

SECTION 2

# Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers

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### Do you think your organisation could use volunteers?

Carefully consider these questions first:

1. Why does your organisation want to involve volunteers?
2. What does your organisation want volunteers to do?
3. What qualities and skills does your organisation want the volunteers to have?
4. How will your organisation find volunteers?
5. How will your organisation select which volunteers they want?
6. How will your organisation manage the volunteers after selection?

A useful perspective towards volunteering is, 'We need volunteers to thrive,' rather than, 'We need volunteers to survive.' Think through these questions carefully – your organisation will be much more effective in their volunteer management with some strategic thinking. It's good practice to put a recruitment and selection process in place before looking for volunteers, but still worth thinking about even if you already involve volunteers.

More information about the recruitment and selection of volunteers can be found in section 3 at this link [www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/As-Good-As-They-Give-Workbook-2-Attracting-and-Selecting-Volunteers.pdf](http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/As-Good-As-They-Give-Workbook-2-Attracting-and-Selecting-Volunteers.pdf)

### Role Description

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A volunteer role description, or profile, is a document which details the specific activities that a particular volunteer is involved in. A volunteer role description forms an important part of an organisation's recruitment process because it gives the volunteer an accurate idea of the work they will be doing and ensures that the volunteer is attracted by the actual tasks as well as the organisation's wider aims. It also helps a volunteer manager to focus on what kind of volunteer they need, which will help them avoid mismatching people and tasks.

#### Areas to Consider:

- Purpose of role
- Availability and location
- Main activities/tasks
- Qualities/experience/skills sought (where relevant)
- Training provision
- Main point of contact/support

A detailed volunteer role description is particularly useful if you are recruiting volunteers through EBCDA or another third party. It saves time and disappointment on both sides if a potential volunteer knows as much as possible about the role before contacting the organisation.

More information about role descriptions can be found in section 2 at this link [www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/As-Good-As-They-Give-Workbook-2-Attracting-and-Selecting-Volunteers.pdf](http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/As-Good-As-They-Give-Workbook-2-Attracting-and-Selecting-Volunteers.pdf)

## SECTION 2 - Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers

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### Code of Conduct

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A useful tool to go alongside a volunteer role description is a code of conduct or code of practice. It provides direction and guidance to a volunteer by setting out expected standards of behaviour in the organisation and clarifying the consequences of contravening these standards.

A simple search online will help you find several examples of codes of conduct or codes of practice. A good start may be to have a look at the The Code of Good Governance at the link below [www.nicva.org/sites/default/files/d7content/attachments-articles/revised\\_code\\_of\\_good\\_governance.pdf](http://www.nicva.org/sites/default/files/d7content/attachments-articles/revised_code_of_good_governance.pdf)

### Advertising/Marketing Volunteering Opportunities

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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 persevere when fostering relationships with other organisations. Good places to advertise volunteering opportunities include your organisation's website, Facebook, Twitter, other social media, EBCDA, Community NI, Volunteer Now, local newspapers or leaflet drops to homes and businesses.

The application process that you have for volunteers will very much depend on your organisation and the work that volunteers undertake within it.

Whatever an organisation's recruitment approach, it is important to develop a system that suits their needs but also does not discourage potential volunteers or place unnecessary obstacles in their way.

An information pack is a good resource to have available to send to people interested in volunteering and can include a covering letter, an organisation leaflet, a role description, volunteer registration form and contact details of the appropriate person to contact.

Guidelines on advertising and marketing volunteering opportunity can be found here [www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2021/07/Writing-Volunteering-Opportunities.pdf](http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2021/07/Writing-Volunteering-Opportunities.pdf)

### Initial Chat

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Part of the selection process is to carry out an initial chat with the potential volunteer. You've had the opportunity to read though their completed volunteer registration form and they've had a think about why your organisation might be right for them. The chat provides an opportunity for both parties to find out about each other and assess whether the pairing will be a good match.

#### Some guidelines to consider are:

- When arranging the location think about accessibility, atmosphere and privacy
- This is not a job interview! Keep it casual
- Be an active listener. Pay close attention to what the volunteer is saying (or perhaps not saying) during

## SECTION 2 - Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers

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the meeting

- Don't promise anything if you are unsure. It may not be your decision if your organisation involves the volunteer, make sure the volunteer is aware of this
- The volunteer may also be more suitable for another role in your organisation rather than the one they have shown interest in. Be open to change

### What to bring

- Completed volunteer registration form
- Current list of volunteering opportunities in your organisation and role descriptions
- Details of organisation and their work
- Initial chat pro forma
- Volunteer pack (if you have one)

### How to chat

- Make sure the potential volunteer feels welcome – introductions, offer a cuppa
- Thank them for their interest and for coming to meeting
- Explain what the meeting involves
- Give a brief description of your organisation and volunteer roles
- Go through any blanks on volunteer registration form
- Go through initial chat pro forma – these questions review questions from the volunteer registration form as well as obtaining more detail
- Discuss possible volunteer roles
- Thank volunteer for co-operation in answering questions
- Explain what will happen next

- Check volunteer contact details

### Volunteer Agreement

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Volunteer agreements can be used to set out both an organisation's commitment to its volunteers, and also, what it hopes to achieve 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 have been set. 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 they are treated, to avoid the creation of mutual obligations that might be regarded as a contract.

### Typically in an agreement an organisation might commit to:

- Provide volunteers with a written role description
- Provide a full induction and any training necessary for the role
- Provide a named supervisor or person that 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
- Implement good health and safety practice
- Provide insurance for volunteers
- Ask for a reference for the volunteer

## SECTION 2 - Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers

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### Volunteers might be expected to:

- Carry out their tasks in a way which 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

### It is suggested to use 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.

### Induction/Settling in Period

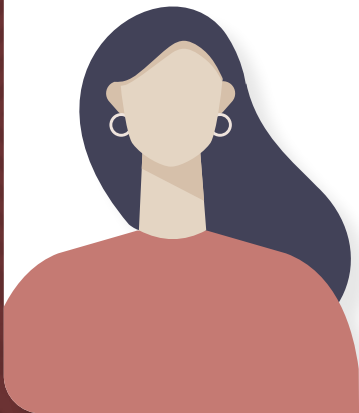
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The purpose of volunteer inductions are to ensure that volunteers feel comfortable, can carry out their volunteering role as effectively as possible and gain a full understanding of your organisation and its policies and procedures. Inductions (group or individual) coupled with a volunteer handbook are often very effective. It can also be helpful to use an induction checklist as a record of topics covered for the organisation and the volunteer.

A format of an induction checklist can be accessed here. [www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2019/10/Volunteer-Induction-Checklist.pdf](http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2019/10/Volunteer-Induction-Checklist.pdf)

This should be adapted to suit your organisation.

Having an agreed period as a settling in period is also very effective. It gives the organisation and the individual a, 'Way out,' should the fit not work. It's also a time to collect references and any other useful information.



## SECTION 2 - Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers

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### Why ask for References?

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References are comments from people who know the potential volunteer in either a work or social context. Whether or not you ask for references depends on the type of work that the volunteer will be involved in. There is no legal requirement to take up references, but reasons might include:

- To check that the person is who they say they are
- To check suitability for a particular role
- To add information not disclosed at the initial chat
- To demonstrate to volunteers, staff and service users that volunteers are an integral part of the service and therefore need to be checked formally
- To satisfy everyone that reasonable precautions have been taken to ensure the organisation has exercised its, 'Duty of Care,' towards its service users
- You may also need to undertake Access NI checks at this stage, depending on the volunteer role.

More info about Access NI checks can be found here [www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2021/06/AccessNI-What-you-need-to-know.pdf](http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2021/06/AccessNI-What-you-need-to-know.pdf)

Remember to make it clear who you will accept references from e.g. responsible person (not a relative). They could be a previous employer (paid or unpaid), the leader of a club or faith group, support worker or tutor for example.

You will find some helpful guidance at the link below for volunteer agreement, induction and references, particularly sections 4 and 5. [www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/As-Good-As-They-Give-Workbook-2-Attracting-and-Selecting-Volunteers.pdf](http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/As-Good-As-They-Give-Workbook-2-Attracting-and-Selecting-Volunteers.pdf)

