



The VODG/NCF

Volunteer Management Toolkit

2nd Edition



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**Volunteer
Management
Toolkit**

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Produced through the Department of Health voluntary sector strategic partnership with the Voluntary Organisations Disability Group (VODG) and the National Care Forum (NCF). This work was also supported by Volunteering Matters.



Table of contents

1 Introduction

2 Making a business case

8 Creating volunteer roles

12 Sourcing volunteers

22 Top tips for recruiting volunteers

24 A question of insurance

26 Supporting people to support others

37 Measuring the value of volunteering

42 Measuring the impact of volunteering

60 Further resources

68 Appendix 1: Sample forms

74 Appendix 2: Impact measurement tools

76 Appendix 3: The question bank

82 Appendix 4: Activities for focus groups

83 Acknowledgements

Introduction

Are you a service manager? Have you ever wondered how you might attract the right volunteers who will make a real difference to the lives of the people you support? Or how you can recruit volunteers who quietly and consistently get on behind-the-scenes with those extra jobs, like preparing newsletters, gardening or fundraising for a special project? If so, this toolkit is for you.

This toolkit does not “re-invent the wheel”. Instead it tells you where to find a wide range of volunteer management resources, many of which are free. Topics such as volunteer recruitment processes, agreements, supervision and recognition are already well covered in existing practice guides. Links to these can be found in our further resources section.

The Voluntary Organisations Disability Group (VODG) and the National Care Forum (NCF) have worked with their members to identify key principles, good practice and resources.

The toolkit complements existing resources by filling the gaps service managers have most frequently identified. It tells you:

- Where and how you can find just enough of the “right” volunteers.
- What to consider when engaging people in vulnerable circumstances as volunteers in care services.
- How to go about measuring the impact and value of volunteering with the resources that are available to you.

We hope this toolkit helps you make volunteering a success in your service.

Find out more about the work of VODG and NCF on our websites:
www.vodg.org.uk
www.nationalcareforum.org.uk

We welcome feedback on this publication. Please email:
info@vodg.org.uk
with your views.

Making a business case

To develop volunteering in a meaningful way in your service is likely to require some investment. If you are intending to recruit just a few volunteers you may be able to absorb the costs into existing budget headings, such as recruitment and training. However, if you are looking to introduce volunteering at scale this will require some additional resources and consequently you may need to put forward a business case to your manager or your board.



Your business case should include:

| THE BUSINESS CASE | |
|---|--|
| Your proposal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > What do you intend to achieve through volunteers? > What roles will volunteers play? > What will be the outputs of the project? i.e. what are the key deliverables? > What will be the outcomes or impact? i.e. what difference will the project make to the lives of the people supported by your service or to the service itself? > Are there additional benefits for the people who are supported, for volunteers, for the organisation or for the local community? |
| A brief summary of evidence to support your proposal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > This will help the decision maker put your proposal in context. > Potential sources of evidence are described on the next page. |
| A budget | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The resources required and how they will be spent. Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If this is a short-term project what are the overall costs? Will the project generate any income? • If this is a long-term project, what are the start-up costs? What needs to be in place to make the project sustainable and when is your target for achieving this? • What other resources are needed? For instance how much of your time or that of your team will be needed? |
| A plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > What are the key milestones and when do you expect to achieve them? |
| A risk assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > What are the key risks associated with your project and how will these be mitigated? |
| Review outline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > How will the project be reviewed and how will the organisation know what it has achieved? > You can find more information on how to review projects in the sections on <i>Measuring the value of volunteering</i> and <i>Measuring the impact of volunteering</i> |

Evidence to support your case

Your business case can be strengthened by referring to:

- Research evidence regarding the contribution of volunteers
- National or local authority policy which supports volunteering

If your organisation participates in Agenda Consulting's Volunteers Count survey, this will give you information about the costs and contribution of volunteers across the third sector. You can use this information to compare your plan with volunteering in similar organisations and to evidence that you are presenting a realistic picture of your plan's costs and benefits.

(<http://www.agendaconsulting.co.uk/product/volunteers-count/>)

You can also get facts and figures about volunteering from The Cabinet Office's Community Life Survey. The Survey for 2014/15 can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/447010/Community_Life_Survey_2014-15_Bulletin.pdf

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) is a further source of information about policy and research findings. (<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/policy-and-research>)

If you are developing volunteering opportunities in Wales, you can find the Welsh Government's policy on volunteering at <http://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/150805-volunteering-policy-en.pdf>

Meanwhile, the volunteering strategy for Northern Ireland can be found at <https://www.dsdni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dsd/join-in-get-involved-2012.pdf>

There is no equivalent volunteer strategy for England or Scotland.

The 2015 Conservative manifesto committed to giving the employees of large companies up to 3 days leave a year to volunteer. If this is implemented, it will affect around 15 million employees and create around 360 million extra volunteering hours a year. However, it is unclear whether this will go ahead and there are no plans to introduce it in 2016.

Finally it is recommended that you do a search of your local authority website for its policy position on volunteering. Try searching for "volunteer", "localism" and "participation".

Some key facts

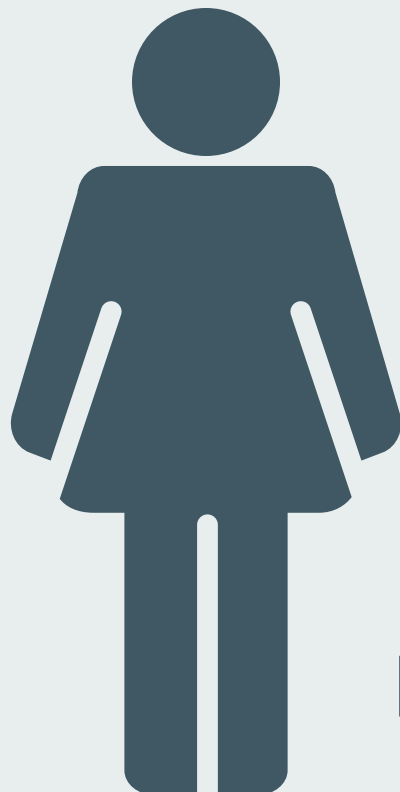
Who volunteers?

Did you know that the average volunteer is female, 54 years old and volunteers for 10 hours per month?

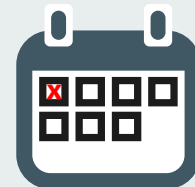
In 2014/15 69% of people volunteered at least once during the year and 47% of people volunteered at least once per month; going forward, some of those people could be volunteering in your service. So what might you do to attract a range of volunteers that meets the needs of your service?

Could young people contribute to the service? Volunteering by 16-25 year olds is on the increase; 35% of people in this age bracket reported volunteering in 2014/15.

The way people are volunteering is changing, with a trend towards more episodic volunteering. In 2014/15, 8% of people participated in employer-supported volunteering. For the majority of these people volunteering was a one-off event rather than a long-term commitment. Could this type of volunteering work well in your service?



54
years
old



10
hours per
month

Some key facts continued

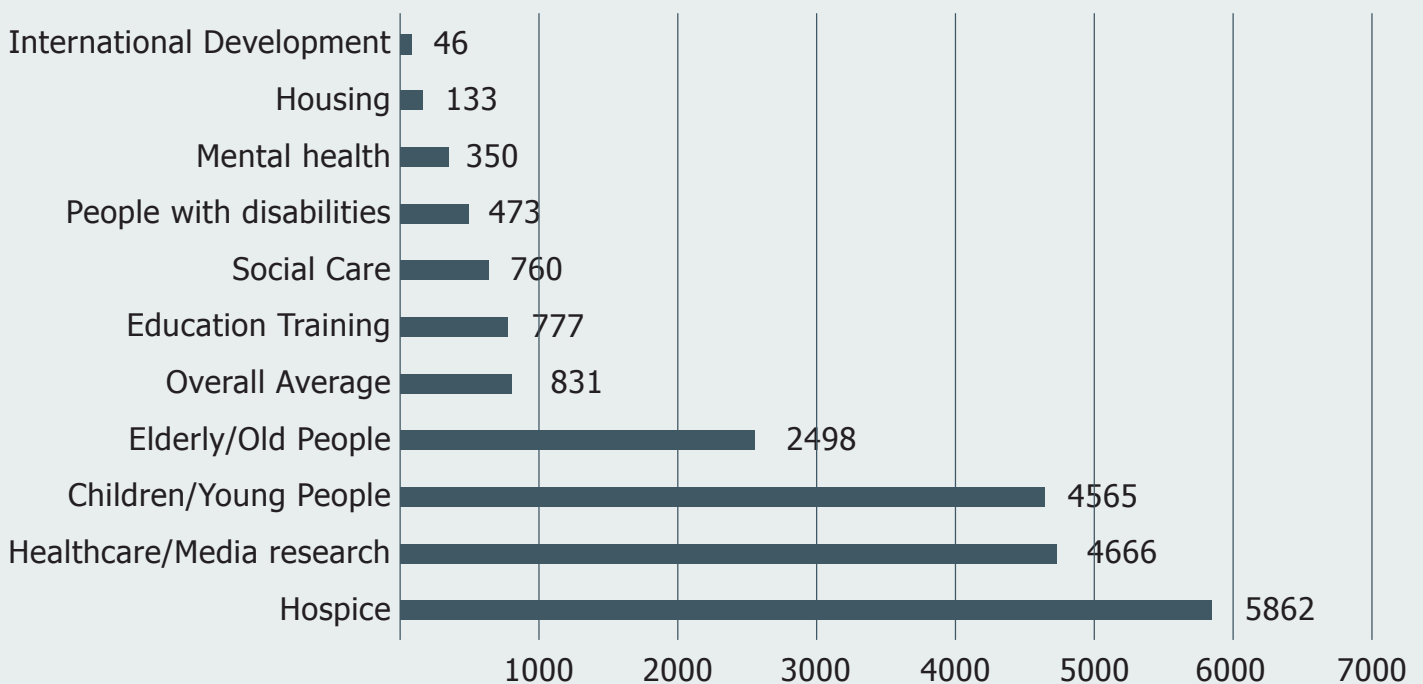
How much do volunteers cost?

Do you know how much each volunteer costs? Agenda Consulting has found that, on average, each volunteer costs £280 per year. The average volunteer puts in 10 hours per month. If the volunteer contribution is costed at the national living wage, this gives a return on investment of 3:1. In other words, the financial contribution of volunteers is 3 times the cost. Organisations with more volunteers achieve economies of scale, which means that the cost per volunteer goes down and the organisation achieves an even higher return on investment.

What do volunteers do?

Hospices, healthcare and children's organisations are most successful at engaging volunteers in large numbers. Meanwhile, social care has below average numbers of volunteers compared with other parts of the third sector. To attract people to volunteering in your service it is important to offer a range of interesting roles.

Median number of volunteers per 1,000 employees



Creating volunteer roles

The single most important factor in the successful management of volunteers is the development of roles. An organisation that has interesting positions to offer will have a much easier time attracting and keeping volunteers than one that does not.



Involving staff and people who use services

The process begins by involving staff and the people they support in a conversation about the role volunteers could play in your service. If you already have volunteers, it is important to listen and include their views too. Involving a wide range of people will help to ensure that volunteer roles meet the needs of people using the service, that the work of volunteers is integrated with that of staff and that volunteers have the support of the staff team.

It is important to note that volunteer roles should not replace paid employment, but should deliver added value to the service you already provide.

Role descriptions

A role description is the basic tool for outlining what a volunteer will do, the sort of personal qualities that are needed for the role and how the volunteer will benefit from the experience. Benefits may include skills development, experience and training.

Sample role description

| VOLUNTEER ROLE DESCRIPTION | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <p>ROLE DETAILS</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Role title:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Reference number:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Supervised by:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Department/service:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">location:</p> | | | | | |
| <p>PURPOSE OF ROLE</p> <p>.....</p> | | | | | |
| <p>MAIN TASKS</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>1.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> </td> <td style="width: 33%; border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>2.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> </td> <td style="width: 33%; padding: 5px;"> <p>3.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> </td> </tr> </table> | | | <p>1.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> | <p>2.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> | <p>3.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> |
| <p>1.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> | <p>2.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> | <p>3.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> | | | |
| <p>PERSON SPECIFICATION</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> <p>Skills:</p> <p>Additional requirements:</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; border-left: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Qualities:</p> <p>DBS (if required)</p> </td> </tr> </table> | | | <p>Skills:</p> <p>Additional requirements:</p> | <p>Qualities:</p> <p>DBS (if required)</p> | |
| <p>Skills:</p> <p>Additional requirements:</p> | <p>Qualities:</p> <p>DBS (if required)</p> | | | | |
| <p>TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES & BENEFITS TO VOLUNTEER</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> <p>Training & development:</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; border-left: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Benefits:</p> </td> </tr> </table> | | | <p>Training & development:</p> | <p>Benefits:</p> | |
| <p>Training & development:</p> | <p>Benefits:</p> | | | | |
| <p>DURATION AND TIME COMMITMENT:</p> | | | | | |
| <p>For more information about this role, please contact:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="width: 15%; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Date created:</td> <td style="width: 35%; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Date modified:</td> </tr> </table> | | | | Date created: | Date modified: |
| | Date created: | Date modified: | | | |

Role descriptions:

- Help you think about whether you have covered everything a volunteer might want to know and the arrangements that you need to have in place.
- Help potential volunteers know what they are being asked to do and make a decision about whether this is the right role for them.
- Clarify for volunteers what they are expected to do once they start volunteering.
- Clarify for other people how the volunteer role fits with their own.

Request for a volunteer form:

What to include in a role description

Role title:

This should be appealing and relevant to the role.

Role purpose:

What are you looking for the person to contribute or achieve?

Main tasks:

Use this section to give more detail on what you are looking for a volunteer to do.

Skills and qualities:

Outline what is needed to do this role well.

DBS check:

Inform volunteers up front if this role is subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check*.

Benefits:

What could a volunteer get out of doing this role?

Duration and time commitment:

Is the volunteer role short-term or long-term? For approximately how long, and how frequently, are you looking for someone to volunteer?

How to apply:

If the volunteer wants to apply, what is the next step?

Any questions:

Who can the volunteer contact if they have any further questions?

*A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is required for certain types of voluntary work including working with children and in healthcare. Checks for eligible volunteers are free of charge. There are different rules for getting a criminal record check in Scotland and Northern Ireland. For more information visit: www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/overview

| REQUEST FOR A VOLUNTEER | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Service user | |
| My goal(s) | The sort of person I would like as my volunteer |
| What I would like a volunteer to do | Skills I would like the volunteer to have |
| How often I would like a volunteer | This is me – things I'd like a volunteer to know about who I am |
| Signed: _____ (Service user) | Date: _____ |
| Signed: _____ (Staff member) | Date: _____ |

1:1 Support

Volunteers are often recruited to provide additional 1:1 support for people using services, for instance as a befriender to support someone with a hobby or interest, or to attend their place of worship. Planning this type of volunteering begins with the person requiring support. What do they want to achieve? What sort of support would they like? How might they feel about being supported by a volunteer?

The example 'Request for a volunteer form' above provides a format for discussing volunteer support as part of the person-centred planning process. The information from this form can be incorporated into a volunteer role description.

Next steps

Once you have written the role descriptions, it is worth asking staff and current volunteers to review them and provide feedback. This will help to ensure that the roles are both clear and realistic. It is also a good idea to review roles at least once a year, or before you next take on new volunteers for the role.

Sourcing volunteers

Recruitment is the process of finding people who are interested in volunteering and showing them how they could add value in your organisation.

One of the first decisions to make is where to target recruitment efforts. It is important to be as resource-efficient as possible, both in terms of your time and recruitment cost, and to attract just enough volunteers with the right skills, values

and time commitment. Not enough volunteers, or volunteers without the right skills and values, are equally undesirable.

In practice, most services use a blend of recruitment methods. Are your current methods of volunteer recruitment getting you the results you want? If not, you may find it helpful to consider some of the following ideas.



Word of mouth

Word of mouth is a common way in which people find out about volunteering opportunities. Research suggests that two-thirds of volunteers find out about volunteering in this way. This means it is the method that is most likely to give you a positive result, and it's free because it is based on goodwill.

To approach word of mouth recruitment in a methodical way requires the help of people who are already connected to your service and have a positive experience of it. People who can help spread the word about volunteering opportunities include:

- Current volunteers
- People who use the service
- Friends and relatives of people who use the service
- People who have previously used the service
- Staff
- Key stakeholders in the local community

Explain to the people in your target group that this is not just a casual enquiry; their help is essential to your recruitment campaign. Then describe the volunteer roles you are looking to fill and how they can help in finding and recruiting suitable volunteers; by talking to family, friends and acquaintances and asking them, in turn, to talk to the people they know. Social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn can also help to get the word out.



Community groups

Recruiting volunteers who are already connected to each other capitalises on the strengths of existing relationships. This type of recruitment involves building a connection between the community group and your service. You could initiate this by offering to do a presentation or, if appropriate, inviting members of the group to an event. To make this type of recruitment work:

1. Secure the support of leaders in the community organisation.
2. Agree with leaders how you are going to engage with their wider membership.
3. At an early stage, discuss the values that underpin your service and those in the community group to ensure they match.
4. Ensure that interested individuals are promptly invited to interview and that new volunteers are assigned suitable roles.
5. Determine how you are going to maintain your relationship with the community group; this could be by attending their events, contributing to a newsletter or sending an annual letter of thanks.

Timebanks

Timebanking is a means of exchange which enables people to share their skills and experience. Everyone's skill is valued equally; one hour's work is worth one time credit. Everybody in the timebank agrees to both give and receive help, thereby earning and spending time credits.

People supported by your service may join a local timebank as individuals, earning and spending time credits as they choose. This gives them equal status with other timebank members and recognition of their skills.

Strictly speaking timebanking is not volunteering as it is based on reciprocity; everybody gives time and everybody gets something back. However, some timebanks will also accept organisations as members; the organisation may earn credits by contributing resources such as meeting space, photocopying or loaning equipment and spend credits by asking timebank members to use their skills in the service.

To find your nearest timebank, visit <http://www.timebanking.org/find-your-nearest/>

Spice also develops time credit projects in England and Wales. Visit <http://www.justaddspice.org/>

Students

When looking to recruit students as volunteers it is worth remembering that you are competing with paid work. Therefore you need to convince them that you are offering valuable experience. In practice, recruiting student volunteers enables you to try people who may be interested in a paid role when one arises; it could be that your best and most reliable student volunteers become your bank workers.

As many students are around during term-time, it is worth factoring this into the design of some of your volunteer roles. Equally, however, students will return home and may be able to volunteer during university

breaks. Suitable roles could include involvement in short-term projects, teaching someone a skill or helping organise an event. You may draw students in by offering to develop roles around their academic interests; this could enable you to benefit from a whole range of knowledge and skills from nutrition and sport to art and photography.

Freshers' fairs and Student Volunteering Week (around February and March) are opportunities to raise awareness of volunteering opportunities at universities and colleges.

Some University Student Unions run volunteer centres. For example see:

www.su.nottingham.ac.uk/volunteering/

The screenshot shows the top of the Students' Union website for the University of Nottingham. At the top left is the logo 'Students' Union UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM'. To the right are two speech bubble icons labeled 'HEALTHCARE' and 'SUTTON BONINGTON'. Below these is a search bar. A dark blue navigation bar contains the following menu items: HOME, NEWS, EVENTS, ADVICE, SOCIETIES, SPORTS, VOLUNTEERING, BARS & SHOPS, DEMOCRACY, CAMPAIGNS, EMPLOYABILITY. Below the navigation bar is a large banner for the 'STUDENT VOLUNTEER CENTRE'. The banner features the text: 'GIVING YOU AMAZING EXPERIENCES THAT ARE FUN REWARDING & HELP CHANGE Lives 4 THE better AND forever'. The word 'Lives' is in a cursive font, and '4 THE' is in a large, bold font. A red heart icon is placed between the words 'better' and 'forever'.

Employer supported volunteering

Employer supported volunteering enables people to volunteer with support from their employer. This may be in the form of time off for individual volunteering, a team challenge or through a relationship with a community partner. This can work just as effectively based on a local arrangement as partnerships developed at a corporate level.

A successful employer supported programme is beneficial to the social care provider organisation, the employer and its employees. The provider benefits from a source of skilled and enthusiastic volunteers while the employer gains an opportunity for building teams and developing future leaders. Meanwhile employees can try new activities, develop their management skills and improve their employability, as three-quarters of employers prefer to recruit people with volunteering on their CV.

A potential pitfall of employer-supported volunteering is that the expectations of the employer and provider organisation may be mismatched. For instance, the provider may be looking for volunteers to work on a one-to-one basis with people using the service while the employer may be looking to develop the strategic marketing skills of the team. It is important to be very clear about needs and expectations from the outset and to identify mutually beneficial activities.

Business in the community can broker relationships between not-for-profit organisations and companies interested in supporting volunteering. This service is also provided by **Volunteering Matters**. Alternatively you could approach local companies directly or spread the word that your service is interested in being linked with a local employer.

Business in the community:
www.bitc.org.uk

Volunteering Matters:
www.volunteeringmatters.org.uk/employee-volunteering/

Pro bono legal advice

Pro bono solicitors and barristers offer free legal advice, representation and mediation to people who have no way of paying for it.

LawWorks supports solicitors, mediators and law students to volunteer their professional skills to assist individuals and community groups who cannot afford to pay for legal help and are unable to access legal aid or other forms of financial assistance. LawWorks asks participating lawyers to sign their pro bono protocol which confirms that pro bono assistance will be delivered to the same standard as fee-paid work.

LawWorks
www.lawworks.org.uk

The Bar Pro Bono Unit

matches barristers prepared to undertake pro bono work with those who cannot afford to pay for it. It has a pre-volunteered panel of around 2,400 barristers, of which 364 are Queen's Counsel.

The Bar Pro Bono Unit
www.barprobono.org.uk



Pets

Pets as Therapy links volunteers and their pets with care homes. Pets are all vaccinated, wormed, protected against fleas and 'temperament tested'. There are currently around 4,500 dogs, 108 cats and their owners involved in this scheme.

The Cinnamon Trust links volunteers with pet-owners who have difficulty looking after their pets due to age or ill-health. Volunteers provide practical help such as dog-walking, pet fostering and long-term pet care if an owner dies or goes into residential care.

Pets as Therapy
www.petsastherapy.org

The Cinnamon Trust
www.cinnamon.org.uk



Brokered volunteer recruitment

An important means of boosting volunteer recruitment is via organisations set up to match volunteers to roles of interest to them. The advantage of this approach is that it can reduce the initial effort involved. The main disadvantage is that you are competing with many different organisations, all looking for volunteers.

Possible sources of volunteers include:

- Your local volunteer centre; you can find your nearest centre at www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering/find-a-volunteer-centre.
- Programmes in colleges that link students with volunteer opportunities.
- Web sites.

www.do-it.org

General volunteer opportunities

www.reachskills.org.uk

Match the skills of experienced people with the needs of not-for-profit organisations

<https://vinspired.com/volunteer>

Volunteering for under 25s

<http://volunteerteam.london.gov.uk/>

Volunteering in London

Volunteering Matters

Volunteering Matters runs a wide range of volunteering and social action programmes around England, Scotland and Wales, including full-time volunteering for young people within health and social care settings. Placements may involve working with individuals living with their families, disabled students, professional service providers and educational establishments. Young people, aged 18 and over, are matched to social action projects for 6-12 months and volunteer for up to 35 hours per week.

Volunteering Matters also works with organisations and communities to establish volunteering programmes such as:

- Retired and Senior Volunteering Programme which responds to local community needs by managing and delivering new services identified and led by older community volunteers.
- Supported volunteering, providing community mentors for volunteers with learning disabilities.
- Parent mentoring, supporting families with children on the at risk register.

Volunteering Matters
www.volunteeringmatters.org.uk



Top tips for recruiting volunteers

1 Make sure your volunteering roles are interesting

Would you do them? Remember that for many people volunteering is an alternative to leisure, so mix up uninteresting tasks with others that make roles enjoyable.

2 Give great customer service

People expect a responsive service as the norm, so make sure you get back to potential volunteers quickly. You are more likely to attract volunteers by providing an efficient, friendly service.

3 Be open to offers

Volunteers may bring talents that you had not considered but could add value to your service. Be prepared to adapt or create a role around specific skills and make sure volunteers know you are open to offers.

4 Be flexible

Some people like to suggest what they could do while others like to see clearly what is on offer, in terms of the tasks, skills required and time commitment up front.

5 Provide a wide range of ways to volunteer

This can increase your chances of attracting a greater number of volunteers. Are there roles that volunteers can fulfil online? Or on the telephone? At events? You may attract people who are willing to be involved in a series of "one-off" events, but who don't want to make a regular commitment.

Top tips for recruiting volunteers

6 Can you accommodate teams or group opportunities?

If you have tasks that are suitable for a team, make sure you promote these as they can be difficult to find. Offering the opportunity to volunteer as a family, a couple or a group of friends can also attract people and this type of volunteering can be a great way of preventing loneliness and isolation.

7 Highlight the difference volunteers make

People are more likely to be motivated if they see the difference they could make through volunteering. Be clear on what impact volunteering will have to people lives and the local community.

8 Promote the positive impact volunteering can have on volunteers

Promote the benefits of volunteering, such as making friends, learning new skills and gaining experience. What can volunteers expect from you? If you offer training or other opportunities, make sure you promote these too.

9 Allow volunteers to try before they commit

Offer taster sessions to appeal to people who may be unsure about what's involved.

10 Engage volunteers in recruitment

A lead member of paid staff will help to ensure that someone in your service is championing volunteer recruitment. In addition you might ask volunteers to help by writing recruitment messages and promoting volunteering at recruitment presentations.

A question of insurance

It is part of an organisation's duty of care to ensure that it has adequate risk management and insurance in place. This includes managing the risks and ensuring insurance cover for volunteer involvement.

Risk management measures include:

- Being clear about the volunteer role
- Ensuring the volunteer has the necessary skills and support to fulfil the role
- Sourcing references
- Undertaking a DBS check for eligible roles
- Providing a volunteer induction
- Delivering training on equality issues and relevant aspects of health and safety
- Providing further training appropriate to the role
- Ensuring volunteers understand how to implement any risk assessments relevant to their role

Organisations owe common law and statutory duties to protect the health and safety of volunteers. Therefore Volunteering England recommends that organisations include volunteers in their health and safety policy as a matter of good practice.

Employers will also be potentially liable for any harassment of their employees by volunteers under the Equality Act 2010. Consequently it is wise to provide training on equality issues to all volunteers.

Volunteers risk personal injury, loss or damage to their own property and liability arising from the course of their volunteering, so it is essential and in everyone's best interest to ensure that adequate insurance cover is provided.



What insurance cover do providers need for volunteers?

Employer's liability insurance usually covers the cost of defending your organisation against allegations of illness or injury. Claims of this nature can cost thousands, and without appropriate insurance cover, represent a serious financial risk.

Public liability insurance offers protection against any action taken by a 'Third Party' (i.e. someone outside the organisation). Your organisation will need to consider what will happen if a volunteer causes damage to third party property or injury to an individual, including a person using the service or another volunteer.

Arranging volunteer insurance

The Charity Commission states that charities must take out Employer's Liability insurance only from a company working under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000.

Things to remember when obtaining insurance

It is important to remember that volunteers are in a unique position within your organisation. They are not employees and may not automatically be considered as 'Third Party' under your Public Liability Insurance. Volunteers need to be specifically referred to in your policy. Insurance policies should cover all actions volunteers may carry out as well as the venues they will be operating in. If volunteers take part in strenuous or dangerous activities, such as sports coaching, or use specialised equipment, then these will need to be covered in your policy.

Any large one-off events such as fundraising events will need specific insurance policies which should include both employers and public liability insurance.

You can find out more about arranging volunteer insurance from VODG partner, **Capita CARE**.

www.capitacare.co.uk

Supporting people to support others

Many adults who use care services, or have experience of living in vulnerable circumstances, are uniquely placed to undertake certain volunteer roles due to their experience of disability, disadvantage and/or using services. They bring a level of insight which can only be gained through lived experience.

However, they can be socially excluded and seen as the 'recipients' of help rather than citizens who make positive contributions. By opening volunteer opportunities up to marginalized groups, you tap into their experience to the benefit of your organisation and the people it supports; you turn volunteering in your service into a force for inclusion. Volunteering offers people a valued role and can lead to them developing friendships, skills, enjoyment and confidence.



Needs and expectations

Care service providers usually embark on a volunteering programme in order to increase their capacity and/or add value to their service. This may be in terms of:

- Befriending:** Enabling someone to develop or maintain a connection with their local community through a supportive 1:1 relationship.
- Providing additional support** to people who use services beyond that available from paid staff; for instance support with leisure activities, travel or developing skills which may not be available within the staff team.
- Help with practical tasks** around the service, such as administration or gardening.

People with experience of living in vulnerable circumstances can also contribute through:

- User involvement:** developing a partnership approach to working with service users through involving them in decision-making and other aspects of running the service.
- Peer support:** Empowering individuals to use their own experiences, insight and understanding to help others. Peer support is often used to complement professional mental health services but is equally relevant for other groups of people.

While managers approach volunteering by thinking about roles and tasks, individuals consider volunteering for a variety of reasons, which are usually a mixture of :

- Altruism:** "I want to help others."
- Self-interest:** "I need this type of work experience."
- Connection with others:** "My family received a lot of help from this service."

However, people generally want to feel included and that their contribution makes a difference.

So, organisations and individuals come to volunteering with different needs and expectations. Therefore it is important to ensure that there is the best possible match between the volunteer and the role you are asking them to fulfil. A person-centred approach to volunteering is as crucial to its success as a person-centred approach to the delivery of care. This is true of all volunteers, regardless of whether they are using care services.

Your organisational context

Before embarking on engaging vulnerable adults as volunteers in your service, secure organisational support for your plans. This will provide you with the authority you need to proceed and help you to run a successful volunteer programme which fits with wider organisational objectives. You may find it helpful to consider the following:

- Your organisation's values:** How highly valued is social inclusion in your organization?
- Your organisation's objectives:** Does volunteering feature in the organisational business plan and in your plans for the service?
- Your organisation's policies:** What do the policies tell you about your organisation's approach to volunteering, equality, diversity and inclusion and making reasonable adjustments for volunteers? What do the policies say is required of staff and managers?
- Your proposals:** What do you want to achieve with volunteers? How does volunteering contribute to your service and organizational objectives? Is it your intention to actively recruit vulnerable adults as volunteers or are you thinking about how to respond to a handful of enquiries?
- Your line manager:** Does your manager support your proposals?
- The resources you have available** to support vulnerable adults as volunteers, including any additional resources you might draw in.
- Evaluation:** How do you intend to measure the impact of your approach?

Quality and risk

People who use services as volunteers

You may consider recruiting volunteers from the group of people for whom you also provide a care and support service. This can generate some huge benefits, such as:

- Involving people who use services on interview panels or in focus groups helps you reach more informed decisions about the workforce and service delivery.
- Involving people who use services as peer supporters can build solidarity with the person supported.
- Providing volunteering opportunities can be a stepping stone to building people's confidence to volunteer outside the provider organisation or enter paid employment.

As a Care Quality Commission registered provider, you are responsible for ensuring that the services you provide are safe, effective, caring, responsive to people's needs and well-led. People who use the service should be able to expect the same high standard of service, whether it is delivered by staff or volunteers. Therefore you need to have sufficiently robust arrangements in place to ensure a consistently high standard of service delivery and the necessary monitoring systems to ensure that the service is working well for everybody.



Recruitment

The application pack should usually contain:

- An introductory letter thanking the person for their interest and explaining whom they should contact if they want to pursue their application
- Some general info about your organisation; bear in mind that people who are socially excluded are also more likely to be digitally excluded (i.e. they may not have access to the internet, or be confident in its use) so do not make an assumption that they will look at your website
- A role description if the person is interested in a particular role: this helps the potential volunteer think about the work and what it may mean for them
- A simple application form, if you want the person to complete the form before the interview.

However, it may be more supportive to fill the form in with the person at the interview; if you choose this route, then it is best to explain by letter what information the person will need to bring to the interview.

Volunteer roles

There are many roles that are suitable for people who want to volunteer for their service provider. Here are just a few:

Art and craft worker
Befriender
Companion for leisure activities
Complaints monitor
Film buff
Focus group member
Games player
Gardener
Interviewer
Knitter
IT volunteer
Musician
Office assistant
Peer Supporter
Quality checker
Reader
Receptionist
Recycling assistant
Sportsperson
Social events assistant
Theatre-goer
Trainer
Travel buddy
Trustee

Should there be a subheading here?

| CONCERN | SERVICE RESPONSE |
|---|--|
| <p>Will quality be consistently high?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Match volunteers with suitable roles ➤ Put in additional support for the volunteer according to their needs ➤ Ensure the volunteer and their supporter (if they have one) have a manager to refer to ➤ Provide regular supervision ➤ Review the arrangement regularly ➤ Have adequate monitoring systems in place for all care and support delivery |
| <p>Will there be any increased risk to people who use services?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Only ask volunteers to undertake tasks that are within their capability ➤ Risk assess the task, if appropriate, and put additional controls in place ➤ As part of the induction process talk to the volunteer about how to respond if they encounter a problem or have a concern ➤ Provide volunteers with relevant training |
| <p>Will the boundaries of relationships between volunteers and people using the service be clear?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure this is covered in the volunteer induction. ➤ Where a volunteer is matched with an individual, talk to the service user and volunteer about the boundaries of the relationship. ➤ If the arrangement is for a fixed period of time, make this clear from the start and provide the volunteer with guidance about dealing with endings. |
| <p>Will people who use the service have the confidence that volunteers are competent in their roles?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Start by introducing volunteering for activities that are not crucial to the user's wellbeing. ➤ Only match individual users and volunteers when both people are happy with the arrangement. ➤ Broker a trial period with both people. ➤ Provide opportunities for both to feedback. ➤ Review the match on a regular basis. |
| <p>Will there be an increased risk of breaches of confidentiality?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure confidentiality is covered in the volunteer induction. ➤ If people raise this as a concern, check out why they feel this way; vulnerable adults can maintain confidentiality as well as anyone else ➤ In the event of a breach of confidentiality, address this in exactly the same way as you would with any other volunteer |

The purpose of the interview

Volunteer interviewing is different to employment interviewing in that it is primarily about exploring whether there is a “fit” between the organisation and the volunteer, rather than whether the applicant is suitable for a particular job. The volunteer interview can be used to:

- Determine the volunteer’s level of interest in a particular role and whether they have the necessary skills to perform it
- Establish whether the volunteer has other interests and skills that might be used to create a different role for him/her
- Consider whether the volunteer would fit comfortably into the work environment
- Explore what support, if any, the volunteer would need when volunteering
- Respond to the volunteer’s questions and concerns

It is important to bear these purposes in mind when developing your interview questions.

Preparing for the interview

The person conducting the interview should prepare by:

- Ensuring that the potential volunteer has the support they need to attend the interview, including the option of bringing a supporter if they choose
- Gathering the role descriptions for which volunteers are needed; this makes it easier to offer alternative options to someone who may not be suitable for a specific role
- Having a list of questions for each role
- Having some open questions, using simple language, that explore:
 - Why the person wants to volunteer
 - Interests and skills
 - The support the person would need to be a successful volunteer
- Having any additional material (such as a newsletter) to share with the potential volunteer about the organisation

The interview

The location of the interview should be accessible, private and comfortable.

Interviewers should take into account the communication needs of volunteers. For instance, for interviewees who may have difficulty maintaining concentration, such as volunteers with a learning disability, the interview should be for a maximum of 20 minutes. If you think you may need longer, one option would be to structure the interview in 2 parts with a break in the middle.

Depending on your organisation's processes, the interview may close by:

- Making an offer of a volunteer role, or explaining that a decision has been made not to make an offer at this time
- Explaining what will happen next: taking up references, a DBS check (if applicable) and the timeframe for the volunteer induction
- Ensuring that you have the volunteer's permission to take up references

- Responding to any final questions from the volunteer

If a decision is not made during the interview, the potential volunteer should be told how and when they will be notified of the outcome.

If the applicant is not offered a role, let them know why, as this will help them think about whether they really want to do this type of work. This should always be done sensitively. Possible reasons for rejecting volunteers include:

- When there is no suitable role
- When the volunteer has expectations that the organisation cannot meet
- When the volunteer's values substantially differ from the organisation's values
- If the volunteer refuses to comply with the organisation's requirements (references, training commitments, etc)

Support and supervision

Most people need support to give of 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.



Supporters

Some people may need a supporter, particularly at the beginning of the volunteer arrangement. Individuals may have their own supporter but others may need support from someone in your organisation. This could be another volunteer.

If the supporter is someone in your organisation, they should meet the volunteer before any volunteering begins. This is an opportunity for both partners to get to know each other and decide whether they think the arrangement will work.

If your organization is providing a supporter, it is good practice to have a named back-up person in case the main supporter is unavailable. People often miss out on volunteering because their supporter is unable to attend.

You will need to think about the skills required of the supporter and ensure that they are well-matched with the volunteer and their support needs.

The function of the supporter is to enable the volunteer to fulfil their role. The support arrangement may be long-term or may be a fixed term element of the volunteer's induction. In either case it should be regularly reviewed through supervision.

Supervision

Supervision is an important part of managing any volunteering arrangement. For volunteers with additional support needs a meeting once a month for half an hour, at least to begin with, is good practice. 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.

If the volunteer has a supporter, they should also attend the supervision meeting. It is recommended that the supporter leaves 5-10 minutes before the session finishes so that they volunteer can discuss any aspect of the support that is not working.

As an organisation you should provide feedback to volunteers with support needs in the same way as you would for any other volunteer. In order to fulfil their role, volunteers need to understand what is working well and what, if anything, could be better.

A copy of the supervision notes should be made available to the volunteer. If needed this should be in an accessible format.

Expenses

It is important to remember that the volunteer may incur costs both in relation to the interview and the volunteering role. The organisation can act to ensure that this does not become a barrier to volunteering. Expenses policies should cover repayment of all reasonable expenses and reimbursement should be a prompt and straightforward process.



Measuring the value of volunteering

Many services and organisations find it helpful to put a financial value on the time contributed by volunteers.

Volunteer investment and value audit

The Institute for Volunteering Research has produced the Volunteer Investment and Value Audit (VIVA) which has gained international recognition as a method of measuring the economic value of volunteering.

The VIVA model involves reaching a notional financial value of the time contributed by volunteers and then subtracting all the costs associated with having volunteers. This will enable you to reach a VIVA ratio; i.e. "For every pound we spend on volunteers, we get £X in return in the value of the work that they do."

A self-help guide to VIVA can be found at www.ivr.org.uk/component/ivr/viva--the-volunteer-investment-and-value-audit-a-self-help-guide

Total volunteer investment

You need to begin by adding up all the costs associated with having volunteers. The self-help guide gives you a list of expenditure to include.

Use figures for a year, either from your budget or last year's accounts. Estimate the cost if the actual figure is not available.

Total volunteer value

VIVA analyses the work undertaken by volunteers and for how long, matches it to equivalent paid work and applies a market rate.

For national rates of earnings, see www.ons.gov.org.uk and search for "gross weekly earnings by occupation". This is updated every 3 months. Alternatively you could use your organisation's pay scales.

For people who volunteer less than once per week it may be easier to estimate their annual hours and use this figure.

Do not add in money which has been fundraised by volunteers. The sole purpose of VIVA is to calculate the economic value of the time volunteers have contributed.

Measuring the value of volunteering

For example

| Volunteer role | 1 | Travel buddy | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Totals |
|--------------------------------|---|----------------|---|---|---|---|----------------------|
| Equivalent paid job | | Support worker | | | | | |
| Hourly wage rate for job | | £8.00 | | | | | |
| Weekly hours | | 3 | | | | | Total hours per week |
| Weeks worked per year | | 40 | | | | | |
| Total hours per year interview | | 120 | | | | | Total hours per year |
| Hours per year X hourly rate | | £960.00 | | | | | Total annual value |

A much simpler method is to total all the volunteer hours that have been contributed in a year and multiply this by the national minimum wage. This gives a lower and less accurate figure, but gives you absolute assurance that you are not overstating the financial value of volunteering in your service.

Overheads

Once you have calculated the total annual volunteer value, you can add an additional percentage to cover what you would have spent on overheads (i.e. National Insurance, annual leave, sick pay, etc) if these people had been paid staff rather than volunteers. Your organisation may have a standard figure you can use. If not, a very conservative figure would be to add 20%.

The Viva Ratio

Divide the total annual volunteer value (including overheads) by the total volunteer investment to produce the VIVA ratio.

For example:

| | | |
|-------|-------------------------------------|---------|
| A | Total annual value | £75,000 |
| | | |
| B | Overheads @ 20% | £15,000 |
| | | |
| A+B+C | Total | £90,000 |
| ----- | | |
| C | Total annual value (incl overheads) | £90,000 |
| | | |
| D | Total volunteer investment | £15,000 |
| | | |
| C/D=E | VIVA ratio | 6 |

This example tells you that for every pound spent on volunteers, this service gets £6 back in the value of the work they do.



Return on investment

It can be useful to compare your metrics with similar organisations. The latest figures from the Agenda Consulting - Volunteers Count benchmarking study (2013) show that the ratios of total cost of volunteers to volunteers contribution are:

- National minimum wage:
£1.00 : £2.70
- National median wage:
£1.00 : £5.40
- Organisation average wage:
£1.00 : £5.50

ie:

“based on the national minimum wage / national median wage / organisation’s average wage for every £1 spent we would get back £X”

In this instance, benchmarking is not used to measure good versus bad – it is a way of highlighting differences between organisations, which may or may not prompt you to review or change your practice. For example, an organisation notices that their own spend on volunteer learning and development is much higher than their peers. When they review this spend alongside their retention levels, they are happy to continue with that level of investment, as their retention are also higher than those of their peers.

Measuring the impact of volunteering

Organisations embark on volunteering projects because they want to make a positive difference to the people they support. Measuring the impact that volunteering makes helps:

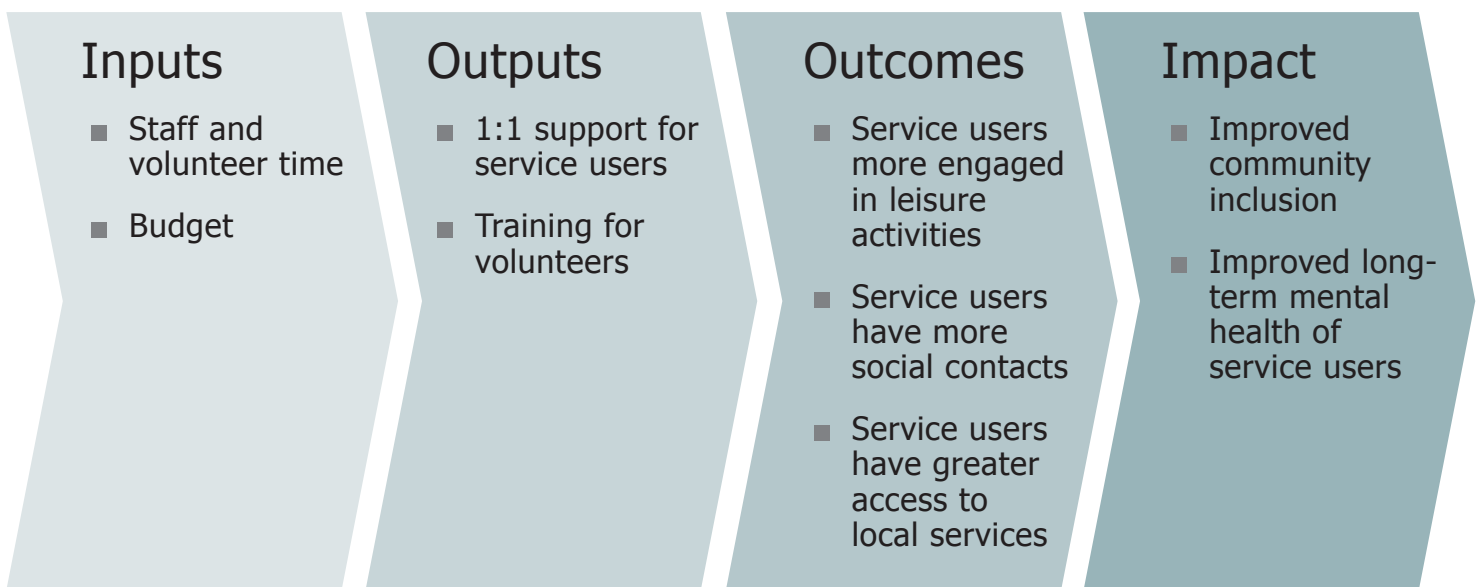
- Demonstrate what has changed as a result of the involvement of volunteers.
- Understand what has worked well.
- Identify areas for improvement in the volunteer programme.
- Provide feedback to volunteers on the difference their contribution has made.
- Provide evidence for funders on the added value that volunteers bring.



Impact

It is perhaps most useful to think of impact as the change that happens as a result of an activity or project. This will be different for different groups of people depending on their involvement with the project. Measuring impact can tell you whether changes have been positive or negative, and how much change has taken place.

Example: Volunteers providing 1:1 support to people using services



Not everyone defines “impact” in the same way. Some organisations use it to describe the outputs and outcomes from volunteering. However, the Charities Evaluation Service defines it as something which is longer term and broader than outcomes. Therefore you need to understand what your audience means by the term “impact”. There is no right and wrong answer, only what is appropriate for your audience.

Monitoring

Monitoring is the process of collecting facts and figures relating to volunteering in your service. This may include data such as the number of volunteers and the number of hours they contribute. Monitoring helps you check that activity is being undertaken as you expected. However, it does not tell you what changes have been experienced as a result of the volunteering.

Evaluation

Impact and monitoring information describe what has happened. Evaluation involves interpreting that information and putting a value on it. For example:

- Is the impact good enough?
- Is the programme worth the resources that are being put into it?

Why do you need this information?

The first step in impact measurement, monitoring or evaluation is to define why you need the information and how it will be used. This will determine what information you collect, the methods you use and how much time and resource you invest in data collection and evaluation. At this stage it is important to consult people who may have a stake in the results of this assessment. This may include your line manager, your finance manager, your team or a funder.

The information may be used to:

- Account for funding.
- Provide evidence to support a tender or funding bid.
- Showcase achievements.
- Develop a structured programme or activity.
- Identify good practice.
- Measure the level of engagement of volunteers

At this stage it is helpful to identify who is your primary audience. Once you have determined why you want this information and whom it is for, your answers will guide:

- Who is involved in the impact assessment.
- The questions you ask about impact.
- The type of data you collect.
- How you communicate your findings.

Volunteer engagement is when the organisation values the volunteer and the volunteer values the organisation. Measuring the engagement levels of volunteers is a good way to track progress over time and identifying the key factors which drive engagement will help you to improve the volunteer offer.



What resources are available?

You need to balance the value of the information you want against the amount of work needed to gather it and the resources available to you. This includes how much of your own time you can reasonably allocate to this task. Also, bear in mind that you are relying on the goodwill of people using services and volunteers to participate, so be careful not to make the process too burdensome.

Assessing outcomes, i.e. the changes, benefits and learning, of volunteering in your service will be less resource-intensive than assessing the wider impacts, but still needs to be done thoroughly. It is also worth remembering that having collected the data you need sufficient capacity to analyse it; it is damaging to your relationships if you ask people for information which you then do not use. If you have insufficient resources you may need to scale back your assessment.

What to measure?

The next step is to consider what you want to focus on. What are the aims of volunteering in your service? Which differences that volunteering might make are you interested in assessing? These could be directly linked to the aims of the volunteer programme but may include other differences which volunteering has made and which you think would be important to assess. For example, if the purpose of a volunteer programme is to extend the range of leisure activities available to service users, you may want to measure whether their involvement in local groups and clubs has increased.

At this point it is worth checking out your thinking with key colleagues:

- Is it reasonable to expect the volunteer activity to deliver the outcomes you have identified?
- Is it possible to test whether the anticipated outcomes have been achieved?



How do I measure impact?

First of all consider whether there is existing data which you can use. If we take the example of the volunteer programme which aims to extend service users' leisure activities, the information you need may already be contained in records.

If existing records are not sufficient for your purposes, there are two common ways of measuring impact.

Pre and post-test

This is a good approach if you are:

- Able to plan your impact measurement before the volunteers have started.
- Unlikely to have a significant "drop off" rate amongst volunteers and/or people being supported.

For example, if you wanted to look at the impact of the volunteering on service users' sense of well-being, you could ask users how they feel about themselves before they are linked with a volunteer and again after they have been supported by a volunteer for a period of time. You could then look at the difference in their responses to measure what change has taken place.

If you intend to take this approach and think that the changes you want to measure have already been measured elsewhere (e.g. well-being, confidence, self-esteem, etc), it is worth looking at measurement tools that are already available and picking questions from them.

This approach means it is possible to incorporate some of your data collection into your support planning systems. A good example of this is the use of an outcomes star.

Outcomes star
www.outcomesstar.org.uk

If you are using this approach, think about when you would expect the volunteering programme to have an impact and plan your data collection accordingly.

A way to strengthen the pre and post-test approach is to ask the same questions of a comparison group to see whether or not they have experienced the same impacts. A "comparison group" is a group of people who have not experienced the volunteer programme, but the numbers in the sample need to be sufficient in order to make this meaningful.

Retrospective pre and post-test

In an ideal world you should think about measuring impact when you are planning a project or activity. This will help you develop a coherent approach that includes planning, resourcing, delivery and impact assessment. However, often we only consider measuring impact after an activity has started. If this is the case, you need to ask people what they feel has changed as a result of the volunteer programme. For example, you could ask people who use services whether they have a greater sense of well-being as a result of being supported by a volunteer.

This approach is not as robust as the pre and post-test method, but sometimes it is the only option available.





Tips for measuring impact

Whichever impact measurement method you use:

- Ask people about change soon after they are likely to have experienced it. If you ask people too early they might not have experienced the full impact of the project or, if you ask them too late, it may be unclear to them what has caused any particular change. Use the same time scale for all participants.
- Always ask people whether the change happened as a result of the volunteer programme or whether there were other factors that played a part.
- Do not assume that all impacts are positive; ask about negative impacts or if there was no change.
- Ask about barriers or enablers to experiencing the impact; for instance, if a user has had a stay in hospital they may have experienced less value than expected from the volunteer programme; or if a user is in receipt of some additional money which can fund leisure activities they may have experienced more value than expected.

PROS AND CONS OF SURVEYS

Pros

- Efficient: you can collect a relatively large amount of data in a short amount of time.
- Appropriate for statistical analysis.
- Online survey tools are easy to use and some are free.
- Allows anonymity so people may respond more honestly.

Cons

- Allows limited feedback on views and attitudes.
- Can result in low response rates.
- Some types of survey are not easily accessible for people who need support with literacy.
- Less useful with a small number of people.

PROS AND CONS OF INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

Pros

- Useful for exploring attitudes and beliefs.
- You can easily follow up interesting points.
- A good way of identifying unexpected outcomes.
- Group dynamics may produce interesting ideas or feedback.
- A way of involving people who might not respond to a survey.

Cons

- Can be time consuming to set up, undertake and analyse.
- May collect information from fewer people.
- A limited number of topics can be discussed in the time available.
- Not suitable for someone who wants anonymity.

Choosing assessment tools

The information you collect depends on what questions you want to answer.

Developing a survey, or using questions from an existing survey, will give you quantitative data. This is appropriate when:

- The question would result in a closed response such as "yes" or "no".
- You want to ask about the extent of a change (e.g. "on a scale of 1-5" or using gradations of sad and happy faces).
- You are sure about the set of possible responses to the questions you want to ask.

Interviews and focus groups will give you qualitative data. These are appropriate when:

- You want to understand how or why something has changed.
- The changes experienced are too complex to be captured by survey questions.
- You want to understand how people think about a topic in order to help you design a survey.

GATHERING INFORMATION

Surveys

Who are you going to send the survey to?

At this stage you need to decide the distribution list for your survey or surveys. For instance:

- Which groups of people have the information you need?
- How will you ensure that anyone who needs assistance to complete the questionnaire gets the necessary help?
- Are you going to invite former volunteers to take part in the survey or just existing ones?
- Are you going to do a survey of staff? Do you need to involve all staff or only certain groups?
- Are there any other groups of people you need to include?

What is the best format?

You need to consider whether a postal, online, email, telephone or face-to-face survey is most suitable for the people you want to involve.

Survey Monkey is a free on-line survey tool which is easy to use.
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/>

Getting the wording right

Make sure that you use simple language which is easy to understand. Ensure that the survey is not too long and is designed in a way that makes it easy to complete. Include your contact details in case respondents have any questions. You should also explain the purpose of the survey and how the information will be used. It is important to include a deadline for returning questionnaires. You may find it helpful to test out the survey on a few people before distributing it more widely.

Getting people to respond

If your survey is easy to understand you are likely to get a higher response rate. If you are doing a postal survey you can increase the response rate by enclosing a stamped addressed envelope. Offering an incentive such as a prize draw can be effective. Always send reminders to people who have not responded promptly.

GATHERING INFORMATION

Surveys

Response rates are often a challenge for volunteer surveys due to the dispersed nature of the workforce and that data on volunteers is difficult to keep up to date.

Helpful approaches:

- Messaging.** There needs to be a compelling message about why people should spend their valuable time to undertake the survey. If it is the case that there is some cynicism about whether surveys will lead to action then this needs to be tackled head on. Try to use the chief executive in key survey communications.
- Branding.** You may wish to brand the survey. For example, some organisations use the brand – ‘Have Your Say’ – and have found this helpful.
- Promotion and communication.** You will need to develop a comprehensive promotion and communication plan and should seek to deliver the messages to your volunteers using a range of methods and communication channels.
- Format.** An online survey is the most cost effective way to reach your volunteers and if it can be completed on a tablet or smartphone, even better. There will be a proportion of volunteers who do not have access to the internet and paper questionnaires are a good tool to encourage participation. Some organisations enlist the help of administrative volunteers to input the information from the paper questionnaires.



GATHERING INFORMATION

Interviews

Who to interview?

This will depend on the purpose and focus of your assessment. Who is best placed to respond to your questions?

Structuring the interviews

You will find it helpful to have a topic guide or some prepared questions to ask at the interviews. It is up to you how structured or informal you want this to be; however, you will probably find it helpful to leave enough flexibility to ask follow up questions where you want to explore a particular experience or viewpoint. A list of questions that could be used for interviews or focus groups is available in the appendix three. This is by no means exhaustive; use it to prompt your ideas and develop your own questions.

At the start of each interview explain its purpose and the overall purpose of the assessment. Also discuss confidentiality: agree with the interviewee whether comments will be anonymous or may be attributed.

At the end of the interview ask for any further comments and thank each interviewee for their involvement.

Recording the interviews

If you have trouble focusing on the conversation and taking notes at the same time, you may find it easier if you have someone to take notes or record the interview and transcribe it later.



GATHERING INFORMATION

Focus Groups

Who to Involve?

At this stage you need to decide whether to run separate focus groups for people who have a similar role in the project, or to have focus groups made up of people in different roles. For instance, you may want to have separate discussions with people using the service, volunteers and staff or you may want to have a mix of people in order to get a broader discussion.

Who will facilitate?

It is important to choose someone with whom the group feels at ease. For instance, if you want to ask volunteers about the support they have received, do not engage the person who has been providing that support as group facilitator.

Structuring the focus group

The ideal size for a focus group is 6-10 people. The number of topics you are able to cover will be limited so think carefully about what you want to get out of the focus group. Then develop some questions to cover these areas. Build in some flexibility as the group may raise issues that you had not anticipated, but which are relevant to your assessment.

You may find it useful to include some activities for stimulating conversation and keeping participants engaged. For ideas for focus group activities, see appendix four.

Recording the focus group

You will need either a digital recording or full notes. Do not rely solely on flipchart notes of the discussion; these tend to get messy as people add to them and while they can make perfect sense at the time, they may be difficult to understand at a later date.

ANALYSING INFORMATION

The next step is to analyse the information you have gathered. Quantitative and qualitative data will each need a different approach. If you have both, you may find it easier to analyse the quantitative data first.

Surveys

The closed questions in the survey will provide you with quantitative data. If you only have a few responses you may find it easiest to analyse the results by hand. You can do this by adding up the totals for each of the different options for each question. You can then produce a table or graph of how many people questioned, or what percentage, gave which answer.

For example:

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Strongly disagree | Not answered |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|-------|----------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| I can get support whenever I need it | 3 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 0 |



ANALYSING INFORMATION

In most cases, it will save you time if you use a spreadsheet. Alternatively, if you have had the survey completed online, the results will be totalled for you. You can also upgrade to a paid-for package if you want help analysing the data.

If you are using Excel, use one row for each respondent and use each column for a different question.

For example:

| Volunteer | Frequency of volunteering | Qu 1 | Qu 2 | Qu 3 | Qu 4 | Qu 5 | Qu 6 | Qu 7 | Qu 8 |
|-----------|---------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| J Bloggs | 3 hours pw | A | B | A | C | A | Z | D | E |

In this example:

A = Strongly agree

B = Agree

C = Neither agree nor disagree

D = Disagree

E = Strongly disagree

Z = Not answered

Filtering is a way of examining patterns in the way respondents answer different questions. For instance, is the frequency of someone's volunteering related to whether they feel they are making a difference? To add filters to your spreadsheet, highlight the spreadsheet, then go to data > filter. Small arrows then appear next to the column headings. By clicking on the small arrow above a column you can choose to just see the responses that included one particular answer. This allows you to manually add up responses. While there are more automated ways of doing this in Excel they take time to set up and using filters may be sufficient for your needs.

ANALYSING INFORMATION

Traffic light scoring

You can use traffic light scoring to give a visual indication of the majority response to each question.

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>A GREEN light is used to indicate that your service is doing well in a particular area. This is usually awarded where the majority of respondents answer "strongly agree" or "agree".</p> | <p>An AMBER light is a cue for further investigation or to consider whether the question was appropriate in the first place. This is usually awarded where the majority of respondents answer "neither agree nor disagree" or do not give a response.</p> | <p>A RED light indicates that substantially more needs to be done to improve work in this area. This is usually awarded where the majority of respondents answer "disagree" or "disagree strongly".</p> |
|---|--|--|

For example:

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Strongly disagree | Not answered | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|-------|----------------------------|-------------------|--------------|--|
| I can get support whenever I need it | 3 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 0 | |
| I feel more independent | 2 | 3 | 7 | 0 | 1 | |
| I feel more self-confident | 0 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 0 | |

ANALYSING INFORMATION

Interviews

Interview analysis involves looking through your notes to identify key themes and points of consensus or disagreement among interviewees. You may find it helpful to make notes for each interview under headings based on the questions you asked. Or you could use different coloured highlighters to indicate each category in your interview notes. This will enable you to compare interviews and see whether respondents are saying similar or different things.

Focus groups

Analysing notes of a focus group is similar to analysing an interview. However, if flipcharts have been used it is worth including these in your analysis and cross-checking them with the notes of the meeting. Focus groups are a good way of seeing how different people respond to a particular question, and what is behind disagreement or consensus in a group, so it is worth paying particular attention to this.



ANALYSING INFORMATION

Reporting

Once you have collected the information you need to collate the results and prepare information for the various stakeholders. At this point it will help you to revisit the aims of your assessment and organise your findings under each aim.

A possible structure for the report may be:

Introduction:

Explain the purpose of the assessment.

Methodology:

Explain the approach you took and the tools you used, including the number of people in each group of respondents (i.e. volunteers, service users, etc).

Results:

Summarise your findings in the way you think is most helpful to your readers.

In this section include any issues that may impact on the accuracy of your results, such as a low response rate or under-represented demographic groups.

Conclusions and recommendations:

Identify the main themes that emerge from your findings and the implications for your service.

ANALYSING INFORMATION

Reporting

While you may have a particular audience in mind, it is good practice to share the results of the impact assessment with everyone who has participated. This may mean that you need to produce a summary of the information or offer it in more than one format.

It is also best practice to gather together any feedback on the assessment process, record what worked well and what you would do differently in the future.

Finally, remember to celebrate success. This may be through an article in a bulletin, a press release or a presentation at an event. It is important to recognise and thank everyone who has been involved in the project.

What to do with the results

People's experience often varies considerably depending on their department or region. Breaking down the results by department or region will help you to understand these differences and give volunteer managers and coordinators the results for their own teams.

If you have undertaken a survey, it can also be useful to benchmark the results against similar organisations in the sector. This can provide valuable information to share with senior managers and trustees as well as pinpointing areas to celebrate or to explore. You will gain a valuable insight into the experience of your volunteers that you would not otherwise have known.

For useful tips on maximising the impact of your people survey, go to:

<http://www.agendaconsulting.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Maximise-the-Impact-of-Your-People-Survey-April-16.pdf>

Further resources

General information and resources

Volunteering England is part of the **National Council for Voluntary Organisations** (NCVO) and provides a set of free volunteering resources on its website. Many of these are included in the lists below. Further resources, including videos and best practice guides include topics such as:

- Insurance for volunteers
- Volunteers and stress
- Health and safety for volunteers
- Volunteer drivers
- Avoiding creating employment contracts
- Data protection and volunteers
- Copyright and volunteers

» You can also sign up for free fortnightly newsletters at www.ncvo.org.uk

The following organisations provide a similar range of resources:

» **Volunteer Scotland**
www.volunteerscotland.net/

» **Volunteer Now (Northern Ireland)**
www.volunteernow.co.uk/

» **Wales Council for Voluntary Action**
www.wcva.org.uk/

General information and resources

» **KnowHowNonProfit** provides short online training videos on a wide range of topics. KnowHowNonProfit also publishes “how to” guides which have been written by people who subscribe to the website. Some resources are free and other various subscription packages are available. See www.knowhownonprofit.org/

S McCurley, R Lynch and R Jackson (2012)
The Complete Volunteer Management Handbook
Directory of Social Change:
this book is suitable for people looking for a more in depth approach to volunteer management.



Information for volunteers

Free **NCVO** resources:

I want to volunteer

Why volunteer?

Find a Volunteer Centre

What to do if things go wrong

» www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering

» **The Citizens Advice Bureau** publishes guidance for people who want to volunteer while claiming state benefits.
www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Documents/Advice%20factsheets/Benefits/b-volunteering.pdf

» **The Department for Work and Pensions** publishes guidance for people on finding volunteer placements.
Volunteer placements, rights and expenses
www.gov.uk/volunteering/find-volunteer-placements



Recruiting and managing volunteers

KnowHow NonProfit offers a wide range of resources, advice sheets and toolkits including:

Recruitment

Volunteer agreements

Insurance and volunteers

Supervising and supporting volunteers

Retaining volunteers

Training volunteers

Avoiding job substitution: keeping the distinction between volunteers and employees clear

Volunteer policies

» See <https://knowhownonprofit.org/@@search?SearchableText=volunteers>

» **KnowHow NonProfit** also provides a **free induction booklet** for volunteers in care homes:
<https://knowhownonprofit.org/people/volunteers-and-your-organisation/Sharingtimeandtalentsbuildingcaringcommunitieswebb.pdf>

» **Volunteering Matters** has produced a booklet on Top Tips for Realising Person-Centred Care Through Volunteering
<http://volunteeringmatters.org.uk/app/uploads/2015/05/Centred-care-top-tips.pdf>

Managing volunteers

Volunteering England resources:

» **Volunteer policies and agreements**
www.volunteering.org.uk/component/gpb/policiesandagreements

» **Reward, recognition and retention**
www.volunteering.org.uk/component/gpb/rewardrecognitionretention

» **Endings**
Good practice guidance on ending befriending relationships
www.volunteering.org.uk/component/gpb/health-and-social-care

Risk toolkit: how to take care of risk in volunteering
Author: Katharine Gaskin

» **Institute for Volunteering Research**
www.ivr.org.uk/component/ivr/risk-toolkit-how-to-take-care-of-risk-in-volunteering-a-guide-for-organisations

Managing Volunteers
Managing volunteers in organisations that work with offenders and ex-offenders

» **Clinks**
www.clinks.org/sites/default/files/VOLUNTEERING%20GUIDE%20-%20Managing_Volunteers.pdf

Volunteers Count Benchmarking Study
Agenda Consulting – specialists in the not-for-profit sector
Runs every 2 years; measures key volunteering management metrics
www.agendaconsulting.co.uk/benchmarking/volunteers-count/

Volunteering in care homes toolkit
» **NCVO**
<file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/volunteering-in-care-homes-toolkit-march-2016.pdf>

Volunteering for particular groups of people

Volunteering Matters has produced a Volunteer Charter which your organisation can sign as a commitment to best practice in inclusive volunteering.

» <http://disabilityactionalliance.org.uk/projects-3/volunteering/volunteer-charter/>

Free information and case studies from **KnowHow NonProfit:**

» Supported volunteering for adults with disabilities
<https://knowhownonprofit.org/case-studies/supported-volunteering-for-adults-with-disabilities>

» Employer supported volunteering
<https://knowhownonprofit.org/how-to/how-to-set-up-employer-supported-volunteering>

» Recruiting student volunteers
<https://knowhownonprofit.org/case-studies/recruiting-student-volunteers>

» Setting up an offenders volunteer programme
<https://knowhownonprofit.org/case-studies/setting-up-an-offenders-volunteer-programme>

Service user involvement in the delivery of mental health services

» **Together and NSUN**
Available at <http://www.together-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2014/06/Service-User-Involvement-briefing.pdf>

Understanding mental health in volunteering

» **Wales Council for Voluntary Action**
Available at <http://www.wcva-ids.org.uk/wcva/2517>

Volunteers and the law

Trowers and Hamlins LLP offer a service suitable for not-for-profit providers which involves:

- Carrying out a risk assessment of your volunteer arrangements
- Analysing the status of your volunteers; i.e. making sure that you do not stray into territory where volunteers may be able to claim worker or employee status
- Issuing you with some handy guidelines to ensure that your volunteers remain volunteers

» <https://sites-trowers.vuturevx.com/82/1140/compose-email/16-05-09---lon---ad-hoc-legal-update---volunteers---assessment-of-your-risks.asp>



Evaluating volunteering

Investing in Volunteers award

UK Volunteering Forum

<http://iiv.investinginvolunteers.org.uk>

Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit: A practical guide for assessing the difference that volunteering makes

NCVO

<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/component/redshop/1-publications/P78-volunteering-impact-assessment-toolkit>

Measuring your social return on investment: beginners guide to SROI

KnowHowNonProfit online training film

www.knowhownonprofit.org/studyzone/measuring-your-social-return-on-investment-how-to-get-started

Volunteering investment and value audit

Author: Katharine Gaskin

Institute for Volunteering Research

www.ivr.org.uk/component/ivr/viva--the-volunteer-investment-and-value-audit-a-self-help-guide

Volunteer Surveys

Agenda Consulting – specialists in the not-for-profit sector

Bespoke surveys to understand engagement of volunteers

www.agendaconsulting.co.uk/surveys/volunteer-survey/

Request for a volunteer form

| REQUEST FOR A VOLUNTEER | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Service user | |
| My goal(s) | The sort of person I would like as my volunteer |
| What I would like a volunteer to do | Skills I would like the volunteer to have |
| How often I would like a volunteer | This is me – things I'd like a volunteer to know about who I am |
| Signed: (Service user) | Date: |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| Signed: (Staff member) | Date: |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |



Volunteer role description form

| VOLUNTEER ROLE DESCRIPTION | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <p>ROLE DETAILS</p> <p>Role title:</p> <p>Reference number:</p> <p>Supervised by:</p> <p>Department:</p> <p>Location:</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>PURPOSE OF ROLE</p> <p>.....</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>MAIN TASKS</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>1.</td> <td>2.</td> <td>3.</td> </tr> </table> | | | 1. | 2. | 3. | |
| 1. | 2. | 3. | | | | |
| <p>PERSON SPECIFICATION</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Skills:</td> <td>Qualities:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Additional requirements:</td> <td>DBS (if required)</td> </tr> </table> | | | Skills: | Qualities: | Additional requirements: | DBS (if required) |
| Skills: | Qualities: | | | | | |
| Additional requirements: | DBS (if required) | | | | | |
| <p>TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES & BENEFITS TO VOLUNTEER</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Training & development:</td> <td>Benefits:</td> </tr> </table> | | | Training & development: | Benefits: | | |
| Training & development: | Benefits: | | | | | |
| <p>DURATION AND TIME COMMITMENT:</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>For more information about this role, please contact:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>.....</td> <td>Date created:</td> <td>Date modified:</td> </tr> </table> | | | | Date created: | Date modified: | |
| | Date created: | Date modified: | | | | |

Volunteer application form (page 1)

| VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM | |
|---|--|
| <p>VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITY APPLIED FOR</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Home befriender <input type="checkbox"/> Group volunteer <input type="checkbox"/> Tele-befriender <input type="checkbox"/> Information and Advice Line volunteer <input type="checkbox"/> Peer support volunteer <input type="checkbox"/> E-Befriender <input type="checkbox"/> Driver <input type="checkbox"/> Social Befriender <input type="checkbox"/> Administration volunteer </p> | |
| <p>PERSONAL DETAILS</p> <p> Title: _____ Forenames/s: _____ Surname: _____ Mr/Mrs/Ms/Other _____ _____ Address: _____ Home No _____ _____ _____ _____ Work No _____ _____ Mobile _____ Postcode _____ Email _____ </p> | |
| <p>AVAILABILITY FOR VOLUNTEERING</p> <p> Are you normally available in: <input type="checkbox"/> The daytime <input type="checkbox"/> The evening <input type="checkbox"/> The weekend </p> <hr/> <p> How often could you spare your time to volunteer? <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week <input type="checkbox"/> Once a fortnight <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month <input type="checkbox"/> Other </p> <hr/> <p> And for how many hours at a time? _____ </p> <hr/> <p> Where did you hear about volunteering opportunities with (organisation)? _____ </p> | |
| <p> Please tell us about any access requirements or support needs which you may require (e.g. large print, induction loop, wheelchair access)? Please specify: _____ </p> | |

Volunteer application form (page 2)

| | |
|---|--|
| FOR ANY ROLES INVOLVING DRIVING | |
| <p>Do you have a current driving licence?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">(If yes, you will need to bring this with you to your interview)</p> | <p>(If applicable to role) do you have access to a car which you are prepared to use for volunteer work in a roadworthy condition with appropriate insurance?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> |
| <p>Please state any penalty points or disqualifications including dates</p> <p>.....</p> | |
| <p>Please tell us about any skills or experience you have that may be relevant to supporting blind people, or any interests or hobbies that may be useful in voluntary work with us?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> | |
| VISAS | |
| <p>Do you require a visa to work in the UK?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> | <p>We strongly recommend that you do not jeopardise your visa status by volunteering if you are not allowed to do so.</p> |
| DBS CHECKS | |
| <p>All volunteers whose role involves contact with deafblind people will need to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service check, previously known as a Criminal Record Bureau check, prior to commencing any volunteering activities.</p> <p>.....</p> | |
| <p>Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or received a caution, reprimand or warning other than a spent conviction under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974?</p> | |
| <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> | <p>Details:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> |

Volunteer application form (page 3)

REFERENCES

Please give details of two people (NOT relatives) who have preferably known you for at least 12 months who we could approach for written references. Please ensure you ask your referees permission to give their name. This section must be completed or we cannot process your application.

Name:

Relationship to applicant:

Address:

.....

.....

Postcode:

.....

Home Tel:

Mobile:

Email:
(Please print)

Name:

Relationship to applicant:

Address:

.....

.....

Postcode:

.....

Home Tel:

Mobile:

Email:
(Please print)

DECLARATION

The information contained in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, true and complete.

Signed: Date:

.....

Data Protection The information you supply on this form will be used by (organisation) for administrative purposes within the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998. We shall not supply it to third parties.

Volunteer agreement



The purpose of this volunteer agreement is to clarify the basis on which you have agreed to offer your services as a volunteer. It sets out what you, the volunteer can expect from Bethphage and what we hope to receive from you during your time with us. This is not a contract; it is a declaration of intent which ensures that we all know what to expect.

Bethphage is pleased to welcome as a volunteer. We hope that this relationship is a mutually beneficial one and as part of this relationship, we aim to:

1. Reimburse expenses where applicable.
2. Provide a full induction and any learning and development necessary for the volunteer role.
3. Treat volunteers in line with our Equality and Diversity Policy.
4. Provide insurance cover.
5. Provide you with a named supervisor and offer adequate support and supervision.
6. Be flexible to your individual needs.
7. Provide a safe and welcoming environment.
8. Provide you with interesting and productive work and learning opportunities.

In return, we ask that you:

1. Have a genuine desire to help Bethphage reach its goals.
2. Do your best to be reliable in regards to your hours and give us as much notice as possible if you cannot attend.
3. Agree to work within Bethphage's values and all of its policies and procedures, as outlined in our Volunteer Policy.
4. Do not form relationships with the people we support or show special favouritism – including the use of internet sites such as Facebook.

Give your consent to take out two references and an enhanced DBS check, if required.

I, confirm that I have read and understood Bethphage Volunteer Policy. I am signing to confirm this and to confirm my intention to volunteer in line with the points set out above. My signature also confirms that I understand that I am offering my services on a purely voluntary basis. I accept that I do not have any employee rights.

Signed by volunteer

Date

Signed by staff member

Position (Must be a Manager)

Date

The following ready-made impact measurement tools are all available online. You could use an off-the-shelf tool or adapt one to the needs of your service.

1 Evaluation tools

The Prove It! Toolkit (<http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/entry/prove-it>) has been developed by the New Economics Foundation and is suitable for:

- Evaluating the impact of small-medium sized community regeneration projects on the lives of local people.
- Looking at the effects of projects that involve local people as workers, volunteers or beneficiaries.
- Organisations that are concerned with community involvement.
- Evaluating a project's effect on social inclusion, social capital and other quality of life issues.

Measuring Up! (www.ces-vol.org.uk/tools-and-resources/planning-for-monitoring-evaluation/measuring-up.html) has been developed by the Charities Evaluation Service to help charities and social enterprises review and improve their impact.

PerformWell (www.performwell.org/index.php/find-surveyassessments) offers a wide range of free measurement tools that are aimed primarily at services

for young people. However, many are equally relevant to adults. The website allows you to drill down to specific outcomes and relevant indicators. The site includes tools on:

- Community involvement
- Employment, housing and self-sufficiency
- Mental health
- Good health habits
- Feelings about self
- Relationships
- Life skills
- Parenting

Clinks (www.clinks.org/vol-eval-kit) has developed a set of evaluation tools for volunteering projects that work with offenders and their families.

Evaluation Support Scotland (www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/resources/228/) provides a blank copy of a generic evaluation wheel. This is a visual approach to plotting progress towards outcomes.

Care and support outcomes 2 monitoring tools

There is now a wide range of outcomes monitoring tools available for care and support. For example:

The Outcomes Star (www.staronline.org.uk/) is a tool for supporting and measuring change when working with people. The basic concept has been adapted for working with different groups of people and there is a wide range of stars available.

Better Futures (www.ccpscotland.org/hseu/information/better-futures) outcomes tool is a web-based tool designed to enable housing support providers to record individuals' support needs over a period of time. It provides a means of recording a baseline when someone starts using a service, plotting their aspirations and progress. The tool is able to produce reports from the data held to enable organisations to measure the outcomes of their work.

3 Wellbeing

The University of Pennsylvania (www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/) offers a range of free online questionnaires concerning happiness, emotional wellbeing, depression, optimism, character strengths, life satisfaction and relationships.

NHS Health Scotland (www.healthscotland.com/documents/1467.aspx) provides a short questionnaire on positive mental health.



Here is a list of suggested questions to ask during an impact assessment interview or focus group with volunteers, people using the service or staff. You could take questions directly from the list or use them to generate ideas and develop questions of your own. Between 10 and 12 questions should result in an interview of around 45 minutes or a focus group of an hour and a half. Your choice of questions should be determined by the purpose of your impact assessment.

1 Volunteers

1.1 Introductory questions

What activities do you carry out as a volunteer here?

How long have you been volunteering here?

1.2 Motivations and expectations

How did you first hear about the service/project?

Why did you get involved?

What did you originally want to get out of volunteering here?

What encouraged you to volunteer in the service?

What discouraged you from volunteering in the service?

1.3 Recruitment

What aspects of your recruitment as a volunteer worked well?

What aspects of your recruitment could we have improved on?

How welcoming was the service?

What would help us recruit more volunteers?

1.4 Training and support

What induction were you given?

What would have improved your induction?

What further training have you received?

What other training, if any, would be helpful?

What support have you been given?

What other support, if any, would help?

Have you felt safe, supported and confident with service users?

1 Volunteers continued

1.5 Impacts of volunteering

What effect has volunteering here had on you?

Has volunteering had any impact on:

- Your career?
- How you feel about yourself?
- Your relationships with other people?
- Your involvement in the local community?

Has your experience as a volunteer changed any other area of your life?

Has volunteering here affected you negatively in any way?

What do you think could be done to improve your experience of volunteering here?

What difference do you feel you have made as a volunteer?

How would you describe the impact you have had on the service users you have worked with?

What challenges have you faced as a volunteer?

Have you ever been in a difficult or uncomfortable situation as a volunteer?

How would you describe your volunteering experience to an interested friend?

Would you recommend volunteering here to a friend?

How would you change or develop the service we provide?

Is there anything else you would like to say about volunteering here or its effects on you?



2 People who use services

2.1 Introductory questions

Do you know that some of the people who work here are volunteers?

Do you know which people are volunteers?

Please describe the support you receive from volunteers.

What do you want to achieve through your time with the volunteer?

For how long have you been supported by volunteers?

2.2 Service delivery

Does the support you get from volunteers match what you need?

Are you satisfied with the support you get from volunteers?

Prompt:

Why/why not?

How has the support you receive from volunteers helped you?

What has worked well about receiving support from a volunteer?

Prompt:

Why has it had a positive effect?

What are the least satisfactory things about the support you have had from volunteers?

Prompts:

Why did they have a negative effect?

What could be done to improve things?

Do you have confidence in volunteers? *Why/why not?*

Do you feel safe with volunteers? *Why/why not?*

Does volunteering affect the amount of support you receive?

Are there any differences between being supported by a volunteer or a member of paid staff?

Do you think the service would be different if there were no volunteers involved?

Would you recommend having a volunteer to another service user?

Prompts:

If yes, what are the main advantages?

If no, what are the main disadvantages?

Do you have any suggestions that would improve volunteering in this service?

Is there anything else you would like to say about volunteers, their support and the effect it has had on you?

3 Staff

3.1 Introductory questions

What volunteer roles are you aware of within the service?

How do you interact with volunteers in these roles?

How long have you been working with volunteers?

3.2 Volunteer recruitment

What aspects of volunteer recruitment work well?

What aspects of volunteer recruitment could we improve on?

What would help us recruit more volunteers?

3.3 Training and support

How well do we train, support and manage volunteers?

What training do you think is necessary for staff to work effectively with volunteers?

3.4 Service delivery

What impact do you think volunteering has on:

- The amount of support we can offer to service users?
- The quality of the service?
- The flexibility of the service?
- How the service is managed?
- The diversity of our service?
- How easy it is to provide a culturally appropriate service?
- How innovative the service is?
- Cost-effectiveness?

What training is needed?

Our reputation as a service?

Do volunteers help to integrate the service with the local community?

Prompts:

If yes, how?

If no, why not?

What are the positive effects of volunteers in the service on paid staff?

What are the most negative effects of volunteers in the service on paid staff?

What are the positive effects of volunteers in the service on service users?

What are the most negative effects of volunteers in the service on service users?

What are the positive effects of volunteers in the service on the service as a whole?

What are the most negative effects of volunteers in the service on the service as a whole?

Does the work done by volunteers have any other impacts on this service and the people we support?

How could we improve the effectiveness of the contribution played by volunteers?

Is there anything else you would like to say about volunteers and the effects of volunteering on the service?

Structuring a focus group around an activity helps to ensure that everybody has an opportunity to contribute their views and keeps people interested and engaged. Here are some ideas you might try.

1 Drawing

Each person has a piece of flipchart paper and coloured pens. Ask each participant to draw a picture that represents their experience of the volunteer programme. Participants initially share in pairs what their picture means to them, then in the wider group.

2 Headline views

Write key questions or topics on flipchart paper posted around the room. Ask people to write their views on post-it notes and add them to the relevant flipchart paper. Collate these quickly and use them as the basis for discussion.

3 Agree or disagree

Print statements or comments that offer a range of responses to key questions on to card. Each person looks at a card and decides whether they agree. If they agree they pass it on to the next participant. If they disagree they put the card in a box in the middle of the room. Do this three times. If a card survives three rounds, there is a degree of consensus around that statement. Use the cards that survive as a basis for discussion.

4 Speaking for each other

Distribute blank cards to each participant. In pairs, ask them to discuss their views on a topic and summarise their opinion on a card. Then ask participants to swap cards and read them out.

Repeat for further topics.

With thanks to the following organisations who have helped to shape the content of this report.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
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| Carers Trust | Nottingham Community Housing Association |
| Certitude | Outlook Care |
| Coverage Care | Radian Support |
| Deafblind UK | Real Life Options |
| Dimensions | Royal London Society for Blind People |
| FitzRoy | Sanctuary Care |
| Guild Care | Seeability |
| Guinness Care and Support | Trowers and Hamlins LLP |
| Just Leaders | Vibrance |
| Langdon | Wales and West Housing |
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