

FACTSHEET: Recruiting Volunteers

Why Do You Want Volunteers?

Before you start recruiting, ask yourself: Why do we need volunteers, and what will they do?

Volunteers bring energy, passion, and fresh ideas but they shouldn't be expected to do the jobs of paid staff. Make sure their role is meaningful and that they know how their time is helping your cause.

- Volunteers should add value, not replace paid staff
- Always have meaningful activities lined up
- Know how volunteers will support your mission

Volunteering is Not Employment

Volunteering Is Not Employment Volunteers give their time freely, so it's important not to treat them like employees. That means:

- No contracts – just volunteer agreements
- No fixed hours – just clear expectations
- No pressure – volunteering should feel good, not like an unpaid job!
- Use friendly language like “we hope”
- Keep things flexible and supportive
- Reimburse actual expenses, but don't offer set payments
- Offer guidance, not rules

[More Information Here](#)

Are You Ready to Recruit?

Before putting out a call for help, check you have the right support in place. This includes:

- A volunteer policy FACTSHEET: Recruiting Volunteers December 2025
- Training & induction plan (including safeguarding)
- A volunteer agreement
- Insurance that includes volunteers
- A budget for volunteer activities and expenses
- Someone volunteers can go to with questions or for support

[More Information Here](#)

Writing a Volunteer Role Description

Clear, friendly role descriptions help volunteers understand what's expected and how they'll make a difference.

Include:

- A short, clear role title
- What the role's all about
- What tasks are involved (and what isn't expected)
- Info about safety, inclusion, and any relevant policies
- Who to talk to if they need help or want to change something
- What costs you'll cover (e.g. travel)
- Any goals or outcomes

Optional extras:

- Who they'll be working with
- How often and where the role takes place
- What skills (if any!) are needed
- Why this role is rewarding
- Info about your organisation and how the role fits in

Keep it flexible and friendly. Be careful not to sound like you're offering a job,

[More Information Here](#)

Making Your Role Appealing

To attract volunteers, you need to stand out and show the value of their time.

- Highlight what's unique about your cause or project
- Be honest and flexible about time commitments
- Show the impact their help will have
- People want to know they'll make a difference, show them how!
- Where you can, use words and videos of current volunteers
- Consider the language you use and test different wording on different adverts to see which lands better and gets more hits

Where to Advertise

There are lots of ways to get the word out, and a mix of different ways will have the best reach:

- Word of mouth (good, but has limited reach and can limit diversity)
- Local media or parish newsletters
- Colleges and universities
- Social media (especially if you include real volunteer stories)
- Go to where volunteers might be for example if you are looking for a volunteer gardener – try advertising at the local garden centre, or for younger volunteers try linking with Duke of Edinburgh
- [Wiltshire Together](#) - our local free community platform Training on how to utilise Wiltshire together and add your volunteer roles available: [Wiltshire Together Training](#)

Making Volunteering Inclusive

Volunteering opportunities should be open to all. Here's some ideas of how to help make yours accessible:

- Offer informal coffee mornings as a chance for people to get to know you and the organisation before choosing to apply
- Use simple, friendly language
- Offer short video explainers if you can
- Create a volunteer journey graphic
- Reach out to community and faith groups
- Keep forms short and sweet
- Only ask for checks (like DBS) if really needed
- Show a diverse range of people in your stories and photos
- Make claiming expenses easy – or cover costs up front if you can

Learn about equity, diversity and inclusion [Here](#)

About dispelling fears and misconceptions around criminal records [Here](#)

Inclusive volunteering guide [Here](#)

Registration and Onboarding

Once someone is interested, make sure it's a smooth, warm process:

- Make applying as easy as possible – ask people to register interest as an initial stage rather than completing a lengthy application
- Reply quickly
- Be clear about what happens next
- Offer a relaxed, two-way chat or informal interview
- If references and DBS are required, ensure characters references are accepted and support with the DBS process if needed.
- Let them know what training is needed now vs. what can wait
- Give them a named contact
- Make them feel welcome and part of the team from Day 1!

Further Information

<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/involving-volunteers/https://volunteero.org/knowledge-center>

<https://volunteero.org/knowledge-center/lunch-and-learn-ready-set-not-yetlaying-the-groundwork-before-you-recruit-volunteers>

<https://volunteero.org/knowledge-center/volunteero-lunch-and-learn-usinggoogle-ads-to-recruit-volunteers-more>

<https://volunteero.org/knowledge-center/how-to-go-viral-on-tiktok-and-attractmore-volunteers-than-ever>

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