

# Toolkit for Assessing Funding Applications that Involve Volunteers

*This toolkit was originally developed by Volunteer Now with input from BIG Lottery, Community Foundation for N Ireland, Belfast City Council, BBC Children in Need, Lloyds TSB Foundation and the Public Health Agency.*

## Purpose of Toolkit

Volunteers are central to many funding applications and they add value to a range of work across the voluntary, community and statutory sectors. However volunteering works best when it is resourced and supported and when systems are in place for the effective involvement of volunteers. This toolkit aims to *help funders ensure the quality of volunteer involvement when considering funding an organisation or awarding a contract where volunteers play a significant part in delivering services. While practices need to be contextualised to the activity volunteers are carrying out, volunteering no matter where should be valued and safe.*

## How to Use

The toolkit is designed in such a way as to stand alone for use when assessing application forms or in telephone/face to face interviews. However it is recognised that funders will have their own assessment checklists and this document could be used simply as a resource for an Assessor to become familiar with the standards expected when involving volunteers, bearing in mind, size of organisation, activity being carried out and number of volunteers.

The toolkit is based on the Investing in Volunteers Quality standard for Volunteer Management. It is recognised that not all organisations will have all these practices in place and it is hoped that funders will work with organisations to develop the practice through the period of their funding cycle, perhaps even supporting them to do so if that practice is relevant to the context of the organisation being funded. Assistance, including training and publications based on the standards, is available from Volunteer Now.

Tel: 028 9023 2020    E: [info@volunteernow.co.uk](mailto:info@volunteernow.co.uk)    W: [www.volunteernow.co.uk](http://www.volunteernow.co.uk)

Further help for Funders is available in the “Guidance Notes for Funders Assessing Against Indicators in the Funder’s Toolkit” at the end of this toolkit and by contacting Volunteer Now or visiting their website.

# Toolkit for Assessing Funding Applications that Involve Volunteers

Name of Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Volunteers: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Application for: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Indicators	Practices needed to demonstrate Indicator	Consider if practice is important to this application (Mark with *)	Is this practice in place? (Yes/No/Partly)	Notes
<b>1: The basis for volunteer involvement.</b>  There is an expressed commitment to the involvement of volunteers, and recognition throughout the organisation that volunteering is a two-way process, which benefits volunteers and the organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Value base and rationale for volunteer involvement.</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear up to date policy on volunteer involvement in the organisation with appropriate policies &amp; procedures for volunteers</li> </ul>			
<b>2: How the organisation resources volunteering.</b>  The organisation commits appropriate resources to working with all volunteers, such as money, management, staff time and materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Person(s) assigned responsibility for volunteer management.</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment to resourcing volunteers' travel, training, social events, childcare, materials used by volunteers, volunteer support expenses.</li> </ul>			

Indicators	Practices needed to demonstrate Indicator	Consider if practice is important to this application (Mark with *)	Is this practice in place? (Yes/No/Partly)	Notes
<p><b>3: Diversity in volunteering.</b></p> <p>The organisation is open to involving volunteers who reflect the diversity of the local community and actively seeks to do this in accordance with its stated aims.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Openness to involving volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities.</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diversity of volunteer team is monitored and steps taken to target under represented groups.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>4: The development of volunteer roles.</b></p> <p>The organisation develops appropriate roles for volunteers in line with its aims and objectives, which are of value to the volunteers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organisation develops roles for volunteers, providing clear information on what is involved and what is needed from volunteers.</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is flexibility around developing and adapting tasks to suit needs, abilities and interests of individuals.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>5: Steps taken to protect volunteers.</b></p> <p>The organisation is committed to ensuring that, as far as possible, volunteers are protected from physical, financial and emotional harm arising from volunteering.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organisation considers risks to volunteers, has insurance in place and adheres to legislation such as health and safety, data protection</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy and procedures on reimbursement of actual out of pocket expenses are clear.</li> </ul>			

Indicators	Practices needed to demonstrate Indicator	Consider if practice is important to this application (Mark with *)	Is this practice in place? (Yes/No/Partly)	Notes
<p><b>6: Fair recruitment procedures.</b></p> <p>The organisation is committed to using fair, efficient and consistent recruitment procedures for all potential volunteers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate procedures for matching volunteers with roles, including an opportunity to try things out.</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisation is following Government guidelines for safeguarding</li> </ul>			
<p><b>7: Volunteer induction.</b></p> <p>Clear procedures are put in place for introducing new volunteers to their role, the organisation, its work, policies, practices, relevant personnel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full induction to organisation and training for role including scope/boundaries of role.</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedures for dealing with problems with volunteers, including complaints.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>8: Volunteer support and supervision needs.</b></p> <p>The organisation takes account of the varying support and supervision needs of volunteers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a clear contact person for volunteers with two way communication systems between volunteers and staff..</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One to one /group support and supervision opportunities appropriate to role and volunteers' needs</li> </ul>			
<p><b>9: Recognition of volunteer contributions.</b></p> <p>The whole organisation is aware of the need to give volunteers recognition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers are recognised in different ways from all levels with opportunities for volunteers to input views and get feedback on their involvement</li> </ul>			

## APPENDIX ONE: Additional Information on Good Practice Standards

These notes outline best practice standards for volunteer involvement. It is important that this information is contextualised to the different settings that volunteers find themselves in. Regardless of the role, volunteers deserve to be valued and kept safe. Determining the formality and relevance of the practice required will depend on the nature of the activity being carried out and the risks involved.

### Indicator No 1

***There is an expressed commitment to the involvement of volunteers, and recognition throughout the organisation that volunteering is a two-way process which benefits volunteers and the organisation.***

- A **volunteer policy** sets the framework for how volunteers will be valued and involved in an organisation. This is an important document that may provide evidence for various practices. 'Based on principles of equality and diversity' means that equal opportunities, inclusion and diversity should be reflected in every aspect of the policy. A policy should include the organisation's position statement on equal opportunities/diversity in particular if the organisation has identified specific volunteers they are seeking to attract. A volunteer policy should indicate dates for regular review. *Template Volunteer Policy Framework is available from <https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2019/04/Volunteer-Policy-Framework.pdf>*
- Volunteers should only be included in **organisational policies** if appropriate e.g. they should not be included if policies relate to staff terms and conditions of employment (e.g. discipline, grievance procedures, etc.) but they may be included in e.g. the overall health and safety policy.
- Policies should reflect appropriate **volunteer management language/terminology** and ensure differences between volunteers and staff are recognised. *Volunteering and the Law Information Sheet is available from <http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/fs/doc/publications/volunteering-and-the-law-information-sheet-nl.pdf>*
- Evidence needs to show that volunteers are **valued** throughout the organisation (by management committee, management, staff, volunteers, clients, supporters) and that they are an important part of, maybe even integral to the organisation. Evidence needs to show the **commitment at all levels** of the organisation to making volunteering inclusive and ensuring that volunteering is a two way process.
- Evidence needs to show that organisations **review** their volunteering programme to ensure relevance, currency and effectiveness. Evidence may include systems for gaining feedback from volunteers on how policy and procedures impact on them or examples of where policy or procedure has been reviewed.

## Indicator No 2

***The organisation commits appropriate resources to working with all volunteers, such as money, management, staff time and materials.***

- Evidence needs to show that someone has been assigned **responsibility for volunteer involvement** and that they have been informed of their responsibilities. Where this role is taken on by a volunteer, e.g. by a member of the management committee, a volunteer role/task description would be appropriate evidence. Where staff have responsibility, job descriptions need to reflect this.
- Any specific **volunteer management training** should be evidenced but transferable skills from staff management are also appropriate. Induction should show that those who work with volunteers have been made aware of the organisation's volunteer policies and procedures and provided with the necessary information or training on the needs and issues of the volunteers involved.
- Minutes of team meetings are acceptable evidence where **volunteer issues or representatives** are identified.
- Evidence needs to show that there has been some **planning** in relation to volunteer involvement and its future development. This may include targets for increasing number and diversity of volunteers, volunteer opportunities, improving areas of practice such as training or recognition.
- **Expenditure for the volunteer programme** might include travel expenses, volunteer training, refreshments for volunteer social events, volunteer support costs, child care costs and the cost of materials used by volunteers. Organisations could also show how they aim to make volunteering accessible for all by making reasonable adjustments or making resources available for volunteers with particular needs. Procedures should show that it is **reimbursement for out of pocket expenses** - lump sum payments and regular gifts are not recommended due to inland revenue implications. *Volunteers and Expenses Information Sheet is available from <https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2019/03/Volunteers-Expenses-Information-Sheet.pdf>*

## Indicator No 3

***The organisation is open to involving volunteers who reflect the diversity of the local community and actively seeks to do this in accordance with its stated aims.***

- Evidence needs to show that there is an active **commitment to increasing diversity** in the volunteer pool. Organisations could show how they are targeting specific groups that are under represented in their existing volunteer teams. If the organisation's community is limited e.g. a women's group that involves only female volunteers then the rationale should be clear for this as per the organisation's aims.
- Evidence needs to show how the organisation's commitment to **diversity is communicated** to volunteers and staff.
- Evidence needs to show how the organisations' **commitment to diversity is portrayed** both visually and in writing so as the organisation appears welcoming to a wide range of people.

The '**community**' may be interpreted as the geographic, cultural or service user group if appropriate.

- Evidence needs to show that opportunities for volunteers are **marketed widely** in order to attract a diverse range of volunteers.
- There should be evidence to show that the organisation knows what their local community looks like and aims to make sure that their **volunteer base is reflective** of this. Evidence should show how the monitoring data of the organisation's volunteer base is compared with that of the community within which it operates and with its client/user group. It would be useful to have documentation showing how the organisation addresses issues of under representation.
- Best practice guidance on how to develop diversity in a volunteering programme is available from the Equality and Diversity section of Volunteer Management resources. <https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/12/Diversity-in-Volunteering-Information-Sheet-NOV18.pdf>



## Indicator No 4

***The organisation develops appropriate roles for volunteers in line with its aims and objectives, which are of value to the volunteers.***

- **Task/role descriptions** should provide as much information as possible about the volunteer role but terminology should not imply an employment relationship. A Recruitment Plan for Involving Volunteers is available from <https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2019/04/Recruitment-Plan-for-Volunteers-Information-Sheet.pdf>
  - Details of the **skills, attitude, experience** etc can be included with the task descriptions showing that the organisation has given some thought to how they can match volunteers to the roles.
  - An organisation may have a variety of different roles, or it may be able to provide a variety of tasks within one role. Where possible, organisations should show how flexible they are and that they are **designing a range of roles or tasks** that can suit a range of abilities and interests and that are in line with the aims and objectives in the organisation's annual plan.
  - An organisation should be able to show that they are open to **meeting the needs of volunteers** where possible, taking into account the varying abilities of volunteers when designing roles and being flexible or willing to adapt roles.

## Indicator No 5

***The organisation is committed to ensuring that, as far as possible, volunteers are protected from physical, financial and emotional harm arising from volunteering.***

- Completed **risk assessments** should be available for all the role descriptions. If organisations are involving vulnerable groups then evidence needs to show that thought has been given to their safe involvement. A Risk Assessment and Volunteers Information Sheet is available from <https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2019/03/Risk-Assessment-Volunteering-Information-Sheet.pdf>
- **Insurance** certificates and guidelines should clearly show the cover for volunteers.
- Evidence needs to show that the organisation has a commitment to trying to cover **out of pocket expenses**, making volunteering accessible for all.

See also guidance notes under indicator 2 around eligible expenses and additional expenses.

- Organisations need to ensure procedures are in place in line with current **Data Protection legislation**. More information can be obtained from the Information Commissioner's Office at <https://ico.org.uk/>

## Indicator No 6

***The organisation is committed to using fair, efficient and consistent recruitment procedures for all potential volunteers.***

- Evidence should show that organisations are providing volunteers with **key information** to help them make decisions as part of the recruitment process.
- This information could include (depending on the role):
  - the type of volunteering opportunities available (roles);
  - the application process;
  - the selection or matching process;
  - whether there is any compulsory training;
  - a summary of the organisation's expectations of volunteers; and
  - what volunteers can expect from the organisation.
- **Accessibility issues** also need to be addressed so information may be in different formats or with an option for oral application.
- Evidence should show that procedures are in place and used consistently to **recruit and match** volunteers with the roles outlined in 4. Procedures should address how individual's needs will be considered during the recruitment process e.g. literacy issues, disability, language.
- Evidence needs to show that potential volunteers are recruited using the **criteria** laid down in the role descriptions and specifications and are only asked for relevant information.
- Evidence should show that **volunteer motivation** is considered by the organisation during recruitment.
- Best practice guidance on how to attract and select volunteers is available from workbook 2 of the 'As Good As They Give' Resources- available from <https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/As-Good-As-They-Give-Workbook-2-Attracting-and-Selecting-Volunteers.pdf>

- Evidence needs to show how **unsuccessful applications** are dealt with at any stage of recruitment. Providing volunteers with feedback about why they are not successful and signposting to other organisations such as Volunteer Centres is useful.
- Evidence needs to show that organisations are open to letting volunteers “**try out**” volunteering through introductory visits or settling in periods, if appropriate.
- Evidence needs to show whether or not **references** are part of the selection procedure. In some circumstances organisations may consider taking references to be inappropriate e.g. the target group of volunteers may not be able to obtain references.
- Evidence should show that organisations are aware of their responsibilities in relation to **safeguarding vulnerable groups**.
- Best practice guidance on safeguarding children and adults at risk are available from the safeguarding section of the publications <https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/organisations/safeguarding/>
- Evidence needs to show that organisations have thought about **dealing with convictions** and agreed how they will manage it.

## Indicator No 7

***Clear procedures are put into action for introducing new volunteers to their role, the organisation, its work, policies, practices and relevant personnel.***

- A good **induction procedure** will include introductions to those that the volunteers will come into contact with. If organisations have a lengthy induction procedure then a checklist is a useful tool to use and provides evidence of the areas covered.
- The evidence may include copies of relevant policies/procedures/guidelines – these may be summarised in a **volunteer handbook**. The evidence also needs to show how the organisation communicates this information to the volunteer.

A **checklist for induction** will show that volunteers are being told about the policies and not just being given a large, sometimes inaccessible, handbook. E.g. - risk assessments, health and safety issues, expenses policy should be fully discussed with the volunteers. Organisations should also address any accessibility issues as part of induction, ensuring a variety of communication methods is used. A template induction checklist is available from <https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2019/04/Volunteer-Induction-Checklist.pdf>

- Evidence needs to show **boundaries** to the volunteer roles that are appropriate to the organisation. Examples of this might include:
  - limits to the volunteer's relationship with service users;
  - limits to the type of information and/or advice given to members of the public; and
  - any limitations necessary to comply with health and safety or insurance policies.
- Evidence should show how policies and procedures on **inappropriate behaviour** are communicated to volunteers.
- Evidence needs to show that the organisation has appropriate procedures in place for **complaints** and has communicated this to the volunteers.

## Indicator No 8

### *The organisation takes account of the varying support and supervision needs of volunteers.*

- Evidence needs to show how the organisation will provide **support and supervision** and how this is communicated to volunteers.
- The organisation must take in to account the **varying needs of volunteers**, the varying demands of volunteering roles and the importance of support being accessible.
- The evidence should illustrate how the organisation makes it clear to the volunteers that they can **refuse** to carry out tasks they feel inappropriate or unrealistic.
- Evidence needs to show that volunteers are asked for **feedback** on their role and their experience with the organisation. This could be through formal monitoring and evaluating procedures or informal methods.

It would be useful to have documentation showing how the organisation addresses feedback received.

- Evidence needs to show that **communication** in the organisation extends to volunteers particularly around issues that are relevant to them.

Good practice guidance on the management and motivation of volunteers is available from work book 3 of the 'As Good As They Give'

Resources <https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2018/10/As-Good-As-They-Give-Workbook-3-Managing-and-Motivating-Volunteers.pdf>

## Indicator No 9

### *The whole organisation is aware of the need to give volunteers recognition.*

- The evidence should illustrate ways in which the management and staff (including Trustees and Boards) say **thank you** to the volunteers in words and actions.
- The evidence should reflect how the organisation **consults with and obtains feedback** from volunteers on how the organisation operates and makes decisions. This could be through formal monitoring and evaluating procedures or informal methods.
- Evidence should show that the organisation has considered what the volunteers want from volunteering and is trying to **meet those needs**. E.g. some volunteers may need help with progression routes from volunteering; some may want to develop existing or new skills; some will just want to volunteer and not want any development opportunities.
- Evidence may be in a volunteer policy or handbook where the organisation gives a commitment to **provide a reference** when a volunteer leaves.
- Evidence needs to show that organisations try to gain feedback on **what volunteers thought about their experience**. It would be useful to have documentation showing how the organisation addresses feedback received.

### **Volunteer Management Best Practice**

Additional best practice guidance in the form of information sheets and best practice checklists are available from the Volunteer Now website.

<https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/publication/>