

Good Practice Toolkit

Volunteering for Older People and People with Dementia



Introduction

At Volunteering Matters we believe passionately in the POWER OF VOLUNTEERING, and we bring people together through volunteering to tackle some of society's most complex issues. We work with people to turn local knowledge and energy into action and progress, building stronger communities and a better future for all.

Within this toolkit we share our good practice and the good practice of our partners across the voluntary sector, providing practical examples around how to engage people living with Dementia in volunteering. We appreciate that there are some glass ceilings to break on this journey. By following the steps in this toolkit, trusting your knowledge and skills, practices and processes we hope that you can think differently and creatively about how you engage more older people and people with dementia in volunteering.

The City of Newcastle is very progressive in this space. Newcastle City Council have funded this work on the toolkit and building the network of organisations to take this work forward. Collaboration and sharing the excellent practice out there is the name of the game. So please join us on this journey to engage and support more older people and people with dementia, and to enjoy the delight and fulfilment that volunteering can bring to us all.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our partners across the voluntary and charity sector for their fantastic stories, quotes and for sharing information and expertise.

Emma Thomas-Hancock, Director of Delivery, Volunteering Matters

How to use the Toolkit

The purpose of this guidance is to offer support and advice around good practice in volunteering within health and social care and dementia settings, with and for older people and people with dementia.

This guidance is aimed at voluntary and community groups and organisations across a range of settings, and aims to provide hints and tips around good practice within the following areas:

- Getting it right from the start
- Building an inclusive programme
- Creating attractive volunteer roles
- Legal responsibilities around having volunteers
- Recruitment, support and retaining volunteers
- Relevant policies, the importance of a clear written role description
- Measure impact, learn and share
- Valuing volunteers, volunteer stories
- The End – when a volunteer decides to stop!
- Covid-19, changing the face of volunteering
- Volunteer Programme Resources

Getting it right from the start!

What do we mean by 'good practice'?

Good practice means that an organisation has thought carefully about why and how volunteers will be involved in delivering services, understands how to make volunteer roles effective, safe and rewarding, and ensures that their volunteer programmes are inclusive to all.

NCVO's Investing in Volunteers (IiV) is the UK quality standard for excellence in volunteer management. The standard's 9 quality areas cover all aspects of volunteer involvement, ensuring an excellent volunteer experience from interview to exit:

- **Planning for volunteer involvement**
- **Recruiting and matching volunteers**
- **Recognising and rewarding volunteers**

The Investing in Volunteers journey provides an opportunity to benchmark your volunteer management programme in line with the UK standard. You will demonstrate and develop existing practice to ensure meaningful volunteering and enhance your reputation for future volunteer involvement and funding.

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/tools-resources/good-practice-in-volunteer-management/IiVStandardMarch2019.pdf>



Building an inclusive programme

Having volunteers involved in your activities and organisation is great. They bring new capacities, abilities, perspectives and ideas, reflect the community and contribute to making projects and activities more sustainable. We believe that everyone should be able to contribute as a volunteer, including older people and people with dementia, so we want to help you make sure your volunteering programme is as inclusive as possible.



This section helps you to think about how to prepare your organisation for volunteers with additional support needs, including older people and people living with dementia, or to improve the quality of your existing programme.

The Mental Health Foundation lists some benefits of volunteering that are relevant to all:

- **It provides structure and routine**
- **It can help people feel good about themselves**
- **It can enhance feelings of self-esteem**
- **It provides opportunities to make friends and take part in social activities**
- **It can provide learning opportunities which can protect mental health**



How can we make it easier for everyone to access volunteering opportunities?

When planning to recruit volunteers it is important to remember that everyone has potential to give something, regardless of their background, age, religion, gender or abilities etc.

To ensure you have inclusive practices, when starting to recruit volunteers you need to consider the following:

- Is your information in an accessible format, perhaps you could use more visual information, use basic language, or advertise roles via a different method to the internet?
- Are you specific about the volunteering roles that you have available, could you make the information clearer, perhaps giving examples of tasks that volunteers would be completing and positive outcomes?

Case studies and volunteer stories can be a great way for potential volunteers to be enabled to realise their matching skills, (as opposed to focussing on skills that they don't currently have), and to be inspired to take up the role!

See Valuing Volunteers, Volunteer Stories

- Is your environment user friendly, could you use more pictures and basic, clear signage to identify where things are located, for example photo boards for staff working in the building? Do you have lowered workstations for wheelchair users and accessible toilets, facilities and emergency exits?
- Is your environment welcoming to all, aside from reasonable physical access, do staff and volunteers understand and appreciate that volunteering is for everyone and everyone has something to give?

- Do you offer adequate support for your volunteers, including induction training, regular supervision, ongoing support and guidance as well as recognition events? Do you need to implement any new support measures in your volunteer programme?

Top Tip

Building an inclusive volunteer programme is much easier to achieve if everyone in the organisation / group is committed to it. Help your staff to understand the importance of developing a diverse volunteer base, by providing the relevant resources, skills, experience and awareness to enable them to involve and support people from diverse backgrounds and those with additional needs or a disability.

- Is your volunteer programme following best practice, or do you need to make changes to make it more inclusive using some of the above ideas? Have you asked your volunteers what would help them within their roles and within the environment?

Top Tip

Planning for regular social days for volunteers can be a great way for volunteers to meet, exchange ideas and develop effective teamwork, friendship and peer support. It doesn't have to cost a lot of money, groups can meet in local parks, or make use of free resources, for example local museums with free entry!

Is volunteering in later life good for you?

In summary... yes!

Many organisations feel they are doing well in the way they involve older people as volunteers and indeed most organisations do have a reasonable percentage of older people volunteering with them. But is this just the tip of a potentially huge iceberg?

Are you missing golden opportunities to involve older volunteers?

Age UK produced an Evidence Review, “Older People as Volunteers”, in which they listed the following key messages from available evidence:



Benefits of involving older volunteers

Volunteering in later life brings many benefits, some of which are generally associated with volunteering, but some of which are specific to older volunteers.

For older volunteers themselves

- Improved mental and physical health prospects
- Improved life satisfaction
- A feeling of usefulness and of having a role to play in society
- Opportunity for social interaction

For recipients of services delivered by volunteers

- Older volunteers have more maturity and experience, which allows them to understand others' problems
- Older volunteers can empathise and engage with older service recipients better than younger volunteers
- Older volunteers engage with children and young people in a different way. In addition, recipients were found to have been treated with dignity and respect and, as a result of the support, to have experienced reduced isolation and greater confidence and independence

For organisations

For organisations, the specific benefits of involving older volunteers are that they:

- Are generally well motivated and skilled
- Are able and willing to share considerable time
- Can talk to a range of service recipients – young and old – and to pass on the benefits of their life experience
- Are willing to give long-term commitment to their roles
- Often have good social links, which are useful for recruiting more volunteers

Examples of opportunities designed for older volunteers

Example 1

Residents as volunteers” project, Abbeyfield Society in partnership with NVCO, (2016-2018)

Through research carried out by the Abbeyfield Society in partnership with NVCO, during the “Residents as volunteers” project, (2016 – 2018), there was evidence of the following benefits:

Social - Reduced feeling of loneliness, feeling of belonging/sense of community, building outside connections, improved social dynamics

Physical - Distraction from health conditions, keeping fit

Mental - Challenging the brain, stimulation

Emotional - Feeling useful, sense of achievement/ satisfaction, increase in confidence

The ‘**Residents as Volunteers**’ project found that residents sought volunteering opportunities in two main ways:

1. They had a specific interest, and the volunteering role sourced met this interest.
2. They wanted to volunteer but were unsure how to, so a range of roles were offered, and the resident chose their preferred option.

Option 1 - If a resident is clear about the type of volunteering activity they would like to be involved in, then the next stage is to source a suitable volunteering role.

- For volunteering outside of the home, map your local area and identify any local organisations that may provide volunteering opportunities. Approach them directly and discuss a potential volunteering role and any additional support needs, for example, mobility
- Talk to your local Volunteer Centre about the desired volunteering role. They may be able to support you to provide a perfect match
- Review the volunteering opportunities within the home that could match the resident’s interests

Option 2 - Often residents will be keen to volunteer but unsure where to start.

- Support residents by drawing together a portfolio of opportunities
- Spend time with staff and residents thinking through the types of volunteering opportunities available for residents both within the home, and within the local community

SEARCH – Ageing Happy Newcastle report 2019 included the following from Natalie Turner, (Centre for Ageing Better) as part of her presentation The State of Ageing in 2019

- 11.9 million people over 65 in UK (2019)
- Volunteering can lead to individuals feeling that they “belong” to a neighbourhood and can contribute toward cohesive communities



Example 2

Grandmentors, operated by Volunteering Matters, is an award-winning volunteer programme which has been successful in various parts of the UK, providing inter-generational mentoring for care experienced young people who may be in challenging circumstances, often deprived of support and opportunity.



The programme helps transform the lives of vulnerable young people through the emotional, practical and social support of older world-wise volunteers.

Grandmentors provide a vital link for young people as they navigate life after care.

Volunteers, aged 50 and over, come from a wide range of backgrounds and all walks of life, enabling them to understand and meet the range of needs of their mentees, forging trusting and positive relationships that support, challenge and empower mentees to unlock their own skills and to shape their own futures.

Research has shown that 82% of the care leavers supported by Grandmentors are in education, employment or training after six months, compared to just 51% nationally.

Fiona Swindell from Alzheimer's Society, offers her insight into volunteering with people affected by dementia:



Many organisations working for and with older people will have volunteers helping people affected by dementia, both those living with dementia and others caring for a person with dementia. In addition, your organisation could offer opportunities for people living with dementia to volunteer. A good way to help your staff and volunteers confidently support people affected by dementia and volunteer alongside people living with dementia is to ask them to become a Dementia Friend.

Attending a Dementia Friends session enables participants to learn practical ways to support people affected by dementia, find out more about how dementia affects a person and ways to help people in their community. It is still possible to become a Dementia Friend during coronavirus as Alzheimer's Society has adapted information sessions so you can now join through a webinar or live streaming session.

Want to know more?

Find out more about becoming a Dementia Friend here – www.dementiafriends.org.uk/WEBArticle?page=become-dementia-friend

There is information on Alzheimers Society Website that will help you support volunteers to deliver the best possible experiences of services for people affected by dementia – www.alzheimers.org.uk

An example is the guide on how to support people with dementia in your community – www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-04/Coronavirus%20-%20How%20you%20can%20support%20people%20with%20dementia%20in%20your%20community.pdf. In this guide there is information on volunteering during the coronavirus emergency, tips on communication and activities to try.

Another source of up to date information about dementia and people affected by dementia is via the twice-monthly e-newsletter updates from Alzheimer's Society, which can be subscribed to by following this link – www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=405 and go to the bottom of the page.

Your volunteers may benefit from training after becoming a Dementia Friend and Alzheimer's Society provide tailored dementia training and consultancy services across all sectors, delivered by specially trained experts. You can find out more at this link – www.alzheimers.org.uk/dementia-professionals/training-consultancy

For anyone interested in dementia research Care and Cure is a research magazine from Alzheimer's Society. You can explore stories and read the most recent issue online by following this link – www.alzheimers.org.uk/research/care-and-cure-magazine



Creating attractive volunteer roles with and for older people and people with dementia

Volunteers are motivated for many different reasons. It's important to understand and appeal to volunteer's motivations to effectively attract them to your volunteering opportunities. Be clear on why you need volunteers, the benefits to all, how you will support them and how you will provide a good volunteering experience.

Think creatively and work towards building an inclusive volunteer programme, consider what you need to do to attract a diverse range of volunteers, including older people and people with dementia to the opportunities that your organisation is offering.

Key questions to ask yourself when planning how to attract volunteers to your roles:

- Can you be flexible and person-centred in your approach to individuals?
- Who is the ideal person for your opportunity / organisation?
- What key attributes, knowledge and skills does someone need to have to be able to successfully carry out the volunteer role you are creating?
- Why would people volunteer with you – what is your unique selling point?
- Are you clear on what you are offering to volunteers? This will need to be detailed in your volunteer role description(s)
- Have you got plans in place of how you will welcome and support volunteers with additional support needs or a disability?
- Are your volunteering opportunities inclusive and enable you to bring together disabled and non-disabled volunteers on equal terms?

People are motivated to volunteer for many different reasons. For example, they may want to:

- Give something back to an organisation or support a cause that has impacted on their personal life either directly or indirectly
- Make a difference to the lives of others
- Meet new people and make new friends
- Help others less fortunate or without a voice
- Improve skills and knowledge
- Gain confidence
- Spend quality time away from a busy home life, eg caring for a family member

Top Tip

Understanding why someone wants to volunteer for your service is vital, as it will help you provide them with the right support, set them tasks that will keep them motivated and engaged, and can make it easier to know how to recognise and reward their volunteering in the future!



Be aware of potential barriers to volunteering in later life, these include:

- Lack of information about options
- Ageist assumptions on the part of organisations' policies
- A lack of confidence on the part of potential volunteers
- Conflicting family commitments
- Health-related limitations

Why you should use clear volunteer role descriptions?

- They provide a clear overview of a role and what is expected from a volunteer who performs it
- They help your colleagues to understand how volunteers support your service
- They help volunteers to decide if a role is right for them
- They help to prevent volunteers becoming a substitute for paid staff
- They show that you value volunteers and have planned their role carefully
- They provide clear measures to determine whether a potential volunteer is suitable for a role

A role description doesn't have to cover every detail of the role, but it must include:

- the nature of a role
- the competencies needed to perform it
- the time commitment required
- who will be the "go to" person for the volunteer's support and supervision?

Flexibility is the key

Creating the scope to offer flexibility for the volunteer to shape their role based on their skills, availability and needs is a key factor in attracting a range of people from diverse backgrounds, age ranges and abilities. Be prepared to adapt roles for varying abilities and needs, or to allow time for an individual to engage within a group and build the confidence to take up a volunteer role.

Top Tip

If you have a volunteer with additional needs, check at regular intervals, that these needs have not changed and that the volunteer does not require any further support in order to carry out their role. Check with all your volunteers as to whether they need any extra support – circumstances change, especially as volunteers get older. Don't assume everything is OK because it was six months ago. Volunteers can decide to leave because their situation has changed, and the organisation hasn't taken that into consideration or made allowances.

Examples

Chris Tait from Search Newcastle submitted the following examples: the first story around gaining confidence through volunteering, the second around the volunteer not only making a difference to older people in his community, but also increasing his own health and wellbeing through connecting with an activity that he loves, and the third, a great example of organisational flexibility in meeting the needs of an older person.

Example 1

G came to us almost by chance. She was looking for work and was already working with a local agency assisting people back into employment. A chance phone call from that agency (who were with G at the time in the local library) came to the Search office. I answered the call and as Volunteer Coordinator, was able to go to the library and immediately sign her up!

Like many people coming through Search, G has experienced life changing events and needed a bit of recent experience and encouragement to assist her in finding work. G took the role of volunteer for the Thursday coffee morning and activities at St James' church hall. Greeting people, ensuring drinks are served, making lunch and generally making sure people feel welcome are all a part of her volunteer role. Naturally quiet, G has gained confidence over the two years she has been with us, developing her people skills towards finding employment. As the weeks progressed G helped Search with bigger one off events, the Buy and Bite and lunch club service whilst maintaining her regular slot at St James.

Example 2

A came to Search as a potential volunteer in October 2018 via Volunteer Centre Newcastle. He was born in Filabusi near Bulawayo in Zimbabwe and raised his family there while working as a teacher. In 2017 he decided to come to the UK to seek a better life for himself and his wife. A started helping at one of our lunch clubs and then the Buy and Bite. A's friendly manner endears himself to our older people and he is always willing to do something new. A is a great help at the lunch club which is always a busy day, helps with food and drinks to the tables, activities and of course clearing up afterwards! A has also joined our popular singing group to continue his love of singing.

Example 3

M has had a varied and interesting life. M married a Polish national (who had fled from Poland during the war) soon after the second world war, and brought up a family in her native area of Benwell. Unfortunately, M's husband died suddenly in the 1960's, and she then lived with her son before living alone.

M has accessed Search services from its early beginnings, and she is proud to be one of our longest-standing Friends. In recent years M has been a regular at our computer club, where our volunteers help her read the news, With M's failing eyesight a larger screen and large font are a must, and this is something we can easily provide for her. A volunteer is always on hand for her should she need support, and she enjoys surfing the net on a regular basis.

In December, a chance conversation with a Search volunteer revealed M has a lot of VHS videotapes which she can no longer watch as she has no player. This information was passed back to the Search office where a staff member who had an unused player wanted to donate it to her. After spending a few pounds allowing older VHS technology to connect to M's new tv set, she was able to watch her favourite tapes once again.

M has supported Search from its beginnings, now our volunteers support her.



Sporting Chance

Sporting Chance is a national programme designed for men over 50, looking to improve their health and wellbeing through engaging in activity and exercise groups within community settings.

The project started in Middlesbrough in 2013, before being developed in other parts of the country. Aside from these larger groups, meeting in local church halls and community venues, in 2015 a smaller group was developed within a sheltered housing setting. The aim of this project; to improve levels of health and wellbeing, but also to combat loneliness and social isolation, catering for older men, many with additional needs, including physical mobility issues.

Jeff initially signed up for the group as a participant with no intention of volunteering but as it was noted that he had great people skills, making others feel at ease with his sense of humour, and with support and encouragement, Jeff accepted the role of Chair on the committee, and has been proactive in supporting members, gaining new members and enabling the group to continue, providing a lifeline for others who had previously been socially isolated.

See Jeff's Story, in Valuing Volunteers, Volunteer Stories

Older people have a lifetime of experience, knowledge and skills that can benefit others through volunteering.

The “Residents as Volunteers” project

The Abbeyfield Society are an older persons housing charity who believe in growing older well. Alongside NCVO, they developed a bid to research the impact of volunteering in later life, (over 75 years old) when living in a residential setting in the UK.

The target was to involve 100 older people over 2 years, (June 2016 – June 2018), and aimed to:

- a) Provide volunteering roles people over 75 can, and want, to be involved in.
- b) Measure the impact that volunteering has on well-being and quality of life for older people.

During the project the NCVO definition of volunteering was adopted:

Any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives. Central to this definition is the fact that volunteering must be a choice that is freely made by each individual.

The project considered both formal and informal volunteer roles that happened inside and outside of the home. They found that most of the volunteering that took place was informal and inside the home. Abbeyfield developed a person-centred programme, with each approach bespoke to an individual, and residents involved from the word “go”!

Residents chose to take part in a diverse range of activities, led by their own interests and skills, including befriending, leading music sessions, arranging film shows, organising a weekly multi-craft afternoon, enjoying Skype chats to overseas relatives and friends, visiting local primary schools to read to the children, helping in the local church and volunteering in charity shops.

Creating a legacy

The legacy of this project is that volunteering is ongoing, and for many Abbeyfield residents, has become a way of life, with less confident residents inspired to volunteer. Residents who are volunteering in the community have become informal ambassadors for the charity.

See Volunteer Programme Resources for full evaluation report.



Recruitment, Support and Retaining Volunteers

Attracting and recruiting the right volunteers is one of the most important aspects to building your inclusive volunteering programme.

Just like paid employees, volunteers need a clear and up-to-date role description, which should be provided for the volunteer before they start their volunteer role and should be referred to when the role is formally discussed. You should review a description at least every two years, or when the nature of a volunteer role or the needs of the volunteer changes substantially. Be prepared to be flexible and adaptable.

For tips on inclusive recruitment, please refer to the memory stick provided.

In 2018, volunteer coordinators in Newcastle started to raise questions and concerns about the number of people applying for their volunteer roles who self-identified as having a mental health issue. Their questions focused on how as a sector we could acknowledge the changing face of our volunteer pool whilst balancing capacity issues with inclusive recruitment.



The 3 partners, Karen Watson, Volunteer Centre Newcastle, (Volunteering Matters), Mish Loraine, Gateshead Mental Health User Voice, and Beth Allan, Launchpad North Tyneside, started the conversation on inclusive volunteer recruitment.

They proposed to investigate the current concerns of volunteer coordinators, volunteers and members of the public, with the following aims:

- To encourage individuals to talk about volunteering
- To encourage organisations to start a conversation about inclusive recruitment
- To reduce barriers to volunteering due to mental health and wellbeing issues

Following focus group discussions, involving local, regional and national volunteer coordinators, volunteers, and members of the public, where the concerns of both volunteers and organisations were identified and discussed, as well as positive experiences around volunteering with appropriate support, the agreed outcome was the need for a clear ViP, (Volunteer Inclusion Plan), following the criteria below:

- Be simple, focused, non-clinical and should be used in conjunction with normal volunteer recruitment processes
- Be used relevant to the role applied for
- To be a volunteer agreement of support and mutual expectations – not a contract
- Organisations need to buy in to and accept the ViP as part of the recruitment process
- Everyone should have the right to a ViP

The ViP is designed to be used prior to a volunteer risk assessment for anyone with additional needs, following discussion with the volunteer in how best to support them.

See Volunteer Programme resources section for ViP template

Karen Watson, Volunteer Centre Newcastle, offers some top tips for inclusive volunteer recruitment and support:

Recruiting volunteers with a disability

You're disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities. But my question is not what is "normal" but what is relevant in your abilities to complete your volunteer role. Your role or task is not your whole life or existence; it is the choice you make to give something back to your community. It is your right to ask to be included or considered for volunteering. If an organisation cannot make reasonable adjustment to keep you safe in the volunteer role then they should legally say no – for the right reasons.

So, top tips for inclusive volunteer recruitment.

Labels

“Labels are for jars not people”: from the moment we are born, we are given our first label – cute, colicky, difficult, disabled. As we go through life and encounter new services and people, we pick up more: wife, son, nerd, bore, awkward, backwards, slow, different, on the spectrum. It is our conditioning to label people in order to categorise and understand, but labels become stereotypes – and these become judgements and biases. Labels can damage, hurt, isolate and exclude. Our challenge as a sector is to look past labels and concentrate on the person behind the label.

Assumptions

Assuming makes an ASS out of U and ME: We have all made assumptions about people or situations; sometimes we are right, sometimes we get it completely wrong. That’s why we have good practice to ensure our recruitment is equal and reflective of our community, so how do we engage with a volunteer with a disability? My point is that this should not be a question in a fair recruitment process. Coordinators should not make assumptions, they should ask the person – just as they would any person applying to volunteer. Asking someone if they need support and what that might be starts a conversation of inclusion rather than assumptions leading to exclusion. We advocate that conversations should be focused around a Volunteer Inclusion plan or Volunteer Action Plan. Every volunteer should have this as part of our normal recruitment screening. This conversation about skills and support can lead to honest dialogue and understanding. It can also help a coordinator demonstrate when they are unable to provide the support a person may need. **Say no for the right reason rather than yes for the wrong!**

Reasonable adjustments

The Equality Act says there's a duty to make reasonable adjustments if you're placed at a substantial disadvantage because of your disability compared with non-disabled people or people who don't share your disability. Substantial means more than minor or trivial.

Volunteers are not covered by Access to Work but we have a duty to take steps to remove, reduce or prevent obstacles – where possible and reasonable – and don’t assume that obstacles are always physical.

So what is a reasonable adjustment that would make your organisation more inclusive and welcoming?

Language of recruitment

- Is your application form accessible? Do you use pictorial options so people can select their interests, availability or skills?
- Do you use jargon or plain English?
- Can a person be supported to complete the form?
- Do you have paper copies rather than just online?

How do we interview?

- Can you offer informal chats over a month instead of one session so the person can relax and show you their real self?
- Can they know in advance the topics you want to discuss?
- Can they be accompanied by a friend, support worker or carer? Make sure the person wants to volunteer rather than the someone else thinking it's a great idea.

Adjusting the role

- Are you able to adjust the role if the person is unable to do all the tasks?
- Can you agree a trial period for the person to shadow a current volunteer to see what the tasks are in practice?

Top Tip

Don't miss out on the opportunity for free advertising and support around volunteer recruitment!

Volunteer Centre Newcastle, contact **Karen.Watson@volunteeringmatters.org.uk**

Having created great inclusive volunteering roles and recruited to them, it is so important to ensure that your volunteers feel supported, appreciated and want to stay part of your community!



Volunteer induction and supervision

Make sure your volunteers feel supported from the very start with a clear induction process and pack, as well as knowing who is responsible for supervising them.

Example Induction Pack for Volunteers

- Welcome letter
- Information about the organisation, organisational structure, vision, mission and values
- Volunteer role description
- List of key contacts
- Information and contact details for the person accountable for the volunteer
- Health and safety information
- Code of Conduct
- Volunteer agreement (if applicable)
- Information about other policies and procedures and how to access them
- Feedback/complaints form and information about complaints procedure
- Expense claim form with an explanation on how to claim expenses and what expenses can be claimed (if applicable)
- Induction checklist

Supporting and supervising volunteers

The Golden Rule to volunteer management is having a robust Support and Supervision procedure in place. The term “Support and Supervision” is almost a contradiction, yet we use them together almost as if they are one action, which they invariably are. So, looking at dictionary definition, delivering quality Support and Supervision is around finding the balance

Support:

- To give aid or courage
- To give strength
- To motivate
- To encourage

All of the above have a soft and positive tone

Supervision:

- To watch over as to maintain order
- Directing or overseeing a performance
- To ensure tasks are carried out correctly without mistakes

These definitions have authoritarian overtones, which could make a volunteer feel defensive. Some volunteers, depending on their previous experience, may have the above understanding of the word.

Top Tips

- Remember Support and Supervision mean different things to different people
- Ask your volunteer how they feel about supervision?
- Explain the purpose of support and supervision sessions as part of Volunteer Induction
- Always refer to sessions as “Support and Supervision”, (as opposed to Supervision) it can seem less daunting for volunteers



“

Support and supervision can be summed up as follows:

Time allocated on a regular basis to see how the volunteer is getting on, an opportunity where you can both look at progress and identify any training needs. Problems can be aired, and praise given, and any new direction can be discussed.

”

Top Tips

- Given capacity, informal weekly calls to volunteers, (in addition to formal support and supervision sessions), can ensure that volunteers continue to feel supported and engaged, as well as giving you the opportunity to get to know your volunteer better, enabling you to develop better communication and working relationships with your volunteers
- Use Support and Supervision sessions as an opportunity to identify any amendments to the role that may be required for the volunteer, in line with changing needs

Support should start from day one, when the volunteer begins their role with you, at the point of induction.

Supervision is more formal, consisting of specific sessions, looking at the performance of the volunteer within their role.

Benefits of support and supervision

To the organisation:

- Gives the opportunity to get to know the volunteer better, learn of personal plans, e.g plans to move when a spouse retires-at least you'll be forewarned that you'll need to replace a valuable asset!
- Maintains continuity, keeps you updated as to what the volunteer is doing, gives the opportunity to recognise achievements and give positive feedback to your volunteer
- Allows time to talk to the volunteer and give undivided attention
- Any potential issues or concerns can be addressed and resolved at an early stage
- Allows for understanding of the volunteer's hopes and plans
- Through conversation, you can identify skills that the volunteer hasn't initially disclosed, that could benefit the volunteer role, and learn of their ideas
- Helps to set objectives and goals, and identifies training needs
- Can stimulate and enthuse, helps you to ascertain the volunteer's understanding of your organisation and its aims
- Check that the volunteering is meeting the needs of the volunteer, the organisation, stakeholders and funders



To the Volunteer:

- Will feel that they are being listened to, their ideas and opinions valued
- Will help them to re-visit their motivation for volunteering, is the role working around that-if not, why not?
- Will help in future planning, goals and training needs
- Opportunity to gain accurate information about the organisation and any upcoming changes-stops also rumour spreading!
- Instil a sense of equality, not favouritism - everyone gets the chance to talk openly
- Gets rid of the “them and us” feeling
- Stimulates, increases motivation, enthusiasm and confidence
- Formally recognises progress and achievement
- Feel respected, trusted and valued
- Feel supported with any difficulties
- Combats isolation

Support and supervision sessions should adhere to the following criteria:

- Be structured
- Be planned
- Be taken seriously
- Must not be cancelled at short notice, or postponed due to something more important coming up



Top Tips

- Start the session with a positive, to put the volunteer at ease, enabling open communication, for example, praising the volunteer on recent achievements
- Think about support and supervision in relation to each individual volunteer, rather than as an individual task. Are you trying to run a “one size fits all” support and supervision structure?
Different volunteers require different approaches and levels of support!
- Sessions should always be documented, that way you can keep the momentum, follow up on any training needs identified, or concerns flagged up within the session and keep to agreed timescales
- Spend some time thinking honestly about the effectiveness of your current support and supervision structure

Support and supervision - formal or informal?

It may not suit your organisation or a particular group of volunteers to hold formal Support & Supervision sessions. It might seem a bit over the top for a charity shop volunteer who does 2-3 hours a week to have a formal session, but it is important that some type of session takes place.

Be creative about the structure these sessions take!

Types of Support & Supervision Sessions

- A formal supervision session held on a specific date and time pre-arranged and on-going – at regular intervals
- An informal session – still at regular intervals – but more along the lines of a catch-up chat. You could ask the same sort of questions as at a formal session and ask the volunteer if you could take notes so that you can remember anything important but avoid using a form. You could let the volunteer have sight of the notes later to check that they are happy with the accuracy
- An informal catch up on a weekly / monthly basis to check if there are any problems or issues – using this time to praise also
- Group support and supervision – a time to discuss any problems, share ideas, praise and give information
- Telephone / email support
- Evaluation forms to capture ‘how it’s going’ thoughts and an opportunity to raise any issues of concern (example in the Appendix)
- An ‘Open Door’ session – held on a regular basis, say monthly, at a specific place preferably a room in your building so volunteers know they can come along and talk to you if they have any concerns, comments or ideas. You could have a system in place to book a time slot.

There is no right or wrong, although in an ideal world you would be able to give a regular one-to-one slot to every volunteer, it is what suits you, your organisation and your volunteers.

For instance, an email might be good for an event volunteer to check how it went, if there were any problems and if they have any ideas or suggestions for future reference, whereas a volunteer providing advocacy support for people with mental health issues may need a regular one-to-one slot in order to be able to address any complex issues.

Top Tips

- Tailor the support and supervision to fit in with the volunteer roles
- Focus on what you want the support and supervision to achieve

In summary...

When providing Support and Supervision to volunteers, aim to be the person who:

- They can trust to keep a confidence
- They can talk to in a crisis
- Can make them feel good about themselves
- They can talk to if they're worried
- Makes them stop and consider what they are doing
- Motivates them to try new challenges
- Genuinely cares about them

See Volunteer Programme Resources for Volunteer Supervision template

Expenses

It's important to give clear information to volunteers around reasonable expenses, what can and can't be reimbursed, this saves any unnecessary embarrassment, either for yourself or the volunteer.

Ensure that you have an expenses policy in place and that volunteers get their expenses on time – no volunteer should be out of pocket, and some people may struggle to continue to participate if their travel expenses are not quickly reimbursed, due to potentially low incomes.

Volunteer Training

Good volunteer management includes ensuring volunteers are trained to fulfil their roles effectively. Training means different things to different people and there are many ways that people learn. If you are responsible for supporting volunteers you will need to think about the amount of time volunteers have available, their own preferred way of learning and what resources you have available: for example, capacity, time, location, materials, budget for external courses.

It is the responsibility of the organisation to ensure that volunteers are enabled to carry out the role they have been recruited to do, whatever that may be. The steps from recruitment to volunteers contributing effectively can be summarised as:

Induction

A good induction ensures volunteers can contribute quickly and feel part of the organisation. Induction incorporates orientation, personal introductions, understanding the volunteering role, knowing where to find things and understanding the values and policies of the organisation.

Support comes in many forms and a well-organised induction session can provide volunteers with the support they initially require. Induction should not consist of simply giving volunteers policies to read and introducing them to other volunteers and staff. Getting the induction process right can help your organisation retain its volunteers for longer.

Volunteer Induction Checklist

- Introduce them to staff and volunteers
- Show them around the building
- Explain who they can go to if they have any questions or problems
- Let them know about breaks, (if applicable to the role)
- Explain how to claim expenses
- Explain your organisation's policy on volunteers using telephones or accessing the internet for their own use
- Ask them to shadow other experienced volunteers or paid members of staff

These are informal points, but they are important because they help volunteers feel more comfortable within your organisation.

Top Tip

Avoid assumptions about volunteers, remember that all volunteers are different, and come with a variety of skills, educational achievements and experiences. In each case the volunteers will need to be inducted into the role and provided with support to enable them (and the organisation) to get the most from their volunteering.

Formal matters

Organisational policies and procedures are better left until volunteers have gone through day-to-day practicalities. Once you have completed the above checklist, volunteers should feel more confident about asking you to explain anything they do not fully understand. When you move onto formal matters, ensure volunteers understand the issues by going through policies and procedures with them. These more formal issues could include:

- Your organisation's policies and procedures. For example, equal opportunities, safeguarding, health and safety, risk assessments etc.
- The history, ethos and structure of the organisation
- How to deal with complaints and areas of concern
- The role and responsibility and any volunteer agreement

Top Tip

The volunteer may find it useful if the information they are given is kept in a handbook or pack.

Further induction for volunteers

The rest of the induction period will be taken up with on-going training, and volunteers trying out the type of tasks they will be completing as part of their agreed volunteer role. The duration and depth of induction will depend on the role and level of resources available.

Top Tip

Working closely with your volunteers during the initial period will allow you to gain insight into what level of support they will need going forward, and what they are hoping to gain, allowing for a better volunteer experience

How much training do I give volunteers?

Volunteer training is about providing opportunities and managing risk, and it's important to strike the appropriate balance.

In addition to role specific training, (individual to each role), there are several training sessions that are useful for all volunteers, some of which can be accessed through external training providers, for example Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults, often provided by local authorities, these sessions include:

- Safeguarding
- Boundaries
- Confidentiality/Data Protection
- Equality and Diversity
- Personal Safety and Understanding Risk

Top Tip

Don't forget to complete evaluation with volunteers!



Completing evaluation gives you the opportunity to establish the level of understanding that volunteers have gained from the training session. Simple methods of evaluation include:

- **Field testing** - give your volunteers the chance to demonstrate what they have learned under careful supervision
- **Small group evaluation** - invite volunteers to talk together about what they gained from the training
- **Pre-training /post-training score comparison** – the same test given to volunteers on entry and after the training session, useful for if you want volunteers to gain a lot of facts from the session, or if you are uncertain as to the level of knowledge that volunteers are bringing to the session

The NCVO site provides practical guidance and resources:
www.ncvo.org.uk

Top Tip

Tailor your volunteer training to the volunteer role.

Example:

Ken Dolbear, Lay Assessor Organiser, RSVP West, offers his Top Tips on Positive Communication, around a person-centred approach toward people with dementia, used for training new volunteers to be Lay Assessors for Care Homes but this can be adapted for other environments:

- Ensure the person can fully see you as you approach
- Say the person's name and/or lightly touch their hand (Pre Covid-19)
- Wait until you have eye contact before you start speaking/move to the person's level
- Turn off background noise and if possible, move away from any distractions
- Think: does the person need their glasses or hearing aid?
- Speak in a calm and relaxed way
- Use short sentences
- Use everyday objects and pictures to help the person understand
- Allow the person time to respond
- Show that you are listening and keep the person included
- Accept how the person is feeling, don't argue about facts

See Volunteer Programme Resources for additional training resources

Helen Cooper, Project Manager, Volunteering Matters, Match and Mentor project, offers her top tips on retaining volunteers:

- Ensure that others in the organisation/setting have the same values, some training around disabilities and explain that making reasonable adjustments does not mean favouritism
- Is it possible for the volunteer to have a "go to" person or mentor as they may need some additional support initially or long term?
- Deliver regular support and supervision
- Volunteer group socials and reward schemes

See Volunteer Programme Resources for additional volunteer training resources

Legal responsibilities around having volunteers

When selecting to utilise volunteers within your organisation, you have the following legal responsibilities:

Screening applicants

Depending on the role, you may have to carry out checks to find out if a successful applicant has a criminal record. If they do, you will need to make a fair decision on whether it makes them unsuitable for the role.

Most organisations require two references and for the volunteer to complete a DBS, (Disclosure and Barring Service) check. DBS can be completed via the traditional paper method, or through an online agency, the latter being a more time efficient process, but also incurring additional costs.

Before an interview, check your organisation's policies and procedures to find out how their screening process works.



Health and safety

You're responsible for certain aspects of your volunteers' health and safety, and your organisation will have a health and safety policy.

Relate the following questions to it to understand what your responsibilities are towards the volunteers you recruit:

- What is my duty of care and what do volunteers need to do to protect themselves from risk?
- Will volunteers be on their own, and if so, what are the contact arrangements and lone working procedures that apply?
- What risk assessments are in place regarding volunteer roles and who is responsible for reviewing and updating them?
- How will I let volunteers know about the risk assessments that affect their work?
- How will I provide appropriate health and safety information, training, support and supervision?
- What insurance is in place covering volunteers' work? Is anything not covered by insurance? Are there any age limits to the insurance?
- Does my organisation use a health and safety checklist for volunteers? Or do we have new starter procedures for volunteers? For example, do volunteers need to do a self-assessment on their desk or chair?

Risk management

Taking the time to document volunteer requirements, roles and responsibilities in volunteer role descriptions or Volunteer Agreements is key to effective risk management.

Before you set off to draft new policies or polish existing guidelines, consider the following tips for ensuring that your volunteer risk management programme rests on a solid foundation:

- **Understand the important volunteer roles within your organisation** - What will your volunteers do? Are the expectations of volunteers reasonable? Is the distinction between employees and unpaid volunteers clear? Is the structure of your volunteer programme effective and suited to current needs and circumstances?
- **Devote time to training and orientation** - Expecting dedicated volunteers to “learn as they go” is inconsistent with thoughtful risk management. Your organisation has the benefit of past volunteer experiences, familiarity with the programmes and services you offer and insight on legal requirements, quality standards and other issues that your volunteers will need to appreciate in order to succeed. A common complaint among departing, disgruntled volunteers is that the organisation did not provide adequate training. The risk of an unhappy volunteer can’t be avoided altogether, but you can eliminate a frequent cause of discontent by providing engaging and helpful training and support throughout the volunteer experience.
- **Got questions?? Ask your volunteers!** - Don’t allow the views and perspectives of your long-time volunteers go to waste. Take the time to solicit feedback on your volunteer recruitment, screening and training activities. Remember to include a question such as: “Would you recommend volunteering with us, to a friend?” as well as a question about how you can improve, such as: “What steps could we take to improve the volunteer experience we provide?”

With a strong foundation for volunteer risk management in place, you’re ready to start developing or re-working your volunteer risk management policies.

Top Tips

- Great policies evolve over time. Things change! As your organisation matures, as volunteer roles evolve, and as the marketplace for volunteers changes with the times, your policies will require updating
- Effective policies are easy to understand and apply- avoid over complicated language or jargon
- Remember to explain rationale as well as requirements - Ensure that your volunteers understand why the volunteer policy is needed, as without that understanding, volunteers are less likely to comply

See Volunteer Programme Resources for example of Individual Volunteer Risk Assessment

Data Protection Act

The Data Protection Act 2018 brought the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) into UK law. It governs personal data rights, including the way organisations handle personal data and rights to compensation for misuse of personal data.

By law, the information you collect about potential volunteers is subject to certain legal guidelines. These govern how long the information can be held and the reasons why you can store it.

Data protection law applies to the information you collect about volunteers, as well as your service users. By law, it is your responsibility to make sure that information on volunteers is:

- Fairly and lawfully processed
- Kept secure
- Obtained for a specific purpose
- Adequate, relevant and accurate

You will need to make sure that all volunteers who have access to personal or sensitive information understand the law around data protection and your organisation's policies. You will need to gain permission to hold personal data where volunteers/beneficiaries/clients are required to sign a confidentiality or data protection agreement.

See Volunteer Programme Resources for email template to gain permission to hold data

Volunteer Scotland developed a Volunteer Charter which sets out 10 key principles for assuring legitimacy and preventing exploitation of volunteers.

- 1** Any volunteer activity is a freely made choice of the individual. If there is any compulsion, threat of sanctions or force, then any such activity is not volunteering
- 2** Volunteers should receive no financial reward for their time however out of pocket expenses should be covered; no one should be prevented from volunteering due to their income
- 3** Effective structures should be put in place to support, train and develop volunteers and their collaboration with paid workers
- 4** Volunteers and paid workers should be able to carry out their duties in safe, secure and healthy environments that are free from harassment, intimidation, bullying, violence and discrimination
- 5** Volunteers should not carry out duties formerly carried out by paid workers nor should they be used to disguise the effects of non-filled vacancies or cuts in services
- 6** Volunteers should not be used instead of paid workers or undercut their pay and conditions of service nor undertake the work of paid workers during industrial disputes
- 7** Volunteers should not be used to reduce contract costs nor be a replacement for paid workers in competitive tenders or procurement processes
- 8** Volunteers should not be used to bypass minimum wage legislation nor generate profit for owners
- 9** Volunteers and paid workers should be given the opportunity to contribute to the development and monitoring of volunteering policies and procedures, including the need for policies that resolve any issues or conflicts that may arise
- 10** Volunteer roles should be designed and negotiated around the needs and interests of volunteers, involving organisations and wider stakeholders. Finding legitimacy and avoiding exploitation through consensus depends on mutual trust and respect

Practicalities and processes

Core policies

- **Safeguarding** - Every voluntary sector organisation must have key documents that help it manage safeguarding well. You must have them if your organisation is a charity or if you work regularly with children or adults at risk. These documents set out what your organisation will do to keep people safe. You must make sure that everyone, no matter what their role, understands the documents and uses them in the day-to-day running of the organisation. Every year you must review how you're doing and address areas for improvement that have come up. Your policy should cover all the key risks for the groups you work with and the activities you do.

See Volunteer Programme Resources for useful information from Safer Culture North East

- **Health and safety** - You must have a written health and safety policy if you employ five or more people. An organisation of any size must conduct a health and safety risk assessment
- **Privacy/confidentiality** - To include Data Protection and GDPR
- **Equality and diversity** - with specific regard to anti-discrimination and harassment of employees and volunteers as well as service users
- **Risk management** - including assessment and mitigation
- **Finance** - including a financial procedures manual and a reserves policy

Policies applicable to volunteer management

- Recruitment and Selection
- Expenses
- Insurance provision for volunteers
- Problem solving procedures
- Code of conduct
- Volunteer Agreement

More information on common policies and procedures here:
www.ncvo.org.uk

Measure impact, learn and share



Everyone who has supported volunteers are aware of the impact that volunteering can have, but how best to demonstrate that?

In this section there is guidance on how to plan to evaluate your volunteer programme and top tips on how to communicate the impact of your volunteers.

Top tips on measuring the impact of volunteering

Being able to showcase achievements with a great story is important for several reasons; it helps to get the best results for volunteers and proves the difference you make to the lives of people. This section sets out some tips to help you evaluate your volunteer programme.

- 1 Planning** is by far the most important consideration. Research evidence planning approaches such as ‘theory of change’ – this process is often used with social interventions to describe the change you seek to achieve, and the steps involved in making that change happen. These approaches enable you to connect your activities to your desired outcomes, impact and long-term goals, which is useful for developing a measurement plan. But do be open and collect information in whatever format it comes – flexibility is the key and will help you gather information about outcomes and impact you may not have anticipated.
- 2 Develop a statement of purpose** and consider the reasons why you are collecting information because this can inform decisions you make further down the line. Do you want to measure impact to support income generation? If so, you may decide to approach measurement in a way that is likely to appeal to commissioners, or if you want to develop a volunteer programme, the questions will be quite different and may be more open and exploratory.

- 3 Select the right tools.** There are several tools to assist you in the learning process. Some are designed to assist you in the planning stage, while others measure ‘distance travelled’ and therefore require baseline assessments and systems for follow-up. It is important to carefully consider in advance the evaluation question as this will profoundly influence which tool you decide to use. When selecting a tool consider the type of intervention, the timing of the evaluation, the skills of assessor(s), the resources available, the audience of the evaluation and the relative importance of the programme and assessment.

The Inspiring Impact Resource Hub is a great place to find out about the tools available: www.inspiringimpact.org

- 4 Involve volunteers.** Put simply, involving volunteers in impact measurement yields better results. Volunteers are often seen as the subjects or objects of evaluation rather than as agents. Volunteer involvement could take the shape of crafting evaluation questions, data collection and reviewing the findings.
- 5 Be proportionate,** this enables you to be focused on the information that is practical and relevant to decision making. Don’t try to collect everything about everyone because you may risk over burdening your volunteers. You may end up with superfluous information that you don’t end up using or is too difficult to analyse. It is important to think about what is realistic and achievable within the resource and scope of the programme.
- 6 Think** about all the different types of data you can collect, and where from. Adopt a 360-degree approach, inviting feedback from as many stakeholders and perspectives as possible. This will help to give a rich, detailed and well-rounded picture of impact. Use a combination of quantitative (numbers) and qualitative (stories) research methods. Think about using both open and closed questions. Open to allow the respondent to express the issues most pertinent to them and closed to aggregate data for statistical purposes.
- 7 Be objective.** Always be open, honest and transparent. Ask difficult questions to understand what would’ve happened anyway or what would’ve happened if we didn’t exist? There are so many factors that can influence an outcome and it is important that you can demonstrate your accountability and role. Explore your attribution by using existing data sources or comparative groups / organisations to benchmark. This helps to contextualise your findings and makes your data more meaningful.
- 8 Use evaluation findings** to review and improve what you do. Use data as a learning tool. Ultimately, this helps to improve the quality of services for everyone.
- 9 Speak to experts and peers.** Evaluation can be complex and requires a wide range of skills. Talk to academics and evaluation experts if you can. You may also find it beneficial to speak to organisations like yours about what they’ve done.
- 10 Professional judgement is key.** Data collection should never override or replace professional judgement. After all you are the experts and know your volunteers better than anyone!



Measure impact, learn and share - take action!

These take action questions will help you go through a self-review process to identify areas of strength and those that may need development in relation to your work with volunteers.

1. Are you publicly showing the impact that your volunteers are making?
2. Do you involve your volunteers in your evaluation?
3. Do you use the results of the evaluation to review and improve your volunteer programme?
4. Do you have a volunteer impact measurement plan?

Useful links

Make your evaluation a success, 9 top tips, (Nesta 2016)
www.nesta.org.uk

Develop effective impact and evaluation practices, (NCVO)
www.ncvo.org.uk

Valuing volunteers, volunteer stories

Volunteers don't start because they're expecting a reward, but it is important that your organisation or group celebrates and values what the volunteers have done.

Acknowledging the contribution made by volunteers shows that your organisation or group appreciates their input and commitment. Doing this can help volunteers feel valued and supported. If volunteers feel appreciated, they are more likely to stay with your organisation. It doesn't have to cost a lot but it needs to be regular, personal and not favour a small number of volunteers.



How do I recognise my volunteers and make them feel valued?

Top Tip

Make the way that you recognise your volunteer specific to the individual.

Some volunteers may be uncomfortable with public recognition, and just like to know that what they are doing has helped others. Some volunteers may be based at home and can't get to an event or location, they may also find the thought of an event a bit overwhelming, while others may love the idea of a big event!

Top Tip

Some volunteers appreciate an award for long service, but you also need to value the input that someone gives who is there for a short time.

Some ideas around how to show volunteers that they are valued

Be prepared for volunteers arriving

- First impressions count, when you advertise roles, ensure that you return calls promptly and stick to recruitment deadlines.
- Talk to the volunteer to find out what they are looking to gain from the volunteering experience, use this information for the matching process.

Let your volunteers know that their work makes a difference, (this can be motivating as well as rewarding)

- Think about how you measure the impact of your volunteers, this kind of feedback helps volunteers to recognise the positive impact that their contribution makes to your project.

Trust your volunteers!

- Giving volunteers a new task with a different role, or more responsibility, demonstrates trust. Trusting volunteers is an important way to show volunteers that you value and recognise their contribution.

Say Thank You!

- Sometimes a simple thank you is all the recognition that a volunteer is looking for. This can be informally in person, by telephone, by email, in a Christmas card or formally at the annual general meeting. You may also choose to case study a volunteer profile for newsletters, or for your organisation's website, but don't forget to gain permission to share from your volunteer!

Top Tip

Remember the same thanks every time can end up being tokenistic, so be sure to be personal, genuine, timely and specific.

Keep volunteers informed

- Volunteers feel valued if they're kept up to date with what your organisation is doing, why not set up a Facebook or Whatsapp group for volunteers, (gives the added opportunity for developing peer support and friendship, as well as a route for information), or send out a regular newsletter?

Make volunteers feel part of the team

- There are many ways to do this, including volunteer ID badges, or printed t-shirts for public events, give out organisational merchandise like branded pens or notepads.

Volunteer events

- Giving volunteers the opportunity to get together socially is a great way for volunteers to meet others, share experiences, feel inspired and develop peer support networks, as well as friendships.

Access to training

- A volunteer may value being able to attend training for development purposes (this must be relevant to the delivery of the role so it's not considered a perk in lieu of payment).

Be honest in your feedback!!

- Be prepared to address any volunteer related concerns or issues that may arise, where you may have to deliver constructive criticism to volunteers. The best way to give feedback is to be honest and specific, focussing on the requirements of the role. Try giving real examples, and make sure it is not too long after an incident or issue arises. Be clear on what you want to achieve and offer suggestions about how you think this could be done. Listen to volunteers and discuss their suggestions. Be prepared to be flexible. Being honest is a positive way to build mutual trust with your volunteers.

Involve volunteers in consultation

- Involving volunteers in planning and shaping volunteering practice shows volunteers that you value their opinions and views. You could have an anonymous suggestion box, invite volunteers onto the relevant committee, ask for comments by email or set up a volunteer forum. Be sure to acknowledge their involvement wherever possible

Top Tip

Volunteer awards

- Some organisations nominate volunteers for their in-house awards ceremonies. This could be for team effort, length of time in service, inspiring volunteer or even a lifetime commitment award. However, it is important if you chose to have awards that you find ways to recognise those who do not get nominated. You should also consider how to recognise volunteers who are not able to attend an awards ceremony.

Top Tip

Example: Rosemary, organiser for RSVP volunteers at Forth Valley Royal Hospital, and who developed new projects within the hospital, received the Volunteering Matters Older Volunteer of the Year Award.

Accommodating needs

- Be flexible and person-centred in adapting roles and tasks to suit your volunteers. Ask volunteers how you can help them to gain the most from their volunteering and listen to their ideas and suggestions

Introduce the ViP, (Volunteer Inclusion Plan) as part of your Volunteer Induction programme, see Volunteer Programme Resources for template

Providing a reference

- When a volunteer requests a reference, show how much you've valued their contribution to your organisation with a positive and honest reference

If you are unsure if your volunteers feel appreciated and valued, ask them! Send out an annual survey, to find out if the support and recognition that you are providing is appropriate.

The End!

When a volunteer decides to stop

Volunteering is ‘time freely given’, so it is perfectly okay if a volunteering opportunity comes to an end if it is no longer beneficial for an organisation and/or a volunteer.

In this case, the focus is on saying ‘thank you’ and providing a positive exit experience.

If the need for the volunteering opportunity is still apparent - either for the volunteer or the organisation – then finding ways to adapt the role to suit the needs of both is key. Older people with increasing health needs may benefit from reduced hours or a ‘pop in when you are feeling well’ approach.

Challenge the assumptions we all have of volunteering as regular time given in a traditional role!

Providing shorter, flexible and adaptable roles is key to enabling people in later life to continue to be active in their communities through volunteering.

Top Tips

- Talk to Volunteer Centre Newcastle, ask what adaptations they can make to their volunteering roles to enable people in later life to volunteer, or suggestions as to how you can adapt your roles
- Think about ways that you may be able to “chunk down” traditional long-term volunteer roles to enable individuals to have the option to engage when they feel able to
- Source the right volunteer role. Is it mutually beneficial, does it suit the individual’s interests and requirements?



Although a volunteer deciding to stop would seem relatively easy to handle at first sight it may well hold some challenges. If the reasons are organisational rather than personal it will need careful handling. There are many reasons why older volunteers may choose to leave, including the following:

- Moving away, perhaps to be nearer to family members
- Naturally burnt out-feeling that they have done their bit
- Ill health, loss of mobility
- Change in circumstances, (retire, start looking after grandchildren, loss of a close relative, becoming a carer)
- Bored with role
- Critical of the way in which volunteering is organised
- Not being asked what they enjoy or would like to get involved with
- Not feeling part of the organisation, feeling a lack of information around development and changes
- Being ignored, feeling that their suggestions and ideas are not being considered
- Finding organisational changes difficult to deal with
- Feeling de-motivated, (see below)
- Not having expenses reimbursed promptly, (causing financial distress)
- The volunteer experience was not as expected
- Do not feel that their skills are being utilised
- Atmosphere not welcoming
- Difficulties between paid staff and volunteers
- Stress-volunteers in certain roles can find their tasks as stressful as paid staff, yet do not feel that this is acknowledged, nor do they receive the same support as paid staff

Is the volunteer becoming de-motivated?

If you feel a volunteer is becoming de-motivated just do a quick check to see if you can spot the signs.

- Increased absenteeism due to illness, especially minor complaints
- Persistent lateness
- Irritable with colleagues/manager
- Drop in performance and standard of work
- Petty grievances or complaints
- Lack of co-operation, disagreeing for the sake of it
- Appearing, unusually for them, to be unwilling to make the extra effort

Increased volunteer turnover could mean that a key volunteer is de-motivated and therefore de-motivating others.

The end?

If you are contemplating asking a volunteer to leave, it may be that there are issues that can be dealt with informally if the organisation and the volunteer are prepared to make changes.

Asking the volunteer to leave is not necessarily the first recourse.

Some issues are serious and leave the organisation no option but to terminate the volunteer's involvement. This is usually if the volunteer has breached or ignored organisational policies and procedures repeatedly.

Exit interview

See Volunteer Programme Resources for Exit Interview template

Volunteer stories

One of the most effective ways to evidence the impact of your volunteer programme is to case study your volunteers and beneficiaries, see below some great stories around older volunteers and the fantastic contributions that they have made within their communities, not only benefitting the people who they are supporting, but also increasing their own confidence, health and well-being and quality of life!

Sead Masic, from Changing Lives, offers the following fantastic story of Michael, an older volunteer, not only making a difference, but also finding new purpose and significantly improving his health and wellbeing!

For Michael's story, please visit

www.changing-lives.org.uk/news-stories/volunteer-stories-meet-michael/

“

Emma Mohan, from DePaul Charity, offered the following case studies from volunteers and their beneficiaries:

It has been great to see my mentee move towards independence, and I have felt valued and supported by the team at Depaul. It was also brilliant that remote training could take place effectively despite the Coronavirus lockdown.

Volunteer Mentor, North East

”

“

I have enjoyed being a volunteer at Depaul for 11 years in December. My roles including: mentoring, drop in, group session work, what drives me is how much the young people really appreciate that I give my spare time to them - for free. In return, that has been a huge impact on me as I understand the importance of the role of a volunteer.

Older Volunteer, North East

”

“

Volunteering at Depaul and helping others for the past 10 years has been very rewarding for me, giving just a little of your time goes a long way. The staff welcome me as part of the team, and I look forward to seeing where the next 10 years with Depaul takes me.

Wellbeing Volunteer, North East.

”

“

My proudest moment so far is being able to manage my own finances, mentoring has helped me become more confident and given me useful skills. So far I have learned and developed cooking and budgeting.

Young person using volunteer mentor service, North East.

”

Jeff, Chairperson for
Bellamy Court,
Sporting Chance



Gina is a full time carer for her husband

Gina's story is a great example of the positive impact of volunteer support not only to the beneficiary, but also to their family.

Bob, volunteer with RSVP Forth Valley, Handyperson Project

To read these inspiring Volunteer Stories, please visit:

Jeff's story: <https://volunteeringmatters.org.uk/casestudy/sporting-chance-jeffs-story/>

Gina's story:

<https://volunteeringmatters.org.uk/casestudy/peer-friendship-project-ginas-story/>

Bob's story:

<https://volunteeringmatters.org.uk/casestudy/handyperson-project-bobs-story/>

Pat, Reading in Schools volunteer, North Ormesby, Middlesbrough

Volunteering Matters developed Reading in Schools in North Ormesby in line with the Public Health Plan, responding to an identified need to increase literacy levels.

In July 2018, Pat was invited to volunteer. Pat is an older volunteer from the Middlesbrough area who has been involved with Volunteering Matters since 2016, when she became a Befriender volunteer, and who was aware of the Public Health Plan, through the promotion of activities and initiatives at the group's monthly meetings.

Pat began volunteering with Year 6 Primary level, supporting eight children, who had previously proven to be the most difficult to engage in reading, some of whom had no-one to practice reading with at home, (for various reasons). With Pat's usual patience and enthusiasm, she put every effort into the role, developing effective working relationships with the children, slowly gaining their trust, and they now look forward to her visits. One of the students even invited Pat to a family celebration!

Pat has been so successful in this role, that one of the students, who initially was very reluctant to read, now fully engages with Pat, not only increasing his levels in literacy, but her support has also had a positive impact on his confidence in other subjects including Maths. When Pat first met him, he really struggled in Maths lessons, but did not feel he could ask for help, fearing ridicule from his peers, and his behaviours led to his exclusion from school. When Pat began to gain his trust, he disclosed to her that he hated Maths, and felt that he couldn't do it. Pat pointed out that he felt that way about reading when she first met him, reinforced the level of reading that he had achieved to date, and offered to speak to his teacher on his behalf, and with Pat's support and encouragement he has now joined a Maths club, and is on his way to achieving higher grades. This student leaves St Alphonsus School this year but has informed Pat that he doesn't need to worry about her, or she about him, as his sister is coming up to Year 6 and will keep him informed!

The Year 6 teacher at the school stated that the year 6 boys, (who had previously been very reluctant readers), were loving reading sessions with Pat, and that she has made it a personal, enriching experience.

Volunteering has given Pat a real sense of achievement, feeling that she's making a difference to the children who she supports, not just now, but for their future.

“

As Pat says,

Friends ask me why I volunteer, saying that I'm 70 years old, and I don't need to do it, but I'm giving back, and it's worth it, you could say I'm being selfish, because I get so much out of volunteering, but it's opened things within myself, that I didn't know existed. I've finally recognised that for the whole of my life, I've had caring roles, mother, grandparent, former nurse, but I demeaned all of that by thinking that I hadn't achieved anything. Volunteering has made me appreciate myself, as a person.

”

Sandy, 70, a volunteer with our Handyperson Project for 10 years

The service enables older people to maintain their independence, and minimises the risk of an accident at home

<https://volunteeringmatters.org.uk/casestudy/9580/>

Margaret volunteered for Help at Hand, supporting a lady with dementia around social inclusion

<https://volunteeringmatters.org.uk/casestudy/help-hand-margarets-story/>

Covid-19... Changing the face of volunteering



It's been a challenging time for everyone recently, especially within the sector, and has highlighted the need for innovation and flexibility, with volunteer safety paramount in any planning.

Covid-19 has forced many of us to change the way that we deliver support and services to older people and people affected by dementia. The CityLife Line was very busy, with an unprecedented number of people coming forward to volunteer, wanting to help the more vulnerable within their communities.

Covid-19 impact survey

Volunteering Matters, (commissioned by Newcastle City Council), conducted a survey to understand the impact of Covid-19 on local organisations, and their ability to deliver volunteering programmes, including plans to return to “normal” as restrictions are lifted.

The findings of the survey included the following:

- 75% of survey participants noted that they had been able to modify and adapt their volunteer programme.
- Biggest impact on volunteer programmes included digital exclusion for vulnerable people, and decline in mental health and wellbeing, which identified a need for support with confidence building, following shielding.

See ‘Volunteer Programme Resources’ for full Newcastle Survey Response report

Connected Voice have put together some guidance around risk assessing community and building services, including useful templates:
www.connectedvoice.org.uk

Examples of adapted volunteer roles:

As part of North Tyneside's COVID-19 recovery, **VODA** has created a new Good Neighbours volunteer buddy scheme to help support beneficiaries in taking their first steps back out into the world. Each role has been created to support people with specific elements of their emergence from isolation.

- Good Neighbours Garden Gate Buddy
- Good Neighbours Shopping Buddy
- Good Neighbours Walking Buddy
- **Search Newcastle** recruit Tech Volunteers, who can assist people to access Zoom, or use a tablet or laptop to stay connected with friends and family.
- Stay connected by post, through local funding, Search Newcastle are posting out a monthly Bulletin and Activity pack to older people on their mailing list. The packs contain quizzes on local history, sport and music, competitions, ideas on growing plants, fun art ideas and crafts projects that can be carried out in the home.
- Stay connected by phone, **Re-engage** supports older people who live alone and find it hard to get out in normal times. The Covid-19 crisis is particularly devastating for these people and many are feeling incredibly vulnerable, especially those with few family members or friends to talk to. In response to the crisis Reengage have suspended their regular social gatherings and, with the help of their dedicated volunteers, have set up a

UK-wide call companions' service. Older people who are feeling alone can receive a regular friendly phone call throughout the crisis and beyond, for as long as they want it.

- In response to Covid-19 **Age UK North Tyneside** have launched a new Telephone Befriending Service for older people at risk of loneliness and social isolation. Age UK match an older person with a volunteer, who will call for a friendly chat at a fixed time twice per week.
- **Age UK North Tyneside** appreciate that caring for someone who is living with dementia isn't easy, and with the impact of Covid-19, isolation is a major factor for us all. They have launched a peer support group session via mobile phone or online, for people who are caring for someone living with dementia. They hope that this will give carers the opportunity to have someone to talk to, to relax, even briefly, and to take a break from caring.
- **Catalyst, (Stockton on Tees)** are launching a new client driven project tailored around friendship and shared life experience. The Finding Me Project offers unique support for individuals left alone as a consequence of a loved one moving into a care home or care home bereavement due to Covid-19 and has been adapted so that support can still be provided adhering to government guidelines. The aim is to provide a co-ordinated befriending service where like-minded people can rediscover hobbies, share skills and experience, develop self-confidence and gain a network of friendship and support.

Volunteering in strange times

The COVID-19 pandemic has shaken the world of volunteering, raising fundamental questions about how we volunteer to help each other and how we organise and support volunteers. Writing for the Directory of Social Change, Mike Locke is convinced we will need to adapt some of our thinking about and practices in working with volunteers, and asks how we apply the learning from generations of volunteering to the unfamiliar new times, and which lessons from the past are going to be the most useful?

Establishing the new 'normal'

Gill Watson, Project Develop Officer, Volunteering Matters, for Sporting Chance, a project designed to increase levels of health and wellbeing in men over 50, offered her insight:



One small project in a big muddy pond of change!!! ...

A Covid Times perspective on working with Volunteers and Older People



My 'normal', has gone from working with around sixty older men in loud, happy, friendly, face to face activities and meetings, to sitting in my kitchen at home endeavouring to keep up contacts and rally interest for whenever we 'get back to normal'.

The Volunteering Matters, 'Sporting Chance' project encourages men aged 50+ to look after their physical and mental wellbeing by joining in with activity such as, exercise sessions, healthy cooking, and knowledge and interest groups and it is known for its friendly welcoming sessions.

The men who attend are from all walks of life, some have lives that are very full, with close family and lots of bustle and social contacts, some are bereaved and live alone, others act as carers for family members and will openly admit that joining the group gives them a very much welcomed break and socialisation opportunity. All of the volunteers who support the programme are over 60.

The bit of the session that is noisiest and full of fun is usually during the tea break where the men can get together for a weekly catch up – this has been most missed.

During the Covid 19 pandemic it has been almost impossible to replace what we have lost. Yes, a text or email has been welcomed and certainly many have said they enjoy a telephone catch up, but it can never replace a face to face get together.

"I can't wait to get back with the lads ..." is a contact phrase I have heard many times over the past 3 months.

So how do we move forward?

As the social distancing measure slowly shrinks, is it possible to do activity now 1 meter apart? (3 feet for those born before the 70's).

Do we redesign buildings and their use? Is there anywhere in the area that has an 'open air yet covered facility' in case of inclement weather? Is there another organisation that would like to partner and work with us?

We all need to adapt and change with the times – this could be for the long haul....

I am constantly trying to think outside of the proverbial box!!

Perhaps we need to do things differently and be open to change

- It is still reported that older people, especially those with underlying health conditions are most at risk from infection after the disease. While community spirit and volunteering has been seen at its best during the pandemic, it may not have quelled the anxiety and worries of those who have been shielding. Re-emerging into society will be a huge step, riddled with worry and anxiety for many. Simple steps with reassurance by a Volunteer, for example, a trip to the local shop, the hairdressers or round to a neighbour's gate for a cup of tea may be the way forward for those who have been at home during the pandemic who need to make those first small but welcome steps.
- The project as it 'was' may not return for a long time - large social groups of older people with close contact will not be advisable. Can we adapt and run small splinter group? Can we change the activity itself to accommodate restrictions? Can we look at different venues – places where social distancing is easier?
- Will the funders 'hang on in with us 'while we tread water'? Proactive and honest conversations where targets and expectations are adjusted should be prioritised.
- **An open mind** to 'what will work' is essential. One volunteer carrying out a garden call, delivering a library book with an accompanying chat, or continuing to support with shopping or a trip to the barber is as vital as attending a meet up to those who are isolated or anxious.
- **Technology is king** - it has been amazing how contacts through video links and group chats have rallied many and kept spirits up during the pandemic. Being able to 'see' your family and friends has been a boost for many. However, there are still older people who don't have access to, don't understand, or don't want to understand technology. An I.T. savvy volunteer being able to provide that support through training, or simply being with an older person with a tablet to enable them to see and talk to their family, is an obvious way forward in making a positive impact.

- **Working with partners** – Consider anything that may enhance the volunteers and beneficiary's enjoyment and safety. Pooled resources can be more than helpful at a time like this.
- **Most of all** - We need to make sure new volunteers and beneficiaries as well as those returning, feel safe. Risk assess and risk assess again! We need to ensure that we have easy access to toilets with soap, paper towels and hand gels, we may need to provide masks in some locations, and we need to be seen to be proactive in cleaning down. We must train and advise as necessary and ensure that for everyone's comfort and safety all rules and recommendations are followed. This will give both volunteers and beneficiaries confidence and hope, however, this will be a changing and challenging time when perhaps we need to measure the 'small steps' in the progress that we make.

Top Tip

Staying connected

Signpost your volunteers to available online training or activities, for volunteers not currently active to continue to feel engaged, and proactive in developing their skills and knowledge.

Volunteer programme resources

Building an Inclusive Programme

“Residents as Volunteers “ Abbeyfield

[abbeyfield-residents-as-volunteers-project-full-evaluation-report-2018.pdf](https://housinglin.org.uk/abbeyfield-residents-as-volunteers-project-full-evaluation-report-2018.pdf) (housinglin.org.uk)

Creating Attractive Roles

Role description template Volunteer Centre Newcastle

https://drive.google.com/file/d/17_BtTcYfU4qJNVze6LdNRYbeAqaXKSeW/view?usp=sharing,%20

Recruitment, Support and Retaining Volunteers

Volunteer Expense sheet template

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AWNKPiRRPZynZgqqgoHFvPwoxqlXIRLP/view?usp=sharing,%20>

ViP (Volunteer inclusion Plan) template

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/184oYBA2iDMRrXdsPluXZ9QaeCSGa4SBY/view?usp=sharing,%20>

Day One checklist example

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/16okqnI6cRO9IukcLsnDw2n3BpZ1YWYWh/view?usp=sharing,%20>

Volunteer Supervision form template

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1I8m9KznlyLpL_pt8ec6Smlz-FAbZhptd/view?usp=sharing,%20

Legal Responsibilities around having Volunteers

Individual Volunteer Risk Assessment template

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1F0YA8zRg1HYkNz6yx71_sVxj2OZmxCKT/view?usp=sharing,%20

Data Protection email template

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1djBHD4nQj3K0OwmQbkaIQfvvMJ5ujGBT/view?usp=sharing>

The End!

Exit Interview template

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/17vxvMk05MtOLhyUuyds6-SW4wRcWisFV/view?usp=sharing,%20>

Covid-19, changing the Face of Volunteering

Covid-19 Survey Response report

Volunteering Best Practice-Easing Lockdown

Getting Together Matters

Online training resources and activities

Safer Culture North East

VONNE, Catalyst Stockton-on-Tees, Connected Voice, Durham Community Action and Northumberland CVA are working in partnership to deliver training and awareness raising sessions on the importance of safeguarding and highlighting the open access NCVO safeguarding resources across the North East, working alongside the region's local infrastructure organisations.

<https://www.vonne.org.uk/safer-culture-north-east-resources-and-training>

Safeguarding for Volunteers- easy to read factsheet

<https://www.vonne.org.uk/sites/default/files/Safeguarding-volunteers.pdf>

NCVO open access safeguarding resources

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/safeguarding/>

The Skills Network

The Skills Network, (TSN) are offering free online course packages in mental, physical and financial health to support people during the Covid-19 pandemic. The skills gained from completing these courses can also help people to better support themselves (and others around them) in terms of their mental, physical and/or financial health. The following packages are available for free:

Mental Health Package

- Understanding Stress
- Understanding Anxiety
- Stress Management

Physical Health Package

- Exploring the Principles of Healthy Eating
- Understand the Principles of Exercise and Fitness

Financial Health Package

- Personal Money Management
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) www.theskillsnetwork.com

British Red Cross

British Red Cross are offering free digital sessions which will help you learn skills to help in an emergency, connect with others and build confidence and coping skills. There are currently two sessions on offer to adults over 19, First Aid, and Kindness in your Community.

<https://www.redcross.org.uk/get-involved/teaching-resources/digital-classrooms/adult-digital-sessions>

Alzheimer's Society

Dementia friend sessions are now being delivered in various remote formats, for easy home access:

www.dementiafriends.org.uk

Key Training have access to Government funding from the 'Adult Education Budget' for individuals living in the North East, (North of Tyne postcode areas).

The following courses are free, and all are nationally accredited qualifications. These courses are delivered online and will improve or refresh the skills and knowledge and are relevant to a range of roles and industries.

- Information Advice & Guidance
- Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Equality & Diversity
- Safeguarding & Prevent
- Understanding Health & Nutrition
- Mental Health First Aid
- Children & Young People's Mental Health
- Counselling Skills
- Awareness of Mental Health Problems
- Understanding Autism
- Understanding Specific Learning Difficulties
- Understanding Behaviour that Challenges
- Principles of Customer Service
- Principles of Team Leading
- Data Protection & Data Security
- Business Improvement Technique

www.keytraining.co.uk/

FutureLearn

FutureLearn offer a range of free online courses, (some accredited), all developed alongside top universities, including the following:

Covid-19: Psychological First Aid

www.futurelearn.com/courses/psychological-first-aid-covid-19

Quality Improvement for Healthcare: The case for Change

www.futurelearn.com/courses/quality-improvement

Social Wellbeing

www.futurelearn.com/courses/social-wellbeing

SCIE, (Social Care Institute for Excellence)

SCIE have put together a list of quality free e-learning and resources:
www.scie.org.uk/publications/getconnectedtoelearning/freeelearning.asp

Helpforce

(in association with NHS Health Education England), have created e-learning resources for people preparing to volunteer in Health and Care, and for experienced volunteers wishing to refresh their knowledge
<https://volunteerlearning.community/>

Essential reading

Age UK

Older People as Volunteers Evidence Review

www.ageuk.org.uk

Social Care Institute for Excellence, (SCIE)

Guidance for those supporting people with Dementia during the Covid-19 crisis

Beyond Covid: New thinking on the future of adult social care

www.scie.org.uk

A survey to understand the impact of Covid-19 on organisations and their ability to deliver volunteering programmes, including plans to return to normal as lockdown restrictions are lifted.

Q1. Tell us about your volunteer programme during lockdown

- 100% surveyed said they have been impacted by the pandemic and lockdown restrictions.
- 75% reported that they have been able to modify the way they deliver their programmes.
- 29% noted that they have involved volunteers in the direct community response efforts to Covid-19.

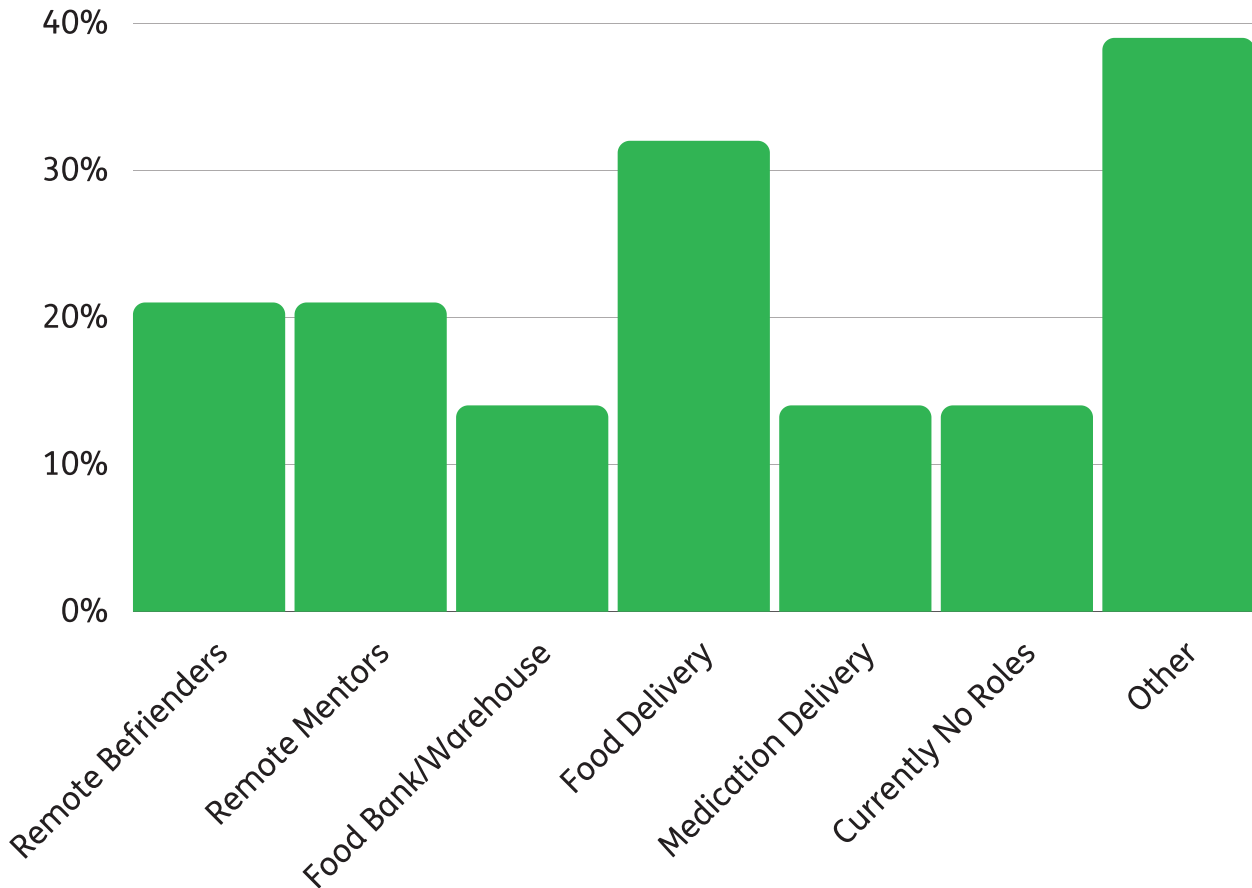
Many noted changes such as online, virtual support as a way of maintaining contact with beneficiaries, such as Zoom sessions, email support and other chatting platforms. Telephone welfare checks have also proven to be a useful way of keep in touch. Where essential work was still being carried out, programmes were adapted to follow social distancing guidelines for the safety of volunteers and beneficiaries.

Where programmes have been directly involved in the community response to Covid-19, there has been a wide range of essential tasks undertaken by volunteers, including: support of foodbank organisation and distribution, grocery shopping and delivery, collection of prescriptions, providing food parcels and windowsill gardening packs.



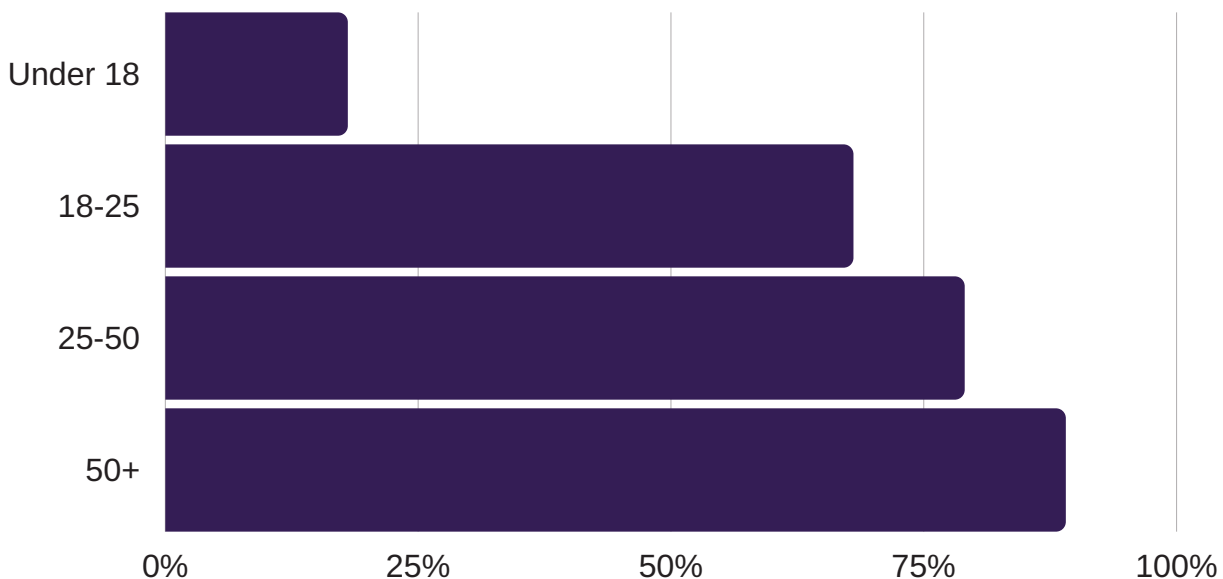
Q2. What volunteer roles is your programme currently offering?

(% of programmes offering each service)



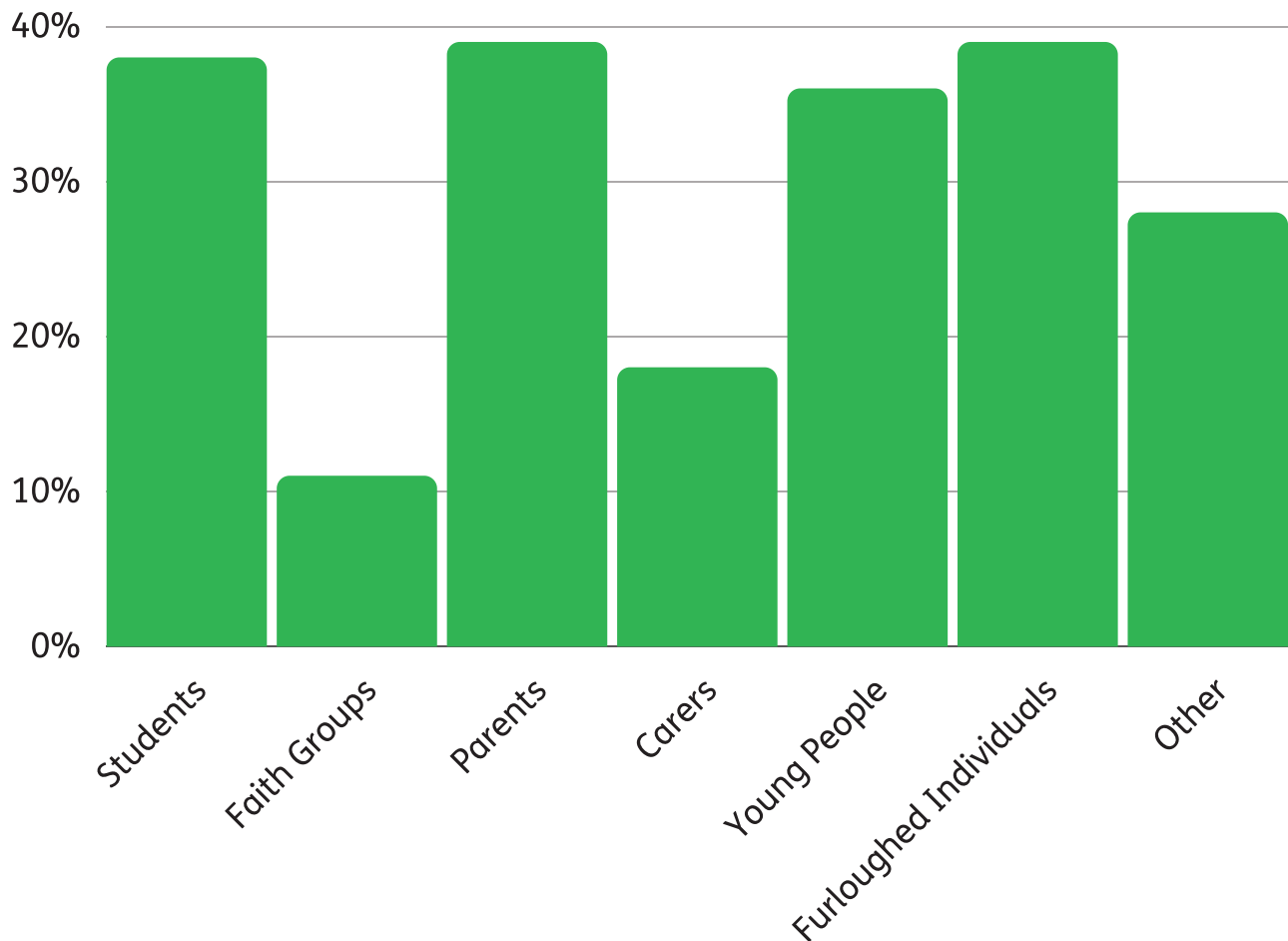
Q3. What age are your volunteers?

(% of programmes engaging each age group)

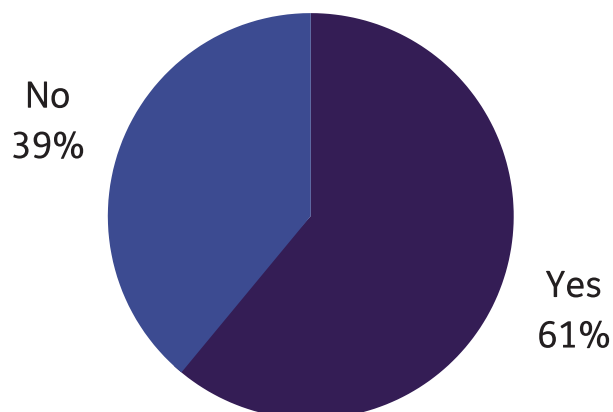


Q4. Which of the following did your volunteer base include during lockdown?

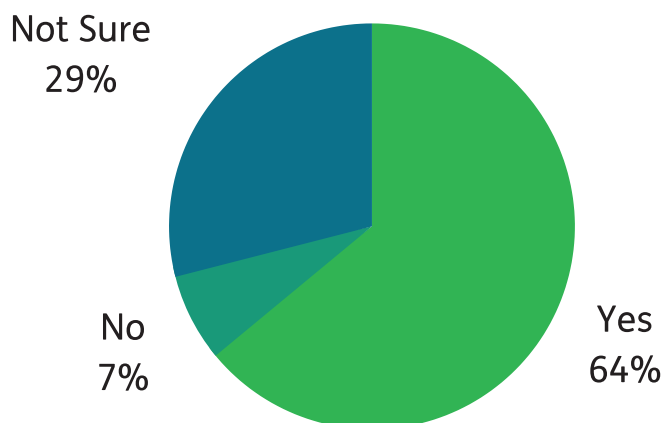
(% of programmes engaging with each)



Q5. Did you redesign your volunteer offer?



Q6. As lockdown ends, will you continue to offer remote support?



Q7. What do you feel will be your biggest barriers to resuming regular volunteer roles?

Many programmes have expressed concerns about the impact that social distancing measures will have on the delivery of service, especially around shared office spaces and group activities. Another challenge will be the perception of volunteers on whether they feel safe to resume their duties - especially those most vulnerable due to age or health conditions. Also mentioned was time and budget constraints, volunteer morale and interest, as well as the need to use public transport.

Q8. What has been the biggest impact to your volunteer programme?

Those programmes that had to completely close down have felt significant impact during this time, with others feeling the pressure of having to adapt quickly to changes. Suspension of regular services has seen a drop in volunteers for some, with others finding it difficult to keep interested volunteers engaged in worthwhile duties. Other responses include digital exclusion of vulnerable people and a decline in their mental health and wellbeing.

with thanks to the following organisations for
contributing to this survey:



VOLUNTEER BEST PRACTICE



EASING LOCKDOWN

#volunteersafely



With the lockdown easing, many of you will be looking forward to returning to your volunteering

This guide is not exhaustive but is designed to make you aware of what to expect from your volunteer organisation, regarding ensuring that you remain as safe as possible during your volunteer activity

Before returning to your volunteering, you will have a discussion with your volunteer manager/coordinator, which will be your opportunity to:

- Voice any concerns about returning to volunteering
- Discuss your personal circumstances
- Complete a Volunteer Health Checklist, informing your volunteer manager of any underlying health conditions that could increase your level of risk
- Discuss your individual risk assessment, further ensuring your safety



The following information is to make you aware of the steps organisations may be taking to safely re-engage volunteers

Volunteer Activity	Physical Location	Steps taken to comply with government regulations	Additional medical or safety checks and equipment	Additional information or training
Support with admin	Office	<p>Deep clean of all offices and equipment</p> <p>Reconfiguration of office space, (desks etc) to allow for social distancing</p> <p>No shared kitchen or dining areas</p> <p>One way system on entrance and exit, and around office space,</p> <p>Use of disposable paper cups</p> <p>Signage around social distancing regulations</p>	<p>PPE to be provided</p> <p>Hand soap Hand sanitiser Sanitiser wipes to clean desks and equipment before and after each session</p> <p>Designated bin for disposal of used PPE</p>	<p>Copy of Individual Risk Assessment</p> <p>Regular meetings/supervision with your volunteer manager</p> <p>Training needs to be identified</p>

The following information is to make you aware of the steps organisations may be taking to safely re-engage volunteers

Volunteer Activity	Physical Location	Steps taken to comply with government regulations	Additional medical or safety checks and equipment	Additional information or training
Community volunteering Shopping Collecting and delivering prescriptions	Community locations, shops, pharmacies, parks etc	Adhering to social distancing requirements, within shop/pharmacy Contact the pharmacy to check prescription is ready, to minimise waiting time and risk of infection	PPE provided (mask, gloves, hand sanitiser) Hand sanitiser to be used, and gloves changed following each visit	Copy of Individual Risk Assessment Regular meetings supervision with your volunteer manager Confidentiality, Boundaries and Safeguarding training
Community volunteering Dog walking	Clients home Public spaces, parks etc	Volunteer to place shopping/medication at clients door, knock, stand back allow for social distancing of 1 m await client opening the door, or signalling from window Volunteers must not enter the clients home On collecting the dog, maintain 1 m of social distancing from the dog owner, consider collecting the dog from the front garden, porch or yard if possible	PPE to be provided, (mask, gloves, hand sanitiser) Wash hands with soap and water before and after each visit, or use hand sanitiser	Copy of Individual Risk Assessment Regular meetings supervision with your volunteer manager Training should include Confidentiality, Boundaries and Safeguarding

The following information is to make you aware of the steps organisations may be taking to safely re-engage volunteers cont'd

Volunteer Activity	Physical Location	Steps taken to comply with government regulations	Additional medical or safety checks and equipment	Additional information or training
Driving clients to medical appointments	Client's home, to/from medical provider	<p>Plastic screening between front and back seats</p> <p>If an escort is required, this will be a member of the client's household</p> <p>Client and escort to sit in the back of the car</p> <p>No physical contact between volunteer and client</p> <p>Volunteers must not enter clients home</p>	<p>PPE provided, (mask, gloves, hand sanitiser, sanitiser wipes)</p> <p>Car to be cleaned, (door handles, door frames, other surfaces), and gloves/mask changed after each client</p> <p>Wash hands with soap and water before and after each client/</p> <p>If you do not have access, hand sanitiser can be used instead.</p>	<p>Copy of Individual Risk Assessment</p> <p>Regular meetings/supervision with your volunteer manager</p> <p>Training should include Confidentiality, Boundaries and Safeguarding</p>

The following information is to make you aware of the steps organisations may be taking to safely re-engage volunteers cont'd

Volunteer Activity	Physical Location	Steps taken to comply with government regulations	Additional medical or safety checks and equipment	Additional information or training
Foodbank support	Community foodbanks	<p>Reconfiguration of the space to incorporate trestle table with screening, with one client entering, being handed their food pack then directed to exit the premises</p> <p>One person in, one person out access</p> <p>One way system to enter and exit</p> <p>No shared facilities for tea/coffee making</p> <p>Strict appointment system in place to minimise the number of people waiting</p> <p>Signage around social distancing requirements, and volunteer to direct people as to where to stand, maintaining social distance</p>	<p>PPE to be provided to staff, volunteers and clients utilising the service</p> <p>Gloves, mask to be replaced after each session</p> <p>Hands to be washed with soap and water before and after each session</p>	<p>Copy of Individual Risk Assessment</p> <p>Regular meetings/supervision with your volunteer manager</p> <p>Training should include Confidentiality, Boundaries and Safeguarding</p>

The following information is to make you aware of the steps organisations may be taking to safely re-engage volunteers cont'd

Volunteer Activity	Physical Location	Steps taken to comply with government regulations	Additional medical or safety checks and equipment	Additional information or training
Befriending or Mentoring	Home community location, (eg local park)	<p>Sessions to be completed electronically/by phone or in person within outside space</p> <p>Social distancing requirements to be adhered to</p> <p>No physical contact between volunteer and beneficiary</p> <p>Volunteers will not enter beneficiary's home</p>	<p>PPE to be provided for volunteers meeting clients in the community</p> <p>Gloves, mask to be replaced after each session</p> <p>Hands to be washed with soap and water, before and after each session</p>	<p>Copy of Individual Risk Assessment</p> <p>Regular meetings/supervision with your volunteer manager</p> <p>Training should include Confidentiality, Boundaries and Safeguarding</p>

Transport to and from volunteering

Current government guidelines advise against using public transport unless absolutely necessary, and to either walk or use your own vehicle

If you can't avoid using public transport please adhere to current government guidance

- Wash your hands before and after your journey
- Where possible, book your travel online, or use contactless payment
- Adhere to social distancing requirements of 1 m from others.
- Use a face covering.
- Avoid touching surfaces, handrails etc.
- Follow instruction from your transport operator
- this may include, notices on how to queue and which seats to use, additional screens, barriers or floor markings, requests to board from different doors or use different station entrance and exit points



For more information please use the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#public-transport>

Safety Checklist - Useful Information

1. Before coming to volunteer today, am I experiencing flu-like symptoms (e.g. fever, headache, body aches, cough, difficulty breathing, lack of or change in sense of smell/taste)?

If Yes, do not come to volunteer.

Let your volunteer manager know if you are not feeling well.

If you start to feel unwell during volunteering, notify your volunteer manager and return home.

You will be required to self-isolate for 7 days if you live alone, 14 days if there are other people in your household

Contact NHS 111 online for advice or guidance

2. Am I washing my hands frequently enough (before and after breaks, lunch, meetings, or using the bathroom)?

Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds each time in line with government guidelines.

Use hand sanitiser if you do not have access to soap and water

3. Do I have the proper protective equipment, PPE (mask, gloves, and hand sanitiser)? Is my equipment clean?

Your volunteer manager will provide you with the appropriate PPE, disposable masks and gloves should be changed after each volunteer session/visit to client

4. What if I am asked to complete a task that I am not comfortable with, for example being requested to enter a client's home?

In this case, politely decline, and contact your volunteer manager for advice. If you are asked to do anything that you are uncomfortable with, say no, and notify your volunteer manager

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@volunteering_uk



Getting Together Matters

Inspired by the innovative work from our **LifeLines** programme in Brighton, Getting Together Matters is a new project from Volunteering Matters running remotely across England, Scotland and Wales as part of our COVID-19 Response Programme. Guidance on accessing the sessions from home is available - ask us when you get in contact.

Mondays

- 10am Seated Pilates
- 12pm Beginners Bridge
- 2pm Armchair Travel with George

Thursdays

- 10am Seated Pilates
- 11am The Big Quiz
- 2pm Fitness with Dean

Tuesdays

- 10am Seated Pilates
- 11am The Big Quiz Live
- 2pm Gentle Armchair Exercise with Dean

Fridays

- 10am Seated Pilates
- 11am Coffee Morning
- 2pm Sing Well With Lifelines

Wednesdays

- 10am Seated Pilates
- 11am Current affairs chat with Andrew, Martha and Ruby
- 2pm Reminiscence with Gill
- 3:30pm Spanish with Hasun and Alfredo



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VOLUNTEERING MATTERS

