

Quick Guide:

Involving People in your Organisation

A Guide for Community and Voluntary Organisations

The needs of every organisation will be different, depending upon its size and culture and the nature of the role of volunteers. However, themes common to all organisations include the potential for volunteers to be engaged and invested in your cause or service; and to be powerful, effective voices in the community, speaking knowledgeably and persuasively about the good work performed by your organisation. Proper orientation of your volunteers prepares them not only for success inside your organisation, but also for the role of champion of your cause in the greater community.

The Involving People Full Guide includes samples of the documents outlined below.

Volunteer Policy Document

A volunteer policy is the foundation on which your organisation's involvement of volunteers should be based.

Most organisations view the policy as a statement of intent, with the day-to-day nuts and bolts covered in separate policies or in a volunteer handbook. (covering Health & Safety, for example). The Volunteer Policy should start with an explanation of what the organisation does and why it involves volunteers in its work - A statement of intent, setting out the principles that will form your involvement of volunteers – (for example, this is where to state that you will not use volunteers to replace paid staff).

Making a lasting impression - Recruiting Volunteers

We all want to feel that the service we offer is appreciated and valued whether we are paid or doing an activity on a voluntary basis. Ensuring you give the very best first impression is important when recruiting volunteers.

Recruitment Policy:

This should be the same as your policy for recruiting paid staff, and include items on Equal opportunities training and expenses. Make sure you have a recruitment check list, follow it and you are more likely to succeed in recruiting the volunteers you need.

Supporting Volunteers

Congratulations you have recruited a volunteer now you need to support them! Consider the following to support your volunteers (new and old):

- [Welcome Letter](#) - The letter can be brief and highlight some of the key aspects of the organisation and the importance of volunteers in fulfilling its purpose as well as its commitment to the wellbeing and support of the volunteer in their role within the organisation.
- [Provide an induction session](#) - Spend time orientating your new volunteer this could include shadowing more experienced volunteers. Use your Volunteer

Handbook to highlight important aspects of their role.

- **Provide a Volunteer Handbook** - a handbook should include policies that will affect them in their role and give clear guidance on how they can claim back expenses etc. who their immediate supervisor is and any Health and Safety issues that will affect them.
- **Arrange on-going volunteer support sessions** –Make the sessions at suitable times and locations for your volunteers.
- **Develop your volunteers** - When new projects or activities occur in your organisation speak to your volunteers, perhaps some would like the opportunity to try a new role or develop a skill.
- **Plan social events for your volunteers** - Volunteer social events enable volunteers to build relationships with each other and enhance a feeling of “belonging” to an organisation.

Developing a Volunteer Handbook

Please download the accompanying information sheet ‘Developing a Volunteer Handbook’ for more guidance on this element of involving people in your organisation. It is available at http://www.devonva.org/information_and_guidance

Creating a Volunteer Agreement

A Volunteer Agreement is a document that can act as a reference point for the volunteers, and a reminder to the organisation that it should meet the standards of good practice that it has set itself.

Care must be taken to set out what the organisation will provide and how it will treat the volunteer and what it expects from the volunteer in such a way as to avoid the creation of mutual obligations, which could be regarded in law as creating a contract.

Typically in an agreement an organisation might commit:

- To provide a full induction and any training necessary for the volunteer role
- To provide a named supervisor for the volunteer, with regular supervision meetings
- To treat volunteers in line with its equal opportunities policy
- To reimburse out-of-pocket expenses where there are receipts or similar evidence of cost to the volunteer
- To provide insurance cover for the volunteers
- To implement good health and safety practice

A volunteer agreement might expect volunteers to:

- Follow the letter and spirit of the organisation’s policies and procedures, including equal opportunities, health and safety and confidentiality
- To meet mutually agreed time commitments, or give notice if this is not possible.

For more information and support contact DeVA on 0845 6099901 or email us at support@devonva.org The full range of Information sheet are available to download at http://www.devonva.org/information_and_guidance