunteers may need training, and managing volunteers will also take up some of their time.

It will help if you can assign a member of your team to the role of Volunteer Co-ordinator. In an organisation without staff this role could be undertaken by a trustee or member of your management committee. In organisations with paid staff it may be added onto the

VOLUNTEERS

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MANAGING VOLUNTEERS IS A SKILL – THE PERSON WHO IS MANAGING A VOLUNTEER(S) MAY NEED TRAINING.

responsibilities of an existing staff member. If you expect to have a large number of volunteers then a dedicated member of staff may be needed.

Volunteer Expenses

Often people think that, because volunteers are, by definition, unpaid, there are few financial implications for their involvement. Being unsalaried does not make them free. Volunteers also require space and equipment. There is no point in arranging for a volunteer to come into your office every Tuesday, if there is no desk space or computer available for them.

Reimbursing expenses is an important way to enable a wide range of people to volunteer in your organisation. Organisations that do not reimburse expenses are missing out on the skills and enthusiasm of people who would like to volunteer, but are unable to do so because it would leave them out of pocket. You will need to budget for reimbursing volunteers' out-of-pocket expenses.

You may also have to think about how you pay these expenses. It may be fine for paid staff to collect expenses at the end of the month in the form of a cheque, but volunteers should be reimbursed more regularly in cash.

See our separate Information Sheets *Volunteer Expenses and Volunteering and State Benefits*.

Insurance

You should make sure volunteers are covered by your insurance policies. Volunteers (like paid staff) may face risks of personal injury, liability for accidents, loss of property and damage to

property. The legal position is often complex, but the organisation may be ultimately liable for such risks. Liability often hinges on whether or not the organisation has taken 'reasonable care'.

Please see our separate Information Sheet: *Volunteer Insurance*.

Risk assessment

Risk assessment is a way of identifying and controlling the hazards that exist in an organisation's activities.

Risk assessment involves identifying all things which could cause people harm. By assessing risk you know where potential problems and dangers lie, and can therefore take measures to prevent harm.

Organisations have a duty of care towards their volunteers. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 also place a duty on employers to assess risk to those who may be affected by their activities, which would include volunteers.

Please see separate Information Sheet: *Volunteer Risk Assessments*.

Further Information and Resources

For further information and help with volunteer recruitment contact the Volunteering Officer. For advice on developing your own volunteering policy contact the Development Officer at Voluntary and Community Action.

- The Good Practice Guide 2nd Edition, K Bowgett, K Dickie and M Restall, Volunteering England, 2002.



CRB

THERE IS A DATABASE OF UMBRELLA BODIES ON THE CRB WEBSITE WHICH ORGANISATIONS CAN SEARCH TO FIND AN UMBRELLA BODY IN THEIR REGION WHICH SPECIALISES IN WORKING IN RELEVANT SECTORS.

USING THE SERVICES OF AN UMBRELLA BODY AVOIDS THE REGISTRATION FEE OF £300.