

## Recruiting Volunteers - what you need to think about

### Why might someone want to volunteer with you?

A Home Office Review found that people who volunteer:

- have volunteering in 'their DNA'
- have been 'affected by a life event'
- are 'in the right place at the right time'
- see volunteering 'as part of their personal development.'

People usually have a strong reason to volunteer, such as:

- a personal connection to an organization or cause
- wanting to give something back.
- a commitment to help solve a local issue.
- friends already volunteer and seem to be enjoying it.
- it's a way to improve your job prospects.

⇒ How will you give people a **strong reason** to get involved with your organization?

⇒ The better you understand your potential volunteer's motivation, the better match you'll get to your role, and the more likely they'll be to stay.

### Can you promote diversity?

Through involving a diverse range of volunteers you can better reflect your local community and your service users. In this way you can bring your organisation's equal opportunities policy to life.

If you are struggling to recruit volunteers, or a particular type of volunteer, it helps to think about how you might target them. Informal surveys are a good way. You can ask potential volunteers as well as your own volunteers:

- What newsletters, websites etc they look at
- Whether they listen to radio stations
- Where they might see a poster
- What might persuade them to volunteer.
- You could do an online survey. There are a number of free online survey providers, such as [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)

### Are you clear about what your volunteer will do?

It's worth spending time drawing up a task profile – or refreshing the one you have.

**Clarity** is key to successful recruitment - it will help you attract someone with the qualities and skills you need. See our [Nuts & Bolts guide](#) to developing role profiles.

## How will you promote your opportunity?

- **Volunteer Centre** – register your opportunity with us, using our [Request for Volunteers Form and guidance](#). We make the opportunity available to potential volunteers contacting the centre and we will also upload the opportunity to the national volunteering database [www.do-it.org.uk](http://www.do-it.org.uk)
- **Word of mouth** – make sure everyone you know knows that you're trying to recruit. The only problem is that through 'word of mouth' you tend to recruit people similar to your existing volunteers so you may not attract as diverse volunteers as you want.
- **Print** – posters, leaflets or postcards can be an effective way of reaching people. You can display printed information in:
  - Schools and colleges
  - Libraries
  - Religious centres
  - Shop windows
  - Community centres
- **Talks and events** – visual images can bring a volunteering opportunity to life and volunteers themselves are most likely to inspire others.
- **Local press and radio** – build a good relationship with local newspapers and radio stations, stressing the human interest of local people getting involved to help the community.

## Some tips on recruitment materials

- Keep the information simple and reflect the nature of the volunteering opportunity in the design.
- Avoid 'volunteers needed'
- People tend to only read the first line
- Use questions to guide the readers through what you're telling them
- Use pictures
- Use quotes from volunteers or service users
- Highlight the benefits to volunteers
- Be clear about who, where, when, why
- Give the broadest range of contact details

## Selection

**Should you use an application form?** Asking volunteers to fill in an application form can be very appropriate and useful if the volunteer is going to need to have the skills utilised in filling out the application form when they are volunteering. If this is not the case, being asked to fill in an application form can be a daunting task and a barrier to volunteering.

**Interviews** – you might invite the volunteer for an 'informal chat' rather than an interview as an interview sounds very formal and can put people off. When you meet the volunteer, if they haven't filled in an application form themselves, you can ask them for all the information you need to fill in the form on their behalf.