



Good Practice Guides: Building Foundations

No. 1 – Involving Volunteers

Key Points

This Good Practice Guide is an introduction to involving volunteers. It looks at the beginning stages of volunteer involvement in your organisation and examines what you need to consider and address before involving volunteers in a meaningful and supportive way.

Why?

It may seem obvious, but it is worth looking at why your organisation wants to involve volunteers. Consider the following:

- What have been your experiences to date with involving volunteers?
- Have you identified where volunteers can fit in to your organisation?
- What are the benefits to your organisation in engaging and involving volunteers?

Within Your Organisation

The decision to involve volunteers should be a whole organisation decision. This means that there should be consultation with your management committee or board, staff, clients etc. Involving volunteers needs to be considered fully as much like taking on new staff, there is a need to consider:

- Resources and cost implications;
- Staff resources and responsibilities;
- Support structures and mechanisms;
- Strategic and longer term impact;
- Impact on service delivery.

What and By Whom?

One aspect of volunteer management that requires addressing before there is any actual involvement is to consider how you will coordinate and support the volunteers? Who will have responsibility for this and how will it be resourced? Do they have the time within their current role to coordinate volunteers properly? The success of your volunteer programme is dependent on a supportive and well structured volunteer process.



The person (or persons) coordinating volunteers, should be responsible for some of the following tasks:

- Be the named person for initial contact with volunteers;
Ensure that volunteers adhere to organisational policies and procedures;
- Ensure there is adequate support and supervision of volunteers (though they do not have to be responsible for all volunteers);
- Ensure that the volunteer's voice is heard within the organisation.

Checklist for Involving Volunteers

Below is a checklist of recommended actions that must be completed before involving volunteers. As with most aspects of volunteer involvement there are no legal requirements, however by implementing sounds basic principles you can ensure that your organisation involves volunteers in a successful way. It's worth remembering that if you wish to advertise your volunteer opportunities with Volunteer Centre Edinburgh, you must have some of the following basic requirements.

Best Practice	VCE Required?
Consult within your organisation	
Create a specific Volunteer Policy	✓ (or are working towards the creation of one)
Ensure your volunteers are insured	✓
Address relevant policies for example Child Protection, Health and Safety	
Ensure you have the resources needed	
Assign key responsibilities for volunteer coordination (including a named contact for volunteers)	✓
Establish the roles volunteers will play within the organisation	
Address recruitment procedures	
Address how support and supervision for volunteers will take place	





Where to go from here...

Volunteer Centre Edinburgh is committed to helping organisations build their volunteer practices. Once your organisation has decided to involve volunteers in their work, use our step by step Good Practice Guides to help you put in place all the structures you will need to provide flexible, safe and supported volunteer opportunities. |

More help?

If you would like more help or advice in relation to this Guide please contact Volunteer Centre Edinburgh on the following details:

Tel: 0131 225 0630

Email: admin@volunteeredinburgh.org.uk

Or you can drop in and see us:

Volunteer Centre Edinburgh

45 Queensberry Street Lane

Edinburgh

EH2 4PF

0131 225 0630

www.volunteeredinburgh.org.uk

