



### **Persistence and Patience When Recruiting Volunteers**

Don't Panic if you are just starting out and recruitment of volunteers appears to be taking a lot of time and effort - It will be worth it!

Passionate advocacy may not always attract the volunteers that are so badly needed but persistence and creativity will eventually pay off. Volunteering is deeply engrained in the British psyche—one in seven of the population is already a volunteer so it is not a new idea. It's worth bearing in mind that asking a person who is already volunteering may be more likely to result in a new volunteer than finding someone who has not previously volunteered.



### **Think outside The Box When Recruiting Younger Volunteers**

Young people seem to self-organise and follow their peers. They are not likely to walk into your organisation and start volunteering. You'll need to have a separate, non-traditional program to find young volunteers and get them involved. Go where these young people are, their extracurricular activities, sports activities, special interest groups.

Honour their interest in helping people or animals directly, and lighten up on the rules.

They may show up late, leave early and seem self-conscious. Whilst some older volunteers relish the limelight, many younger people prefer to be anonymous or even help from a distance rather than up close.

Show you understand their concerns and offer incentives that match. What keeps these young people up at night is worrying about getting into college. If possible, offer volunteer opportunities that could help with college admissions.

Make volunteering fun and social. Offer short volunteer opportunities that run the gamut from lightly involved to more serious engagement.

### **References For Volunteers**

Referencing volunteers is a really good idea. In the first instance, a simple letter from referees (Two is usually the right number) will be enough but talking to referees by phone is also advisable as this allows you to probe a little deeper and ask about the applicants ability to work in a team, their flexibility and their ability to best represent the organisation's cause as a new volunteer.



## Recruitment, Induction and Supervision

Having put your recruitment campaign into full swing you need to be ready for enquiries. Have information packs ready to send out. Include the role description, information about the work of the organisation/group, your volunteer policy or a similar statement of principles around volunteer involvement and an application form (if you choose to use one).

If you are going to use application forms, keep questions to a minimum and ask only those questions that you really need to know answers to there and then. Other questions can be asked as part of an informal interview. However be specific with your needs and requirements this helps match the right volunteer into the right role.

Depending on the role, you may need to ask:

- To provide references – usually the names of people who can comment about their suitability for voluntary work.
- Disclosure of any criminal records. This only occurs if the role requires working with children or vulnerable people and, even then, only under certain circumstances.
- Provide a valid driving license (if driving is required)

### Interview

Most organisations will want to have an informal chat. This is for them to find out about the volunteer and for the volunteer to find out about them. Some organisations may require the volunteer to attend a more detailed interview, so they can place where skills, experience or knowledge can be put to best use

### Saying No

You can't take on everyone who walks through the door. Some people will be clearly unsuited to the role. If people want feedback as to why they were not selected, be honest but constructive. It's not helpful to them if you are untruthful, but at the same time there's no point sending them away totally discouraged.

If possible, suggest an alternative role or refer on to other organisations/groups or back to the Havering Volunteer Centre. It would be helpful however if you let HVC know why you felt the volunteer was not suitable as this will assist with future placements.

### Induction

Induction aims to introduce new volunteers to the organisation and their role in it. All volunteers need some form of introduction to your organisation/group, as well as the information to carry out their role and make their first few days as a volunteer easier.

Make sure volunteers are properly introduced to other staff or committee members, where the toilets are, where to make tea and coffee, where to find stationery, tools etc.

It is important to pace both yourself and the volunteer, don't overwhelm new volunteers with details on the first day. At the same time, you need to make sure that the relevant information is covered. It is essential to run through Health & Safety procedures, fire exits, muster points etc. This should be covered on your Induction Checklist and ticked off, kept on their file for future reference.

### Personnel File

It's advisable to keep a personnel file for all volunteers as you would any paid member of the team. This ensures you have covered everything in your induction check list, it contains a signed agreement, policies read and viewed plus training/support and supervision undertaken. HVC also recommend a Next of Kin contact form in case of emergencies.



### Support

Most people need support to give their best and a lack of support can be a significant barrier to volunteering. Therefore it is especially important to get the right support in place before the person begins volunteering.



### Supervision

Regular supervision is an important part of managing any volunteering arrangement. This can be done informally once a week to assess how the volunteering is managing or through an informal/formal meeting once a month for half an hour (will differ).

This is an opportunity to develop the volunteer's work skills, hear new ideas and check that the volunteer is happy in the role they are doing and to recognise the volunteer. Ensure that the volunteer feels that their input is valued and a chance to say 'thank you' for their contribution.

As an organisation you should provide feedback. In order to fulfil their role, volunteers need to understand what is working well and what, if anything, could be better.

It may be a good idea for the supervisor to give the volunteer a few questions before the meeting, so that the volunteer has time to prepare. All supervision's or informal chats should be logged and a copy of the supervision notes should be made available to the volunteer, if needed. This should be in an accessible format.

Arrange a quarterly/half yearly group supervision session where all volunteers can meet each other and feel more integrated with the rest of the volunteering team. This offers peer support and a sense of belonging.