

# A PLAN FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

## A SUMMARY

Before beginning to recruit volunteers, answer the following questions:

### 1. Why does the organisation want to involve volunteers?

You need to consider **why** you want **volunteers** in your organisation - don't just go and recruit volunteers without identifying clear reasons for their involvement and communicating it to everyone involved in your organisation. Are there benefits to your organisation of involving people from the community - benefits that are not purely economic? Will you benefit from a vast array of skills, experience and flexibility? What can you give back to volunteers? Thinking through this will help you to develop a clear value base for involving volunteers. Your value base should acknowledge that volunteers bring a unique contribution that is different from, but complementary to, that of paid staff. It should also include the reciprocity of the volunteering relationship and acknowledge the benefit to the volunteer.

### 2. What does the organisation want volunteers to do?

You now need to identify clear roles for your volunteers. The attached pro-forma will assist you to draw all this information together into a volunteer role description. The role description will focus your thoughts on what you want volunteers to do and may help you to break down the role into a range of tasks which may require several people to complete. Please note it is a **ROLE** description not a **JOB** description. Volunteering is not a contract of employment - and it is vital that the wording you use does not create any confusion.

### 3. What qualities/skills does the organisation want the volunteer to have?

Once you have identified what it is you need volunteers to do, then you can decide which skills, abilities, experience you may need the volunteers to have. The attached pro-forma will assist you to draw this information together into a Volunteer Specification. Not all volunteers will have the skills you need - but you may be able to give them the skills through training or work based support and mentoring.

### 4. How will the organisation find volunteers?

Once you have identified what you need volunteers to do, you can start to look for volunteers who can fill those roles. Use your Volunteer Specification to think about who could carry out the roles and where you might find these people. Then plan how you will communicate with them.

### Selling the Volunteer Role

People look for different things in a volunteering experience. Your Recruitment Campaign should give a snap shot of the benefits of volunteering that will appeal to a range of people.

## **Targeted Recruitment**

If you have a very specific role then you may find targeted recruitment more effective i.e. use specific images and wording, do talks or put posters up in specific places that will attract the attention of a specific type of person. For example, if you are looking for people with knowledge of/interest in working with young people, one strategy might be to recruit from child care and social work courses at the local colleges.

## **Your Message**

Keep it short and sweet - and remember to SELL what the volunteer role and your organisation can offer the potential volunteer. Remember point one of the recruitment plan - volunteering is a two-way process! What can your organisation offer a volunteer?-training, skills development, fun, a social network, support, flexibility, a chance to make a difference to someone's life/local community? The following are ideas on how this message can be packaged– provide positive quotes from present volunteers, images of volunteers having fun, attending training or events, describing the impact of the volunteering, etc, . These can all help to promote your volunteering opportunities.

## **Relieving Fears**

Fears can become barriers that prevent people from volunteering. Your recruitment campaign should not only sell what the role offers but also relieve people's fears. For example, a financial worry that volunteering may cost money to do, are relieved by knowing 'out-of-pocket expenses are re-imbursed'; being nervous about having to complete training as it is some time since you were in formal education can be relieved by knowing it is 'fun and relaxed training' and 'support is offered'; worries of over commitment is relieved by being given a realistic idea of how much time each week/month is required for the role and the level of flexibility within this. However, it is important to remember that some barriers cannot be removed. If your youth club opens on a Friday night, then you need volunteers that are free on a Friday night, there is no flexibility around what night of the week they volunteer. What are the selling points of the particular role you are recruiting for? What fears/barriers might you have to address in your recruitment campaign?

## **Avoid going public until the plan is done...**

### **EXAMPLE: Selling a Volunteer Role - Role: Youth Leader**

#### **Main sell**

'Want to be an invaluable part of a fun, committed and lively team? Want to develop new skills in working with young people or practice existing skills? We offer fun, relaxed training, a chance to meet new people, great support and 're-imbursed out-of-pocket expenses.'

#### **Further details**

'Presently, Youth Leaders meet Wednesdays 6.30pm-9.30pm with occasional planning meetings approximately once every two months. We are flexible and supportive of volunteers who have caring responsibilities'

## **If interested**

'Curious? Contact our friendly co-ordinator James for more details: T: 028-----, drop him an email at james@----- or pop in and see him at -----.'

You have to make it easy for a potential volunteer to get in touch - there needs to be someone available to deal with their enquiry.

How you present this information is up to you. Is it a poster, website, recruitment talk, stand at a local event, flier, etc? You should try to ensure that your volunteer opportunities are advertised as widely as possible, in order to enable the widest cross-section of people to apply. The layout, catchy heading, pictures used, colours, enthusiasm of the presenter (if a talk) will all impact on how you grab the attention of the potential volunteer. Notice how the advert sells what a volunteer will gain from the role and also subtly relieves fears by using 'flexible' 'supportive' 'friendly' 'fun' 'great support' 're-imbusement of out-of-pocket expenses' and 'realistic time commitments'. There should be enough basic information for a potential volunteer to decide if this role meets their motivations, needs and availability.

### **5. How will the organisation select which volunteers they want?**

Once you have put your message out that you need volunteers, you must be ready to select the right number and the right type of volunteers, to fulfil your needs. Choosing a selection procedure will depend on the role which you are recruiting for - the rigor of the procedure will depend on the degree of risk which the role poses to the volunteer, the client group and your organisation. It may involve registration/application forms, references, informal chats/interviews, police records checks, training and a settling in/ taster period. Be consistent in the procedure you choose to use - remember equality of opportunity.

### **6. How will the organisation manage the volunteers after selection?**

Once you have selected the volunteers you want to involve in your organisation, you must also think about how you are going to keep them. If possible, it would be beneficial to have thought about these issues before recruitment has begun. Effective management ensures that you keep volunteers motivated and that everyone continues to benefit from the relationship. You may want to consider drawing up a volunteer agreement, carrying out inductions, using a settling in period, providing training, a clear handbook and code of practice, as well as providing support and supervision. Addressing barriers to volunteering at every stage of volunteer involvement will help create a mutually beneficial relationship.

More information on all of these areas is provided in As Good As They Give workbooks:

- Workbook 1 [Planning Volunteer Involvement](#)
- Workbook 2 [Attracting & Selecting Volunteers](#)
- Workbook 3 [Managing & Motivating Volunteers](#)
- Workbook 4 [Managing Volunteer Training](#)
- Workbook 5 [Volunteers and the Wider Organisation](#)

Please click on the links above to download or go to the [publication section](#) of Volunteer Now's website.

## Volunteer Role Description - Planning Document

Role title: \_\_\_\_\_

Main purpose: \_\_\_\_\_

### Questions/Issues

#### 1. What?

List all tasks in order or priority, identifying any client/user group the volunteer will be working with. What might be difficult or unpleasant?

#### 2. When?

Set times or flexible? Hours per week? Days, evenings, weekends? Short or long term involvements?

#### 3. Where?

Include everywhere the volunteer will be expected to go.

#### 4. With whom?

Will volunteer work alone or with other volunteers or paid colleagues?

#### 5. Support, supervision, training

Who will support/supervise the volunteer? What training support, supervision will be needed?

#### 6. Expenses, etc

What expenses do you offer? Travel, telephone, stationery, meals, etc? What else do you offer to help volunteers to carry out their role, e.g. childcare?

#### 7. What the role offers volunteers

Make two lists - what the role does and does not offer. A challenge? Friendship? A chance to change things? Personal development? Training? etc.

### Notes

## Volunteer Specification - Planning Document

Role title: \_\_\_\_\_

Main purpose: \_\_\_\_\_

### Questions/Issues

### Notes

#### What?

What skills, experience, attitudes, etc., are needed?  
What is needed to work with clients? Physical requirements? Qualities to cope with difficult aspects?

#### 2. When?

Minimum/maximum time commitment? How important is reliability? And flexibility?

#### 3. Where?

Does volunteer need own transport, or be willing to use public transport? Access requirements?

#### 4. With whom?

What special requirements arise from working alone or in a team? Initiative? Team skills?

#### 5. Support, supervision, training

What is expected in terms of e.g. willingness to ask for support or attendance at supervision or training?

#### 6. Expenses, etc

Does the volunteer have to fill in forms to claim expenses? Are you expecting people to be out of pocket?

#### 7. What the role offers volunteers

You can not fill this space in advance - it is up to the volunteer!

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Reasonable precautions have been taken to ensure information in this publication is accurate. However it is not intended to be legally comprehensive; it is designed to provide guidance in good faith without accepting liability. If relevant, we therefore recommend you take appropriate professional advice before taking any action on the matters covered herein. Charity Registration No. NIC101399.. Company Limited by Guarantee No. NI602399. Registered in Northern Ireland.