



Introduction to Recruiting Volunteers

Volunteering Kingston Guidance

1. Getting Ready to Recruit
2. Recruitment Process
3. Recruitment Campaign

Before recruiting volunteers, make sure your organisation is “volunteer-ready” by completing the **Volunteer Management Health Check**.

Getting ready to recruit

Define your volunteer roles

Before recruiting, we advise carefully planning how volunteers will be involved in the organisation and creating **clearly defined volunteer roles**.

When developing roles, think about the needs of the organisation as well as people’s motivation for volunteering. These may include: helping others; learning new skills; gaining confidence; meeting new people. Can you adapt your volunteer roles so that they better fulfil individual’s motivations?

Remember: **volunteers are not free**. It requires time and resources to involve volunteers effectively, and ensure they are properly supported.

Think flexibly

Anybody can volunteer, but people have different needs and availability. If all your volunteer roles are pretty similar, can you develop a new role which is a bit different?

For example, if all your roles require knowledge of computers and the ability to volunteer for one day a week, could you promote a one-off volunteer role for an event, that doesn’t involve computers? Having a variety of opportunities not only helps attract a different types of volunteers, but also means existing volunteers are more likely to stay volunteering for your organisation for longer, as even if their circumstances change, they will still be able to be involved.

Job Substitution

The distinction between a “volunteer role” and a “job” is very important. The NCVO advises that volunteer involvement should “complement and supplement the work of paid staff, but not displace paid staff or undercut their pay and conditions”. To achieve this, volunteer roles should be developed in consultation with local union representatives, employers and volunteer managers.

Recruitment Process

Writing a Role Description

Once you have defined the roles, and ensured they are appropriate for volunteers, you should write a clear and concise role description for each role. Remember to include:

- An introduction to your organisation, and why the work you do is important

- The tasks or responsibilities of the volunteer
- Practical details such as location and expected time commitment
- Benefits for the volunteer, including if you cover expenses and provide references
- The skills you will require volunteers to have, and the training you will provide
- Avoid language which suggests paid employment, e.g. “part-time” or “work”

Volunteer roles should be **flexible**, so the role description does not have to be set in stone. However, it helps to ensure you recruit suitable volunteers.

Recruitment Process

Decide your recruitment process before promoting the role. It should be fair and consistent for all applicants. Your process may include the following:

- **Application Form:** these can help gather useful information, but can also be a barrier for some volunteers. Consider if you can be flexible, and invite volunteers to complete the form at your site.
- **Meeting volunteers:** inviting volunteers for an informal chat is a good way to make sure they understand the role and are a good fit.
- **DBS Checks:** not all volunteers need a DBS check. Make sure it is necessary before asking for one, and consider if volunteers be able to start before this is complete?
- **Feedback:** If you meet with a volunteer who you do not think is suitable, try to give them constructive feedback. You can always refer back to the role description when doing this.

The Recruitment Campaign

Plan your recruitment campaign

Before launching a recruitment campaign, think about your **target audience** and their needs. Your audience may be based on the skills you are looking for, the location of the role, or perhaps you have identified a group that is underrepresented amongst your volunteers. Tailor your message to your audience: where do they go, and what do they read?

You should also agree some clear objectives, such as:

- Target number of volunteers
- Length of campaign
- Budget

Where to promote

If you have clearly defined your target audience, this will help inform you where to focus your campaign. For suggestions of where to promote roles, see our Recruitment Page.

To simplify the process, have one point to direct all volunteers to. For example, this could be a dedicated page on your website or the volunteer advertisement on Volunteer Connect.

Track your progress

Whilst recruiting, keep a log of where new volunteers heard about your role so that you can monitor which is the most effective means of recruitment.