

How to contact us

To find out more about how we can help your organisation promote its volunteering opportunities and develop a volunteer programme, contact us for a chat or to arrange a meeting.

Our offices are open to the public between Monday and Friday from 9.00am until 5.00pm. You can contact us by telephone, email, or post, or visit our website.

Telephone: 01234 213100

Email: vb@bedfordvb.org.uk

Website: www.volunteeringbedford.org.uk

Address: 43 Bromham Road
Bedford
MK40 2AA

Volunteer Centre Bedford covers North and Mid Bedfordshire

Registered Charity No. 1086329

Member of Volunteering England and licensed Volunteer Centre

Volunteer-Involving Organisations

a guide to our services



Volunteer Centre

Bedford



Welcome

Supporting good practice



We want to help you develop your organisation's most valuable asset – your volunteers!

Volunteers are a valuable resource bringing enthusiasm, skills, experience, flexibility, fresh ideas and new ways of working.

Whether volunteers can offer a regular commitment, one-off, occasional, or seasonal help, every volunteer has a unique contribution to make.

Need help finding volunteers?

Volunteer Centres work with volunteer-involving organisations to promote and develop volunteering.

Our knowledge of local voluntary organisations, the public sector and community groups makes us the first point of contact for anyone interested in finding out about local volunteering opportunities.

Register with us and we'll promote your opportunities and signpost volunteers to your organisation.

The Volunteer Centre can offer advice, information and support on all aspects of volunteer recruitment and management.

Tips, advice, training and practical workshops relating to involving volunteers in your organisation - good practice, pitfalls and sources of further information.

Help to develop and promote clear volunteer policies and good practice covering:

- recruitment
- equal opportunities and diversity
- induction and training
- expenses
- supervision and support
- insurance
- health and safety
- grievance and disciplinary procedures
- confidentiality
- risk assessment
- setting up and running a volunteer programme
- meeting Investing in Volunteers (and other) quality standards on volunteering

Developing new opportunities

The Volunteer Centre can assist you in developing new volunteering opportunities. If you have not used volunteers before, or simply want help in identifying and developing volunteer roles and opportunities, we can advise you.

We offer individual consultations to develop potential opportunities within your organisation. At this stage we can help you look at:

- role descriptions
- person specifications
- volunteer recruitment
- what to expect from a referral from us
- how to welcome potential volunteers
- interview and selection procedures
- further help and support for volunteer co-ordinators

We look forward to working with you, please call for an organisation and opportunity registration pack. Our Volunteer Centre staff would be happy to meet with you to discuss how we can help.

How we work with potential volunteers

Our goal is to match a volunteer's interests, skills and availability with appropriate opportunities.

Potential volunteers can access Volunteer Centre services via the Internet, through telephone enquiries and informal face-to-face interviews.

Some people have a good idea of the type of activity they would like to get involved in and are happy for us to pass their details straight to the relevant organisation.

Others may have been unaware of the range of opportunities available to them, or have yet to decide what they would like to do. In these circumstances we would encourage these potential volunteers to look at more than one organisation before making a commitment.

Volunteer Centres are committed to promoting equal opportunities and challenging barriers to volunteering.

We offer impartial advice and guidance to people seeking to volunteer and do not make judgements on a volunteer's suitability for a role.

We do not take out references or undertake criminal records checks on volunteers.

Promoting your opportunities

The Volunteer Centre works with organisations to stimulate interest in volunteering and community activity. Follow these five steps to help us to help you.

Step one – Register your organisation and opportunities with the Volunteer Centre. Call us for an organisation and opportunity registration pack or download one from our website.

Step two – Information on your activities or services helps prospective volunteers get a clearer picture of what you do. Keep us up-to-date with leaflets, publicity materials or newsletters in order to help us to promote your opportunities effectively.

Step three – Referrals. If a prospective volunteer expresses an interest in your opportunities we will contact you and pass on their details. Please respond promptly to any referrals we make. Remember that volunteers are likely to be looking at more than one organisation before making a decision. This is your chance to enthuse about your organisation.

Step four – Invite the prospective volunteer for an informal chat or interview. Remember it is your responsibility to assess the volunteer's suitability for a role before taking up references or a Criminal Records Bureau check.

Promoting your opportunities

Step five – Keep us informed. Let us know if you take on any of the volunteers we refer to you, or if an opportunity is no longer available. This will help to prevent us from referring volunteers to you unnecessarily. We will check the information we hold with you annually and you can add or remove opportunities at any time.

In addition to our one-to-one sessions with people interested in volunteering we can also promote opportunities via:

- the national volunteering website www.do-it.org.uk
- our directory of volunteering opportunities
- volunteering events
- information days
- articles in local newspapers
- newsletters and publications
- our website
- national campaigns and events

Don't forget your own promotion is equally important; we can advise you on how to promote your organisation and opportunities through your own networks, publications and promotional materials.