



# FAITHFULLY VOLUNTEERING

A good practice guide about volunteering for churches,  
Christian projects, and other voluntary groups



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*Our vision is for every church in every community to be involved in tackling poverty together by giving time, money, action and prayer. Our aim is to increase the passion within the Church for the poor and marginalised and to make the Church's response more effective.*



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# INTRODUCTION

In a church nearly everyone is a volunteer: the elders, members of the Parochial Church Council, youth leaders, visitors, Boards and Committees – nowadays there are many volunteers serving as priests, pastors or congregational leaders.

Churches and church community projects demonstrate a real partnership of paid and unpaid, professional and enthusiast. It becomes different if you involve people from outside your church in your work serving your community and your neighbourhood. It changes the dynamic, it changes the way you communicate, and it changes the way you run.

When we seek to serve the local community, problems and opportunities emerge and lots of complex issues need to be addressed.

This pack really focuses on using volunteers outside our particular local church, although many of the good practice guidelines apply in all circumstances. There is a need to challenge the way church communities operate and the expectations of their volunteers, so there may be something in this pack for everyone.

If you start a project for the elderly you may be happy to have outside help from the local community, or if it were an advice centre, you may want to draw volunteers from farther afield. What about expenses? How should volunteers be involved? Should they be members of our congregation, a Christian, believers, or sympathetic? Should we train them? Are they insured? These are questions you need to ask before involving volunteers in a project.

We recommend also using our *Volunteer Training Course Guide* for helping your community group to think through volunteer-related issues, as well as our *Supplementary Case Studies* on difficult volunteer situations and suggested *Case Study Answers*.

Using volunteers on projects is a way to celebrate the gifts in your congregation and also to recognise that churches are community resources, which want to reach out.

The language used in this pack may seem strange to some churches. We have used the term project to cover any grouping whether part of the management structure of a local church or an independent Christian charity involving volunteers.

Finally we apologise if there is repetition but we have deliberately mentioned matters whenever they are relevant. In addition you may be just consulting one section so we have tried to add the information there rather than including too much cross referencing.

**Every blessing in your work!**

## THIS PACK ALSO CONTAINS SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES:

PLANNING A VOLUNTEER TRAINING COURSE

CASE STUDIES IN SEARCH OF ANSWERS

ANSWERS TO CASE STUDIES



# QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU START

## INTRODUCTION

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These questions need studying. Many pointers are given in other sections of the pack, but it is vital that you ask the questions before you start.

You might like to reproduce this section and circulate the questionnaire to all who will be involved in taking the decisions about developing your volunteering programme. You might also consider revisiting the questions as part of a periodic review of your work and the way you involve volunteers in your project.

These questions are also addressed in our ***Planning a Volunteer Training Course*** resource, as well as our ***Supplementary Case Studies*** on difficult volunteer situations and suggested ***Case Study Answers***.

## THE QUESTIONS

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- 1 Why are you recruiting volunteers?

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- 2 Do you have sufficient tasks for them to do? Will you be involving volunteers on a short-term, time-limited or a long-term basis?

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- 3 Is your church (the priests, ministers, leaders, deacons, council, members, etc) supportive of involving volunteers in the project?

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- 4 Are those currently involved in your project, at all levels, supportive of involving volunteers in the project?

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- 5 Are they clear about the implications and the tensions that might exist between volunteers from the congregation working on a project and new volunteers who come in from outside?

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- 6 Are there worries that the trustees/leadership will lose control when involving outsiders or non-believers?

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- 7 What if funders require equal opportunities policies that may upset or be against your Christian beliefs or your denomination's regulations?

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- 8 Is there a budget for volunteers? Is it based on realistic costings? Does the management-body think that using volunteers means no costs at all?

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- 9 Do similar Christian projects/initiatives in your area involve volunteers? What is their experience? Have you visited them and discussed what it entails?

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- 10 Have you looked at legal implications (e.g. the requirement to have indemnity insurance if you are giving advice, insurance cover for injury to volunteers or clients on the premises, or implications if you use people to drive vehicles)?

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- 11 What about confidentiality (e.g. on listening or counselling projects)?

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- 12 What about safety (e.g. notably minibuses, parent/toddler's group, residential, or sport activities)?

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# QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU START

## THE QUESTIONS CONTINUED

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- 13** What special problems might volunteers face (like safety or health risks, advice liability or making home visits)?
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- 14** Volunteers bring new dimensions, new skills and enthusiasm. Can your congregation and your project cope with change ... with non-believers... with those of different religious traditions?
- 
- 15** Have you allocated staff time or a trustee or leader to manage volunteers? Have they had appropriate training?
- 
- 16** Will you have someone responsible for ensuring that volunteers are trained properly?
- 
- 17** Have you estimated the staff time or the time of your trustees, priest/ minister required to manage volunteers?
- 
- 18** Have you space for volunteers and sufficient extra equipment?
- 
- 19** How will those who you serve, users, members, the local community, etc. react to the involvement of volunteers? Have you asked them?
- 
- 20** How will your funders react to the involvement of volunteers? Have you checked with them?
- 
- 21** Do you need specialist advice (e.g. Dioceses, Associations, Volunteer Centre, or Council for Voluntary Service or specialist agencies)?
- 
- 22** Is involving volunteers just seen as a way to recruit members?
- 
- 23** Do you want volunteers simply to save money on paid posts?
- 
- 24** Are you starting a project with short-term funding? What happens when funding ends, when users/clients/community may have become used to volunteers' involvement and expect it to continue?
- 
- 25** Will ministers, leaders, members, not directly involved in the project interfere inappropriately, which could adversely affect volunteers?
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# VOLUNTEER POLICY – KEY POINTS

The starting point when developing any new work that involves volunteers is your volunteer policy. It is a document that outlines why and how you plan to include volunteers. Producing a volunteer policy offers the opportunity to think about why you want to involve volunteers and what they can expect from your project.

It is important that you discuss what goes into it with existing members/those actively involved within your project to ensure everyone is clear about the aims and practicalities of the project. If the project is based in the church or church hall then you may need to involve the wider leadership so that everyone is clear about roles, responsibilities and boundaries.

What goes into a volunteer policy will vary for different projects. You should consider including the following headings. More detailed information to help you think about these sections can be found later in this document.

- Introduction / Aims of the project
- Ethos
- Recruitment, screening and selection
- Volunteer roles and responsibilities
- Expenses
- Induction and Training
- Supporting and Supervising Volunteers
- Insurance and Health and Safety
- Equal Opportunities
- Confidentiality



For some of these sections you may decide to refer to other policies e.g. Health and Safety Policy, but you should still look to include a summary in the volunteer policy. The Policy should be regularly reviewed in consultation with volunteers, staff and trustees.

An outline is produced on the next page. This **should not** simply be cut and pasted into your set of policies, but reviewed and adapted.

Many projects also create a Volunteer Agreement. This is a document given to volunteers that clearly explains what is expected of them and how they can expect to be treated. More information can be found at:

<http://www.volunteering.org.uk/component/gpb/policiesandagreements>

# A MODEL VOLUNTEER POLICY

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

*All volunteers operate within the context of our Equal Opportunities Policy for which they will receive appropriate support and training.*

## **MANAGEMENT, SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION**

*We demonstrate our commitment by having someone to manage our volunteers. There will be a clear process of assessing the performance of volunteers and offering support in training and personal development.*

## **ADEQUATE WRITTEN INFORMATION**

*Information relevant to volunteers will be contained in a handbook. The Handbook will be revised and updated in consultation with our volunteers.*

## **INSURANCE, HEALTH AND SAFETY**

*Volunteers are covered by our insurance policies and reimbursed if costs are incurred. Volunteers will be trained/updated on Health and Safety.*

## **EXPENSES**

*Volunteers will be entitled to reimbursement of travel and other legitimate out of pocket expenses at rates reviewed annually.*

## **PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING**

*Volunteers are vital to the delivery of the service and thus will be involved in the decision-making processes of the project. However, only promise what you plan to deliver.*

## **TRAINING**

*Volunteers must receive sufficient training to fulfil their role, for the benefit of both the project and the volunteer. They should be strongly encouraged to take further training appropriate for their roles.*

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

*All partners are bound by the Confidentiality Agreement. This applies to clients, our work methods and colleagues (volunteers, staff and trustees).*

## **PARTNERSHIP**

*We are committed to partnership with our volunteers. In return we expect them to respect our ethos as a Christian inspired project.*

# COSTING A VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

## THINK CAREFULLY

It's important to appreciate that although volunteers give their time for free, there are costs involved in a volunteering project, so here are some pointers:

## SETUP COSTS

- Will you need additional furniture, e.g. desks, chairs, etc?
- Will you need more equipment (e.g. computers, phone-lines, etc)?
- You will probably need more staff time/trustee or management committee input in the initial stages to get things started.
- Printing and advertising costs must be allowed for (e.g. simple posters or adverts in the local press).



## RUNNING COSTS

- Do assume that all volunteers need reimbursement of expenses.
- Do not overlook the costs of insuring volunteers.
- Think about the cost of training volunteers and consider in-service training and training on new developments, changes in legislation, etc.
- Consider who will manage and support the volunteers and what this will cost your project.

Ensure that you have budgeted for all aspects of the programme. If your project is unable to meet the costs you may be able to apply for funding, although it is important to consider the implications of involving external funding.

A good starting point for finding potential funders is your local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) also known by various other titles including Council for Voluntary Action, or your Rural Community Council (RCC). Your Volunteer Centre will be able to give guidance on training specific to volunteering.

In addition key bodies in your denomination at regional and national level may be able to help.



## BACKGROUND

It may seem insulting to place cash value on volunteers but it is an item to include in reports, etc. In kind contributions of all types are regarded as significant by many funders.

## FLAT RATE SUMS

Use a simple rate of £11.09 per hour as the value of every volunteer to your project. This is the rate used by most local councils in June 2012. It soon adds up! So: 10 people giving 3 hours a week to help in a luncheon club for 50 weeks a year is a subsidy of £16,635.

## EQUIVALENT RATE SUMS

If you have the resources then you could estimate the costs of each type of volunteer within your project. Paid counsellors, solicitors offering free legal advice, volunteer plumbers or drivers all have going rates for the job. This is a method of working which relates well to statutory bodies and can give a real and highly cost effective impression of a project.

## FULL TIME EQUIVALENTS

Another method of calculating the contribution of your volunteers is by comparing the number of hours they do relative to the number of hours done by full-time paid workers. If, overall, your volunteer group contributes a lot of hours compared to your full-time paid group, then this would show to funders just how big your volunteers' contribution is.

In calculating the full-time equivalent of your volunteers, remember that staff have holidays (normally at least 20 days each year) statutory and concessionary days (normally at least 10 days a year). Many organisations have longer than this so just base it on your figures. There are normally 260 working days in a year but with these holidays and concessionary days this is reduced to a maximum of 230, possibly even 220.

### Ground rules:

*Say you have a team of ten volunteers organising a luncheon club for the elderly – it runs three days each week for five hours.*



*So the total number of hours per week of the team of volunteers is 3 (days a week) x 5 (hours per session) x 10 (volunteers) = 150 hours.*

*The luncheon club operates for 40 weeks a year. So the total number of hours covered by volunteers is 150 x 40 = 6000.*

*You have one paid member of staff – a Centre Manager who works a 37.5 hour week (7.5 hours on an average day), and who has 25 days holiday plus Bank Holidays, the period between Christmas and New Year, and an extra day at Easter. These bank holidays bring the total holiday amount up to 35 days. So in reality she works 225 days a year. The number of hours she works is 225 days x 7.5 hours a day, which equals 1687.5 hours a year.*

*In conclusion, the volunteers at the centre give 6000 hours a year and the manager gives 1687.5 hours a year, so the volunteers equate to 3.55 full-time members of staff.*

## DESCRIPTIVE METHOD

Volunteers enable you to diversify the work force and support/target new client groups. You will have examples, stories and numbers to put into Annual Reports. Another method is to list the volunteers and the time they give, for example, a solicitor who runs an advice session 3 hours a week, a chef spending 12 hours a week cooking lunches.

## MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE/TRUSTEES

Estimate the contribution – the length of meetings, time spent reading/preparing/on the phone for them.

## GOOD NEWS SPREADS

Most volunteers come by word of mouth. How often do the members of the women's group get helpers from other places of worship or their neighbours, who are impressed by the community outreach of the church?

This is obviously easier when you have a project to enthuse about rather than one that has not got off the ground yet.

Spreading good news through word of mouth is particularly useful for getting short-term volunteers. However, the sources listed below largely refer to finding long-term volunteers.

The danger of relying only on word of mouth recruitment is that you will be unlikely to involve volunteers from different backgrounds, which can limit the development of your project and contribute to a perception as *not for me or too churchy* in potential volunteers.

## IF YOU ALREADY INVOLVE VOLUNTEERS THEN USE YOUR CURRENT TEAM!

Ask your present volunteers if they can approach anyone who might help. This can be a particularly good way to get short-term volunteers or helpers for fund-raising events as friends and family will help on a one-off basis quite often!

## PROFESSIONAL HELP

Your Volunteer Centre or Council for Voluntary Service/ Voluntary Action/Rural Community Council may organise training courses on publicity – their addresses should be in your local telephone directory – join them, go on their mailing list and attend their events – you will benefit!

## YOUR LOCAL FREEBIE

The local free newspapers are helpful and approachable, particularly if your volunteer needs could link to something which is photogenic, and of local interest. You may want to tell them about your project and your project's other activities regularly, so consider having a press contact.



## LOCAL ADVERTISING

Supermarkets have community notice-boards, as do neighbouring churches, community centres, schools, leisure centres, libraries, newsagents, shops or garages. Change adverts and updates regularly. Change posters regularly, especially if dog-eared or covered in graffiti.

These are very useful sources of recruitment if you want local volunteers. They may be a rich source for one-off events like fun runs or fetes. Remember to have interesting posters. You could put a sign in your windows. Considering selling it as an opportunity to do something specific to help others (e.g. *"Interested in youth work?"*), rather than a general plea for volunteers.

## PRESS RELEASES

Producing press releases and building links with the media has spin offs. Some projects pay to advertise in the local press or even the *Guardian*. Keep the message simple. Get someone who is not too involved to check your promotional literature to see that it is clear and free of jargon. Elders, Synod, etc. may be clear to you but clear as mud to others.

When recruiting for genuine emergencies, people will respond. But this will not be the case if you have not put in the time to plan!

*"The Church is the only organisation which exists for those outside itself".*

*Archbishop William Temple*

## LIKELY PLACES TO RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS

Research indicates that most volunteers still come by word of mouth – if you treat volunteers well they really will attract others!

But here is a very long list of other ideas – you may have more to add. Indeed it could be a fun exercise to brainstorm with colleagues and see how many of these and others you can identify yourselves. There is a great deal of overlap but sometimes people can overlook the obvious. So here goes:

- Churches nearby or those in your denomination (Deanery, Circuit, etc)
- Wider decision making bodies serving your denomination like Dioceses, Association as well as regional interchurch bodies
- Your local Volunteer Centre
- Religious publications (regional or national) notably for unusual projects or projects needing volunteers with specific skills
- Church Secondary Schools, Sixth Form Colleges and University Colleges where you may be able to forge links with the chaplain, and staff responsible for pastoral work or religious education. Many universities actively encourage students to volunteer and have systems you can plug into, especially if you are offering useful course-related experience.
- Local secondary schools, Student Community Action Groups at Colleges and Universities and Christian societies of students
- Community centres, youth clubs/centres and tenants' halls
- Pre-retirement courses
- Building links with local businesses and with bodies like Business in the Community (BITC) who may know of companies who want to assist
- Clinics and doctors' surgeries
- Job Centres, Job Clubs, rehabilitation centres, etc.
- Lions, Rotary Clubs, Soroptimists, Rotaract, etc.
- Uniformed youth groups, notably for short term or one off activities
- Libraries, council offices, police stations, etc
- Local radio and, where you have it, local community television (most will have staff who specialise in community affairs and in religion)
- Relevant Specialist bodies, self help groups and professional agencies
- Post offices, garages, supermarkets and corner shops
- Sporting and other clubs (often keen to support local charities)
- Advice and information organisations like Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)
- Talks to specialist/relevant audiences, especially if you need a specialist
- Exhibitions either static in a library or shop or mobile for a club/school
- Leaflets – for wide circulation, or customised for different audiences
- New technology like a website (keep it updated and interesting) and PowerPoint displays (with little text and lots of photos!)
- Materials in different languages, particularly when members of your church may have a first language other than English (use volunteers who speak community languages to support the work in their communities)
- Open days at your centre or project
- Freebies who may write an article or publish a picture or letter that you send them (pictures of interesting events are really useful)
- Stunts like floats
- Delivering leaflets in the neighbourhood where you are based
- Circulate leaflets to your neighbouring churches, synagogues, etc.

### REASONABLE RESTRICTIONS

Potential volunteers must not be rejected due to non-relevant criminal convictions, mental health problems or other disabilities. Your policy should be clear to all involved and explained when recruiting.

Arguments like *other church members or other volunteers might not like it* are unacceptable – such attitudes must be challenged. Equal Opportunities training may be needed.

Ex-offenders often want to help prevent others committing crime and make excellent volunteers. The same applies to ex-drug addicts and people who have had mental health problems. Robust and just risk assessments should be devised for their engagement.

There are a number of instances where restrictions are justified:

- **Ethnicity:** Where members of a particular ethnic group are needed for the work.
- **Self-help groups:** Where membership is restricted to those with a certain disability or a shared experience (e.g. widows, or ex-drug addicts).
- **Christian outreach projects:** We have a section on this.
- **Age restrictions:** Where these may be laid down by law.
- **Age Requirements:** Youth projects may only want people in a certain age range e.g. people over retirement age to work on an advocacy project for and with retired people.
- **Driving Insurance Restrictions:** Most insurance companies require volunteer drivers to hold clean licences and be aged between 25 and 75 (some Companies cover drivers under 25 notably for student or youth projects), but premiums may be higher.

You may be able to get senior citizens who are drivers already with cover if they join RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme of Community Service Volunteers). Their address is: 237 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9NJ (Tel: 020 7643 1385). [www.csv-rsvp.org.uk](http://www.csv-rsvp.org.uk)

- **Finance and Legal Restrictions:** For example, Credit Union directors, trustees/directors of companies may not be undischarged bankrupts or have committed certain offences of a financial nature. **Remember** ex-offenders who have committed such offences can be involved as ordinary volunteers, and supporting /empowering them may assist in rehabilitation and personal development.
- **Other Criminal Activity:** These would depend on the project. This relates to the section on the Criminal Records Bureau. Here, specialist advice may be needed. Most denominations at Association/Diocesan type levels have people responsible for safeguarding, who can give advice and may be willing to oversee CRB checking your volunteers (a charge may apply).
- **Qualifications or training:** These are sometimes required, although this is unlikely to be the case for the vast majority of volunteering roles. Literacy and numeracy difficulties may be an issue, but check that this is really required (with proper supervision is it essential on practical projects?). Interpreting programmes will search for people with particular language skills (though this may be qualifications, training or experience).
- **Health restrictions:** These may apply in certain cases but explore thoroughly that this is the case with the potential volunteer. Try to include people with specific needs and take expert advice if necessary. When discussing roles and responsibilities with potential volunteers these issues should be explored openly and positively.
- **Gender:** Women's refuges are entitled to recruit females. Single-sex sports or youth groups may want volunteers of the same gender. For some ethnic and faith communities it is critical that visitors are of the same gender where there is close contact on home visits, teaching and other projects.
- **Experience:** You may need those with genuine experience – for instance, disability, parenting, bereavement or mountaineering.
- **Geographical:** Some community-based projects may be seeking local volunteers, not just to save money but because this is critical to their work.

## B. PRE SELECTION

### BACKGROUND

Information, application forms or a pack could be sent out beforehand. This may reduce pressure on certain people at an early stage, allowing them to opt out. However it can also appear overly bureaucratic and be off-putting to people if too much information is included. So think carefully.

How you approach this depends on the project. Thus detailed documentation is more appropriate, say, for advice, counselling or caring groups. For others you may consider completing forms as part of an initial face to face discussion; this is recommended where possible, as it removes one of the barriers to involvement.

Remember that most people want personal contact with a project before they start to complete paperwork.

For some specialist projects, application forms may be completed and references taken up, and CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) or other checks must be made before the potential volunteer visits your project – some agencies have informal interviews.

Other pre-selection ideas include open days, DVDs, presentations, or tours of your premises. **Remember** to involve existing volunteers.

**Remember** that thoroughness is vital when people are involved in working with children and vulnerable adults.

Once somebody has expressed an interest in your project it is usual to invite them to meet with you to discuss the volunteer role. This is often referred to as the interview, although it is important to remember this is not the same as the selection process for a paid position.

Remember you are not selecting the best candidate for a single position but assessing the suitability of each individual to contribute to your project. It is also a chance for the volunteer to make sure the role is right for them; this should not be an overly formal process.

### KEY AREAS TO CONSIDER

You may want to cover the following:-

- 1** Equal Opportunities must be explored carefully. Ensure commitment is demonstrated and interviewees do not have pre-conceived ideas.
- 2** The importance of confidentiality must be explored. Stress that the information given by potential volunteers is confidential.
- 3** Discover how they heard about you. This helps to put them at ease.
- 4** If the role is not core to your activity, then check whether they are more concerned about working with you or particular types of work.
- 5** Explore weaknesses and strengths positively – to identify support/training is needed.
- 6** What is the person's availability (hours, days, short-term, long-term, regular days and times, flexibility)? Is this what you need?
- 7** What is their knowledge of the client group? How realistic is it?
- 8** Do they understand and respect your religious ethos?
- 9** Stress your obligation to support, train and help volunteers. Explain about induction, trial periods, etc.
- 10** When tricky questions are asked by interviewees, say you will check and let them know!
- 11** If you are running a community project – how local do you want your volunteers to be?
- 12** What are their motivations: Helping others? Expertise to use? Lonely, unemployed or bored? Suggested by friend or colleague? Gaining new skills? Previous experience? Religious commitment?
- 13** What are their negative motivations? Uncompromising/insensitive views? On a course? Want to work on their terms? Inappropriate or naive? Unable or unwilling to listen? Want to convert?
- 14** Give them a chance to ask questions and opt out. This can be facilitated by a further interview, induction training, etc. See if they have concerns, questions or comments.
- 15** Give them a feel for the project by a tour and meeting volunteers.



## C. TAKING UP REFERENCES / TRIAL PERIOD

References are a useful way of determining suitability of volunteers, although some people will struggle to find two referees. People who have committed offences or have a disability are normally open about it, particularly where you need to know. Often they have experienced rejection and are nervous; be sensitive and supportive.

Trial periods are very useful for both volunteer and project to determine if a “match” is suitable. It is an inclusive and supportive way to try to involve those who perhaps cannot provide references. It could include:

- people who have been out of work for a long period
- people who are unable to work
- people with long-term mental or physical health problems
- refugees/asylum seekers who may have a range of professional expertise, experience and language skills which may be invaluable but for whom paid work is not always permitted

There is a danger in making assumptions – give potential volunteers a chance! However, do this in a controlled way that protects both them and your organisation from harm and embarrassment. **Remember** face to face discussion is better than filling in a form.



### HAMILTON WENTWORTH CATHOLIC SCHOOL ONTARIO'S PRAYER

*Dear God, Your will is that we may be one.*

*We thank you that you call us into communion with you and each other.*

*Your generosity and mercy are always taking us by surprise.*

*We bless you for the vision of inclusion, solidarity and compassion which opens our minds, widens our sympathies, and enlarges our hearts.*

*We commend to your gracious care all those whom it would be easy for us to forget – the homeless and the hungry, the addicted and the lost, abandoned people and hurting children.*

*We thank you for the imagination and generosity of those who minister out of love and compassion to those who are most in need.*

*Strengthen us and give us togetherness to serve the needy, the rejected, and the forgotten.*

*Confront our indifference, break down our barriers, and surprise us with joy. Dear Christ, be with us in this suffering yet glorious world*

*Amen.*

# SCREENING AND THE CRIMINAL RECORDS BUREAU (CRB)

Churches and Christian projects have a duty to ensure that children and Vulnerable Adults are safe and that there is no possibility of them being abused.

Volunteers involved on a project need to have had the appropriate training, supervision and should understand the mechanisms to ensure that no false allegations can be made against them.

At the moment the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) run searches on volunteers to check for past convictions. It is a useful tool to help you screen volunteers to protect others involved in the project. However remember that the system is not foolproof and a CRB check alone is not sufficient to protect children and vulnerable adults. It is a small part of a screening and ongoing monitoring process. It is better, where possible to set up the project so that no volunteer is left alone and given unsupervised contact.

There were plans for a new vetting and barring scheme that had been created by the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) to tighten up the CRB checks required for volunteers, which meant that organisations were now under an increased duty to disclose any information received about a volunteer to the scheme, even if the volunteer had left (see below).

However, the requirement to have volunteers who applied to be involved in certain activities to become registered members of the vetting and barring scheme has now been put on hold due to a government review.

The redefined activities and contact criteria that a volunteer has with a vulnerable group has also been put on hold and there will be key changes happening this year

These changes will include:

- maintaining a barring function
- abolishing registration and monitoring requirements
- redefining the scope of 'regulated activities'
- abolishing 'controlled activities'

Therefore until the new changes come into force any activity defined as a 'regulated activity' will still need to be checked A 'regulated activity' (known as a 'regulated position') include roles that involve:

- Contact with children and/or vulnerable adults; and is of *specified nature* (this includes teaching, training, care, supervision, advice, treatment or transport); and takes place "frequently"\* , "intensively"\* or "overnight" \*<sup>1</sup>.
- Contact with children and/or vulnerable adults and is in a "specified place" e.g. a school; and takes place "frequently"\* or "intensively".
- Fostering and childcare
- Certain positions, e.g. school governor.

Therefore if a volunteer has frequent contact with either children or vulnerable adults (as described above) then they will need to have a CRB check but ***there is no longer a requirement for those working or volunteering with vulnerable groups to register with the ISA.***

As there has also been an expansion on the type of role that needs to be CRB checked, you may have to review roles that did not require CRB checks before because the volunteer did not have unsupervised access to the service users. However do not blanket CRB check all roles automatically as there are penalties for inappropriate CRB checks, and it is not good practice to be unnecessarily intrusive.

A new single, new non-departmental public body will be created called the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The planned operational date for the DBS is November 2012.

Until the Protection of Freedoms Bill receives royal assent and decisions are made on when specific measures are implemented, the safeguarding regulations introduced in October 2009 that will continue to apply, including:

- a person who is barred by the ISA from working with children or vulnerable adults will be breaking the law if they work or volunteer, or try to work or volunteer with those groups

<sup>1</sup> "Intensively" means that the regulated activity takes place on 3 or more days in a 30-day period and "Frequently" means the activity takes place once a month or more.

## SCREENING AND THE CRIMINAL RECORDS BUREAU (CRB)

- an organisation that knowingly employs a barred individual to work with children or vulnerable adults will also be breaking the law
- if your organisation works with children or vulnerable adults and you dismiss a member of staff or a volunteer because they have harmed a child or vulnerable adult, or you would have done so if they had not left, you must refer this information to the ISA

The CRB will continue to be responsible for the disclosure of criminal records and the Independent Safeguarding Authority for the barring function.

If a volunteer role does require CRB/ISA checks they are offered free for volunteers. For projects requiring less than 100 checks a year you apply for the check through an umbrella body; these are bodies registered with the CRB to administer the process.

The CRB website maintains a database of umbrella bodies. Although checks are free for volunteers some umbrella bodies may charge you a small administrative fee for each check.

Many religious umbrella bodies like Anglican and Roman Catholic Dioceses will process CRB applications for their churches and projects.

All the major denominations have detailed guidelines covering this area and you should check that you conform to these. In addition you should be aware of the procedures in place to cover your local authority.

Remember that by undertaking CRB checks you have a duty to keep the information confidential. You must also ensure that you have a transparent policy outlining what convictions you consider would prevent an individual volunteering with you. It is not acceptable to reject a volunteer because of an irrelevant conviction.

An overview of issues relating to CRB checks can be found at:

<http://www.volunteering.org.uk>

More detailed information can be found at:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/agencies-public-bodies/crb>



### THE DECISION TO REIMBURSE EXPENSES

Churches and Christian projects wishing to involve volunteers need to reflect carefully on this.

If you do not pay expenses then you should be clear from the outset.

If you are only recruiting local volunteers then it is often reasonable not to pay travel expenses, but you may wish to make exceptions for anyone who needs to use a taxi, e.g. because of a physical disability or sensory impairment or for personal safety reasons.

Work through the issues with the Trustees/ Management Committee/ Elders/PCC so that everyone is clear about what to say to volunteers and ensure that the policy is applied to all volunteers.

You may decide that you cannot reimburse expenses or that you will only refund travel at public transport rates – just be clear, consistent and cost it!

### WHAT YOU CAN REIMBURSE

Costing a volunteer programme may increase your chances of getting funded by trusts or statutory agencies as they will see that you have acted professionally. Travel is covered in the next section.

Other general expenses which can be reimbursed:

- **Responsibilities for caring:** You can reimburse/ contribute to any additional costs that volunteers incur (if they need say, a childminder while they do their volunteering or someone to care for an infirm relative).
- **Home expenses:** If a volunteer uses their home for meetings, supplies refreshments, uses their telephone, etc. then you can reimburse these costs.
- **Subsistence:** If volunteers are with you all day then it is acceptable to supply them with lunch or give them a reasonable contribution towards buying some. We suggest that you should offer all volunteers free tea, coffee, biscuits, etc. Obviously, if you run luncheon clubs or volunteers help at meetings with meals, it is acceptable to give them a free meal.



- **Protective clothing:** Outdoor, removal, and DIY projects should supply protective clothing (rainwear, boots, etc.) or reimburse volunteers who buy their own.
- **Uniforms:** Some practical and caring projects require volunteers to wear uniforms. These should be provided by the project.
- **Cleaning:** If volunteers have to wear protective clothing or uniforms then the project should either have them cleaned, or pay volunteers a contribution to cleaning.
- **Going to conferences and meetings:** If a volunteer represents you at a conference then you should pay all their travel, accommodation and registration fees. If it is a long journey then you should contribute towards subsistence (coffee and a sandwich on the train are expensive if you are on benefits!).
- **Training:** If you want a volunteer to undertake training to enhance their performance with your project then you should consider paying for the course, the books, travel and related costs (like mailing assignments). Sending volunteers on relevant training not only helps with their personal development but also increases the quality of volunteers. It may be that you could get people to lead training based at your Centre, which can end up being cheaper than going elsewhere.



## EXPENSES — GENERAL

However, such training must be relevant to the tasks undertaken as otherwise it could be defined as *payment in kind*.

- **Emergencies and odd occurrences:** Little sums mount up, particularly if the volunteer is on benefits. For example if a volunteer rips their clothes on your equipment or one of your pens leak, then you can pay for a new garment or reimburse for a dry-cleaning bill.
- **Social events:** It is a legitimate expense to pay for your volunteers to attend events like staff parties, etc.
- **Gifts:** A box of chocolates at New Year or Christmas or a gift on their Birthday is one thing, but do not give volunteers cash presents. Small gifts for long service, special occasions, etc. would be fine too, but not gifts which amount to an honorarium.

It affects the concept of volunteering and it can affect those on benefits.



### FIVE TIPS

Consider these carefully:

- 1 Do not try to force unemployed volunteers to buy tickets for events, etc. They probably do not have spare cash and can be acutely embarrassed. Church projects for which fundraising initiatives come as second nature often overlook this.
- 2 Assume that the refund of expenses for your volunteers is the norm. Remember if people claim expenses and wish to donate it back to a charity then the charity can claim Gift Aid.
- 3 Always make it a simple and clear process for claiming expenses.
- 4 Pay expenses regularly (daily or weekly) as volunteers on low income need the money back quickly.
- 5 Never make ex-gratia payments or give honoraria – this can land you and volunteers with tax, benefit, or National Insurance problems, as well as implying that a volunteer is actually an employee.

### VOLUNTEERING — SOME TOP FACTS

- *94% of employees who volunteered to learn new skills had benefited either by getting their first job, improving their salary or being promoted. (Timebank)*
- *73% of employers would employ a candidate with volunteering experience over one without (Timebank)*
- *Employers see volunteering as a great way to improve team working skills, self-confidence, and communication (v)*
- *15% of all volunteers say volunteering had led them to eat less chocolate (ICM Research)*



## TRAVEL BY PRIVATE TRANSPORT

**General:** You should reimburse volunteer expenses at agreed rates. These should be based on mileage rates, not ex-gratia payments per day or per journey. The Inland Revenue defines the maximum rates payable. If you pay above these rates then the volunteer becomes liable for tax.

Do not pay above Inland Revenue rates. The same rate of travel expenses can be applied to volunteers and staff. This is simple and fair.

Offer mileage to users of motor bikes and pedal bikes! They need helmets and must be properly insured. They are cheaper and indicate an environmental conscience, which Christian projects would want to support.

**Insurance:** If the volunteer is required to transport people, make home visiting, or move goods, then this may mean an extra premium. It is legitimate for the host project to refund this.

It is advisable for volunteers to inform their insurance companies that they volunteer and use their vehicle to travel to/from the project. It should not mean paying an additional premium, but it may. The insurance policy may be invalidated if you do not tell the company.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND TAXIS

**Taxi:** The host project may sanction the use of taxis perhaps when a volunteer works in the evening or has a disability.

**Bus and Train:** Reimbursement is normal. If volunteers use a travel pass then payment at a negotiated level for each day is reasonable.

Remember: reimbursement means that you can only pay when volunteers attend. You should not reimburse travel expenses as ex-gratia payments (e.g. all volunteers get £2 per day). Travel expenses must be justified.

You may be asked to account for this. So if someone walks down the road to volunteer then there is no cost! Volunteers may be questioned over expenses for tax or benefits. Receipts, tickets or photocopying a travel pass should cover this. It will help volunteers and your internal auditing.

Information on mileage rates available from the HM Revenue and Custom's website at: <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/paye/rates-thresholds.htm#8>



# PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIP



## INTRODUCTION

It is vital that your volunteers feel respected, needed, and able to participate. Trust and openness are key elements with a policy and clear guidelines for volunteers (an agreement and an information file).

## CONSULTATION

There is sometimes a tendency to ignore or even disparage volunteers. Comments like, *they are only volunteers*, are heard. In many projects volunteers have greater continuity than staff! This is certainly the case with the many luncheon clubs run by local churches who usually draw on their women's groups, while church-based uniform organisations are the major youth/children's work providers in some areas!

Independent church projects should allocate places for volunteers on the management committees. Many funders, including the Big Lottery Fund, will look for this in your grant applications. We hope that you will do it because you want to, not just because funders expect it.

Consultation should form a central part of volunteers' meetings, support/ supervision sessions, and in formal processes (e.g. major reorganisation).

Consultation is not just about courtesy. It recognises that volunteers have skills and a valid contribution to make to the decision-making processes. Remember your volunteers who are not church-goers, or come from another religious community or background – avoid jargon.

## PARTICIPATION

If your project is a separate charity established by a Trust Deed, Constitution or Memorandum and Articles, then volunteer and community representation should be written in to the Trustees' membership.

Volunteer representatives have a duty to report back to volunteers and to find out opinions of your volunteers on major issues affecting your work.

When you are revising your Constitution/Articles/ Deed then we suggest that you include representatives of your volunteers on the management committee. Many funders will expect you to have an open and participative management structure, which should include your volunteers, users, the local community and others. Churches believe in participation and helping people fulfil their potential, so you should want to involve your volunteers – don't just do it for funding!

## BACKGROUND – A BASIS FOR INVOLVEMENT AND TRUST

Confidentiality affects all aspects of volunteer management. It does not just relate to information shared about a client! Problems arise notably:

- Personal information on volunteers is wrongly seen as public. Often unnecessary detail about volunteers' personal lives are widely shared among all the staff or members of the church. All volunteers have a right to privacy.
- Projects sometimes do not tell volunteers vital information (e.g. volunteer receptionists need to know that a client who regularly visits your centre has been violent when they were not on duty). Remember the old phrase, *a need to know basis*?
- Volunteers are unsure to whom they can share and divulge confidential information. Counselling, listening, and advice projects often have well developed guidelines on this.
- Clergy and members of management committees often do not understand boundaries – they have no right to be told about confidential information just because of a position that they hold.
- The absence of clear guidelines in relation to safeguarding issues affecting vulnerable adults and children.





## TEN GUIDELINES ON CONFIDENTIALITY

- 1** Volunteers need to be clear what amount of information they can share about their volunteering with friends and family. It is particularly important that members of church working on the project do not share confidential information on clients with other members from the congregation.
- 2** Information on clients is normally confidential to the agency and often to the adviser (volunteer or staff) working with them.
- 3** Where volunteers have a caseload then they should have all the information available to them which is available to your paid staff.
- 4** If a volunteer or staff member shares a caseload then it must be clear to the client that the counsellor/adviser has to share all information with colleagues.
- 5** Situations when volunteers or staff can reveal personal information (home address, etc.) need to be clear for their self-protection.
- 6** Circumstances, if any, under which staff or volunteers may remove confidential information from the office must be clear.
- 7** Staff and volunteers should regard information gained about colleagues in the course of their activities as confidential.
- 8** Staff and volunteers should only reveal information to clients about colleagues when the person affected knows and it is essential.
- 9** Application forms and information on volunteers should be kept in a secure place (locked filing cabinet or using password protected files).
- 10** Volunteers should know who has access to the information on them and they should be able to see the personal files that the project keeps on them.

## SUGGESTED CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I will maintain strict confidentiality in my work. This relates to:

- revealing and discussing information about the clients and colleagues;
- discussing the internal workings of the project;
- removing confidential information without permission;





## BACKGROUND

So many of us talk of striving to be Equal Opportunities Employers/ Agencies! This can become a slogan with no substance.

Volunteers help you to demonstrate your commitment to equal opportunities by enabling you to recruit a wide range of participants (from minority ethnic communities, the gay community, under 25, etc.).

Remember – it is important to monitor your recruitment of volunteers not just the recruitment of staff!

## FINITE RESOURCES AND REALISTIC GOALS

All projects work with finite resources. There is a limit to any policy – training, recruitment, equal opportunities, opening times, etc. Ask:

- Do we represent the community we aim to serve?
- Do we listen to the community we try to serve?
- Does policy making involve all partners (staff, trustees, users, volunteers)?
- What are the financial implications of equal opportunities?

Funding may be available, e.g. if you need to adapt offices for disabled access, buy specialist equipment. Your local Council for Voluntary Service, Voluntary Action/ Rural Community Council will be able to help.

## EXCLUSIVE PRACTICES

Looking at volunteers, we are aware of several issues specifically:

- Projects that do not pay travel or related expenses
- Unnecessarily complex forms (are forms even needed?)
- Questions over criminal convictions which are unjustified
- Recruitment strategy that makes you look narrow and unwelcoming
- Ways of working and acting that exclude those who are not church members or closely associated, when you claimed to be inclusive.





## PRAYER, THOUGHT, AND REFLECTION AT THE START

Pray, discuss and reflect on the project you are undertaking. Reflect on the following questions and if the answer is no then you probably want to draw in volunteers from a range of communities:

- Is it specifically religious? Obviously this is perfectly acceptable, but make this clear and remember that statutory bodies and many trusts will not fund specifically religious or missionary activities. There are also trusts which fund specifically religious or missionary activities! Funders and the community may get angry if you are dishonest. To develop the family outreach of a Church with a youth evangelist is your right and an enriching experience key to your role, but do not try to package it as anything other than a mission-oriented initiative.
- Does your project require active members of your church?
- Do you feel that you must have members of your denomination with a specific interpretation of your scriptures or sacred writings/teachings (Anti-abortion, opposed to divorce, Anglo Catholics, Evangelical, etc)?

## REMEMBER THE FINANCIAL NEEDS OF VOLUNTEERS

Remember that lots of members of churches are poor or unemployed. Just because you want to recruit believers for your counselling service or youth project should not mean you do not pay expenses.

## OPENNESS IN LITERATURE AND RECRUITMENT

Be explicit in your literature about your religious base. This will probably attract people. However you will still need to sift them.

Seemingly religious people can be found amongst criminals and child abusers, so you must adopt careful sifting, monitoring and training policies.

You must ensure that volunteers from the congregation fulfil the same requirements as all other potential volunteers. Being an active member of a church does not make you a good listener, youth worker or counsellor!

If you run a professional Christian-inspired counselling, listening or advice project you must ensure that the training of Christians, who may come claiming to be experienced counsellors, is up to your standards. Your funders may also require that volunteers reach externally recognised standards and accreditation by a professional body.

## REMEMBER – YOU ARE LEGALLY LIABLE

You must maintain high standards no matter how small you are even if all you do is run a half-day club once a week. You have what is termed a, “duty of care”, for negligent acts of your volunteers, plus the need to protect volunteers and clients.

The information contained here is just an introduction and a warning! Consult your broker or your insurance company.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY – THE CORE LEGISLATION

### Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

You should have a copy of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, which states that you must write a Health and Safety policy. The act focuses on staff and employers – good practice would demand you treat volunteers as staff for this purpose.

Your premises must be safe, otherwise volunteers, staff or visitors can sue you. Remember, this is not just the worship centre, but any halls, outside buildings, churchyards, car parks – and do not forget home visiting, etc. If you share facilities then determine who is liable, and for what.

Never say, “*It will not happen to us*”, as small organisations like sports groups and community centres have been sued when unforeseen accidents occur.

### Occupiers Liability Act of 1957

Under the Occupiers Liability Act of 1957 you must ensure that your premises are safe to visitors. If you use/rent other premises, check who is responsible.

## SAFETY CHECKLIST

You must have a Health and Safety Policy, which includes reference to volunteers. The following should be carefully studied:

- All volunteers must have copies and understand your Health and Safety Policy! Breaches of it are very serious.
- Arrange fire drills at different days/times so all volunteers experience it.
- Ensure volunteers undergoing specialist tasks are given training (for example – lifting furniture, moving wheelchairs, dealing with drunk/disruptive callers).
- Make all comments on health and safety in writing to avoid misunderstandings
- Everyone must know where first aid box(es) are and who the first aiders are.

## SOURCES OF ADVICE

The act requires you to take reasonable care – this term is vague so be thorough and assume the worst!

There is an excellent source of advice namely the Health and Safety Executive. This provides an Information and Advice Line on 0845 345 0055. They produce useful free leaflets and have a publication ordering service on 01787 881165. You can buy the Acts mentioned from HMSO.

The Health and Safety Executive’s website has free guides and information: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/index.htm>. While these are aimed at small businesses they have relevant information for voluntary/ community organisations. You can download their leaflets on: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/leaflets.htm>

ROSPA has a document called Managing Occupational Road Risk in Voluntary Organisations. Although this is a pilot it does have some useful information in. Downloadable from: [http://www.rospa.com/roadsafety/info/voluntary\\_morr.pdf](http://www.rospa.com/roadsafety/info/voluntary_morr.pdf)

### PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE

This covers your project against claims arising from accidents to persons or damage to property. If you use other premises even if only for a half-day then you must check that they have cover.

### EMPLOYEE LIABILITY INSURANCE

You must have this if you employ staff – check where volunteers (perhaps students on placement or trainees on Government schemes) stand. You may be required to give detailed information on the types of volunteers that you involve, e.g. numbers, etc. It is recommended that you have the word ‘volunteers’ in the policy.

### PERSONAL ACCIDENT INSURANCE

This covers volunteers for injury from activities carried out on your behalf.

### PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY

This is important for advice and counselling organisations that end up giving bad advice to clients. Ensure it covers your volunteers – you must be seen to have taken “reasonable care”.

### SPECIALIST POLICIES

Many agencies require other specialist policies (taking your volunteers to help a youth group who are going on a skiing trip perhaps). Check policies cover volunteers at all venues for everything you ever do.

### CONSULT YOUR INSURERS

Scrutinise your policies and any changes that may have happened! If you change the way you operate then check it with them. It is important to determine whether or not you are covered for activities both on and off your premises. In general insurance companies will be helpful.

There are Church-inspired insurance companies who understand volunteering/ advising charities. In addition local Councils for Voluntary Service/Volunteer Centres or Rural Community Councils may advise.

Remember to tell them everything that is out of the ordinary e.g. if your youth group goes on an outward bound trip for the first time when their normal activity is an evening meeting in a hall.



## VEHICLES OWNED BY THE PROJECT

You must check restrictions on your insurance policy. Many state you cannot use people under 25 or over 75 years of age, or who require clean driving licences.

You may be able to get senior citizens who are drivers, covered, if they join RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme which is a part of Community Service Volunteers). Some Companies may cover those under 25 although this may require an extra premium. It is your duty to check this and see they fulfil the requirements of the policy.

## VEHICLES OWNED BY VOLUNTEERS: GETTING TO THE PROJECT

Volunteers should contact their insurers if they travel to their volunteering. This definitely should not involve an extra premium and may seem like an unnecessary precaution.

You could design a letter for your volunteers to send to their insurers explaining the situation. If a volunteer does have to pay an additional premium then the project can reimburse it as a legitimate expense. We stress that it is very unlikely.

## USING VEHICLES IN VOLUNTEERING

If volunteer use their own transport to help you (do not forget vans, motorbikes and pedal bikes here!) then you must see a copy of their licence and insurance.

If a volunteer drives for you, collecting for a charity shop, taking people to hospital, or delivering posters, then they should not pay an extra premium as it is not for profit – however volunteers must check.

There are policies by which you can protect no claims bonuses for volunteers. This is a reasonable expense for you to pay. If you have volunteers who travel in connection with their volunteering with you, by motor or pedal bicycles, then they must wear helmets. If a volunteer is involved in a crash then you could still be held liable so consider taking out a Contingent Liability Policy.

Mileage rates may be obtained from your Volunteer Centre or Council for Voluntary Service/Voluntary Action and they are at the HM Revenue and Customs website <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/paye/rates-thresholds.htm#8>.

The main website address is [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk).



## INTRODUCTION

All volunteers will need induction into your project – you can explain how, why and where you operate.

Not everyone needs training (e.g. cooks or solicitors) but they must know how you tick. Thorough induction coupled with targeted and appropriate training breeds good staff and good volunteers.

A Volunteers' Handbook is an ideal method to cover a lot of this information. You can use it as the base of an induction session for new volunteers. It could be just a few loose leaf sheets in a folder, which are easily revised and replaced rather than a booklet.

## INDUCTION – GETTING A FEEL OF YOUR PROJECT

Every project works differently; even moving from one scout group to another demands some induction, no matter how small.

Many projects have an induction programme common to all new volunteers, which ensures everyone is at the same level.

## INDUCTION PROGRAMMES

In an induction programme assume ignorance but explain why! Four areas to cover are:

### Introduction to your Ethos

You should have a leaflet or paper outlining what you do, your aims/objectives and if necessary, how you differ from similar projects/organisations in your field or area of activity.

This is vital if you have an overtly religious ethos. Be up-front about it and explain it. If done in an open and enthusiastic way it is a useful tool for sharing our faith. For example, catering at a hotel is different to helping at a luncheon club, and bereavement counselling is different to careers advice.

Explanation and discussion on your approach to equal opportunities will be important here. Volunteers with experience of a different type of agency, even in a similar field, may find a great contrast – often this may need to be emphasised!

### Introduction to your methods

Where you file, how you log phone calls, what resource books you use, are all important. This should be written down and explained to the volunteers – always explain that you may have to state the obvious!

For example, explain how to complete expense forms – you will have other examples. However you will have issues specific to your project, which you should include here.

### Introduction to rules, guidelines and the building

Show everyone where toilets, emergency exits, kettles, etc. are. In particular you should go through:

- 1 Health and Safety briefings – first aid procedures, fire drills, upkeep and tidiness. Consider when your fire drills are – will the volunteer be present during drills if you have them at certain times? You would need to go through it with them at another time!
- 2 Protection of children and vulnerable adults – If you are working with these groups, you will need to make your safeguarding policy clear to volunteers from the outset, as well as what to do if issues arise. Some information on child protection and safeguarding can be found here:

<http://www.ccpas.co.uk/documents/safe%20and%20secure.pdf>

<http://www.ccpas.co.uk/Documents/Help%20-%20work%20safeley.pdf>

### Introduction to your Users and your Community

If you recruit volunteers from outside your neighbourhood then give them information that is relevant – e.g. about the housing or ethnic composition for a housing project, or the number of elderly for a day centre.

Avoid religious jargon and abbreviations. It is bad practice, and not a helpful way for people to understand your work.

## UPDATING YOUR VOLUNTEERS

You will wish to update your volunteers on changes (new contact addresses, legislation, moving to new premises, etc.).

New regulations may come in affecting your client group e.g. the Disability Discrimination Act which needs mentioning but not training. Some ideas:

- A newsletter or regular letter to your volunteers (if you produce a congregational newsletter or magazine they may appreciate a copy, even if they are not regular worshippers)
- If you have a small team of volunteers then tell them individually or by phone, possibly supported by a letter
- Update them at Volunteers' Meetings, which are useful if held regularly
- Add relevant changes in updates to your manual – perhaps a loose leaf.

## IN SERVICE OR CORE TRAINING – PRINCIPLES

Look at your project. See whether there are core elements which apply to all new volunteers, and, might not be covered by an induction. Many may require updating through in-service training. Here are a few pointers, but you can probably expand the list for yourselves:

- Equal opportunities, so everyone should be on the same level
- Rights and responsibilities of volunteers
- Protection and safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults
- Health and Safety and first aid (be aware that any action or training on first aid can have insurance implications)

## TRAINING VOLUNTEERS

Many projects with substantial numbers of volunteers working alongside have their own training programmes. Some offer NVQs.

If you are starting a new project then we can suggest groups to contact for good practice models. It would be impossible in this short paper to go into detail about a precise training programme.

Your local Council for Voluntary Service, Rural Community Council or Volunteer Centre is a good starting point on specialist training.

### A PRAYER FOR HELPERS AT A SOUP KITCHEN IN THE USA

*With a thankful heart I will set this table.  
Today, O Lord, I serve you.*

*With a thankful heart I will prepare this food.  
Today, O Lord, I serve you.*

*With a thankful heart I will stir this pot.  
Today, O Lord, I serve you.*

*With a thankful heart I will bake this bread.  
Today, O Lord, I serve you.*

*With a thankful heart I will fill these glasses.  
Today, O Lord, I serve you.*

*With a thankful heart I will serve this meal.  
Today, O Lord, I serve you.*

*With a thankful heart I will clean this kitchen.  
Today, O Lord, I serve you.*

## BACKGROUND

When you recruit volunteers a host of different reasons are given for wanting to volunteer – to help people, as part of their religious commitment, as a member of your worshipping community, they support your aims, something to do, time on their hands, wanting to do something different, to brush up on skills, wanting to help the church, came with a friend, to develop new skills, to gain experience. Nearly every reason is valid!

Volunteering is increasingly seen as helpful for those on Jobseeker's Allowance. This is recognised in a leaflet from the Department of Work and Pensions called Volunteering while getting benefits.

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/dwp1023.pdf>

This information aims to complement it.

When volunteers do a substantial number of hours with you or undertake specific tasks, then you might encourage them to design personal action plans about what they intend to do in the future. Obviously most of what is envisaged here is for long-term volunteers.

Projects react in different ways to other types of help, which is not pure volunteering. So you may have students on placement from school, university or theological college, you may have trainees on a Government schemes like the Flexible New Deal. You need to determine appropriate ways for dealing with these different groups.

## IDEAS TO DEVELOP THE SKILLS OF YOUR VOLUNTEERS

### NVQs (National Vocational Qualification) and other training:

Training courses benefit users, staff and volunteers. You should pay for your volunteers' training.

Consider the possibility of getting your own training programme registered, or look for relevant courses at colleges, or with training agencies for volunteers.

Contact with your local Skills Funding Agency for help on this if appropriate – their address is available from your local Council for Voluntary Service/Voluntary Action or Volunteer Centre.

### Drawing attention to vacancies and training courses in the press or on the grapevine

A simple signposting activity, which all those responsible for volunteers could assist with. You should know your volunteers and their potential so look out for them. Buy relevant newspapers like the Liverpool Echo or Jobs NW. Have all your local freebies on display for your volunteers to look at job advertisements.

Remember specialist papers that are relevant to your specialist area of work or your church (like Community Care, Disability Now, Church Times, the Universe, etc.). Specialist papers and magazines are valuable background for volunteers to read anyway.

### Investing in Resources

If you have the resources, then buy copies of relevant periodicals, books, videos, CD ROMS, computer programmes, etc. which your volunteers can borrow to develop their skills, or even perhaps have group sessions.

Never overlook the skills that your volunteers possess, and get them to network with each other – informal methods of training are often as good as the highly structured ones!

## DISCOVERING FAITHFUL CAPITAL

*One of the most powerful gifts that faith-based organisations have to offer is that they are instructed to 'practise what they preach'.*

*A commitment to human flourishing and a vision of the good city can therefore never simply remain at the level of doctrine or abstract principles – it finds its expression in a myriad of locally based, grassroots activity.*

*"Faithful Cities" produced May 2006*

## INTRODUCTION

Supporting starts from the needs of the volunteer. Support can come from a variety of sources and in a variety of ways.

Projects should take a personal interest in their volunteers (if they phone in to apologise for absence due to illness, bereavement, or a new grandchild, ask how things are). Here, Christian projects tend to have a good track record. This builds links and can prevent crises developing.

## IDEAS FOR SUPPORT – GENERAL AREAS TO COVER

Those responsible for volunteers need to have clear systems stating when they are there to offer support. Some practical methods of support are:

- New volunteers can be buddied with established volunteers.
- Regular volunteer meetings can be held and here these could take place with/without staff/management committee present.
- Regular social events, parties, when volunteers get together on their own, or with staff, trustees etc.
- Offers from other staff or volunteers to help on specifics (like using a new database or piece of equipment saves time and embarrassment).
- Using a newsletter, emails, a website or a notice board as a support method and mention when something major has happened to a volunteer (a new baby, completed NVQS, etc.).
- Get volunteers to develop group support amongst themselves (telephone contact between admin workers, meetings of all the Counsellors on Wednesdays, or an email contact group).
- Certain types of volunteers may wish to get together to reflect on your project, e.g. perhaps all the black volunteers, or all those under 25. This can be a useful way of improving practice and making our equal opportunities claims really work.
- Access to external sources of support like counsellors may be required for volunteers undertaking certain types of delicate or traumatic work.
- If there are similar projects nearby then joint events with them could be planned, relating to many of the above.







## IDEAS FOR SUPPORT AND THE RELIGIOUS DIMENSION

Where volunteers who are not members of your church express interest in religion, then invite them to a major act of worship or religious event, and arrange for a member of the congregation to buddy them so they are not embarrassed.

Interest should be expressed at times of joy (like weddings and births) and at times of sadness (like death or serious illness), as this shows that your congregation/project really cares.

A special act of worship or religious event once a year could be arranged to celebrate the work of the project and its team of staff and volunteers.

Try to ensure that volunteers who are members of your church do not try to push religion down the throats of other volunteers, as this can be seen as negative, not supportive!

Where your volunteers are not members of your church, you need to ensure that cliques do not develop among your members, or even that a hierarchy of access to information and decision-making does not become apparent.

Often people of faith are happy to support the projects of other religious traditions, but remember to be aware

to their special dietary or worship requirements and that they need time off from their volunteering for their own religious festivals.

Clear guidelines need to exist between members/ leaders/trustees/ activities of the host community so that volunteers do not feel unwanted or intruders – this is particularly an issue when a project is based in or next to the worship centre.

### A QUOTATION FROM THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

*Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen, to loose the chains of injustice and untie the chords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?*

*Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter?*

*When you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away your own flesh and blood.*

**Isaiah 58:6-7**

# SUPERVISION OF YOUR VOLUNTEERS

## INTRODUCTION

Supervising starts from the needs of the project and is about managing volunteers.

## SUPERVISING — THE LEVEL REQUIRED

The level of supervision required may vary and will depend on:

- how often you see the volunteer personally
- how often you are in contact with them by telephone
- how long they have been with you (you may see new volunteers more frequently)
- what type of volunteering they do
- where they do the volunteering (e.g. for volunteers who might be based at home and involved in IT tasks)
- the type of case/activity (e.g. to counsel certain clients requires more supervision)
- how volunteers feel about the agency, colleagues or the role, which needs extra supervision
- the methods you use to supervise your staff undertaking similar roles
- when changes take place in the project, the volunteer's life or when the supervisor changes

## CONTACT WITH THE OFFICE, STAFF AND CHURCH MEMBERS

A designated member of staff/trustee should supervise volunteers but everyone involved should offer support when the need arises. Someone needs to be a reserve for volunteers when the normal contact is away.

It is vital to sensitize frontline staff responsible for reception, petty cash, etc. to the role volunteers play. Normally, administrative and reception staff are your ambassadors and may need training.

It is important that church members understand and appreciate the role of volunteers, particularly where a project is based in or by the church.

## CHECKLIST OF POINTS TO RAISE IN SUPERVISION

Always put the volunteer at their ease and select the venue carefully. Some issues emerge in volunteers' support sessions or trustees' meetings but better to have it all out in the open than festering.

You do not want to be like a barrack room lawyer, but you need to have manuals, role descriptions, etc. as you (both) may need to consult them.

Here is a proposed checklist – it may seem bureaucratic, but it is a base for consistency:

- Does the volunteer have issues that they wish to raise with the supervisor?
- How are relations with staff, volunteers, clients and management committee members?
- Are the communications systems within the project adequate?
- Are there practical problems emerging (e.g. expenses, health and safety, etc.)?
- Are there any policy issues over which the volunteer or supervisor has concerns?
- Would the volunteer benefit from any training to develop, refresh or enrich them?
- Are there comments on the way the agency operates (here, misunderstandings about the religious ethos might be covered when required)?
- Are there issues relating to the host church (often members of the congregation who are not directly involved in the project may involve themselves inappropriately)?
- Does the volunteer have any personal matters to raise?

## APPENDIX I – TRAINING AND PUBLICATIONS



### TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

You can get information on training for volunteer management from your Volunteer Centre or Council for Voluntary Service/Voluntary Action.

It may be that your local Volunteer Centre has written material or arranges training courses. And check whether your denomination at regional or national level may be able to offer training or support.

Volunteering England has information and a good practice website: <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/goodpractice/themes>



### PUBLICATIONS ON VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

Volunteering England will send you an updated list or you can browse the online catalogue on [www.volunteering.org.uk](http://www.volunteering.org.uk) by clicking on Managing Volunteers link and then publications on the left-hand side. Their address is: *Regent's Wharf, 8 All Saints St London, N1 9RL.*

There is a postage and packing charge of £2.95 for these publications.

We suggest the following:

- **Essential Volunteer Management** by Steve McCurley and Rick Lynch. Cost: £14.95. An American guide revised and adapted for UK use by the Directory of Social Change.
- **Managing Volunteers**, by Mark Rankin. Cost: £20. A detailed book with useful exercises. Ideal for the staff concerned to get their teeth into.
- **Recruiting Volunteers** (F Dyer and U Jost). Cost: £14.95. This includes practical advice and creative ideas to help you recruit the people with the skills that you need (from Volunteering England).
- **The Good Practice Guide** (Spiral bound). Cost: £12.50. Packed with information and advice about all aspects of working with volunteers (from Volunteering England).

You can also obtain "A guide to working with volunteers" in CD format for £5, as well as other volunteer resources from Volunteer Bristol:

<http://www.volunteerbristol.org.uk/organisations/resources#working>

### OTHER RESOURCES

#### Timebanking

<http://www.timebanking.org.uk/index.asp>

Time Banking UK is the national umbrella charity linking and supporting time banks across the country by providing inspiration, guidance and practical help. Time banks link people locally to share their time and skills. Everyone's time is equal: one hour of your time earns you one time credit to spend when you need. If you are thinking of starting a Time Bank in your area, this guide may be a good place to start.

#### Besom volunteer exchanges

<http://www.besom.com>

A besom provides a bridge between those who want to give time, money, things or skills and those who are in need. Local besoms operate across the country to enable people to volunteer to help their communities.

#### Volunteering with a criminal record

<http://www.backontrackmanchester.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Volunteering-with-a-criminal-record.pdf>

Useful guide for ex-offenders and projects hoping to work with volunteers with a criminal record.

#### CRB Checks with volunteers from overseas

<http://www.london.anglican.org/resources/Blocks/12073/CRB-Overseas%20Criminal-Record-Checks.pdf>

This page gives advice on making CRB applications for volunteers from other countries.

#### Volunteer Now's downloadable guidance

<http://www.volunteering-ni.org/publications>

Although this is based in Northern Ireland and so some parts will not be identical to England, they have some really useful documents and guidance that are general, such as their Involving Volunteers Checklist.





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