

Finding volunteers

Summary

If you would like to recruit new volunteers or trustees for your group or organisation, there are plenty of ideas to try. This Information Sheet provides contact details and simple ideas for finding volunteers.

This Information Sheet covers:

- Volunteer Centres
- Other specialists
- Filling particular roles or finding a specific set of skills
- The internet
- Places in your local area
- The media
- Word of mouth
- Appealing to the widest range of people

But don't forget to spend some time planning before you start your recruitment. If you want to have happy volunteers, it's also important to ensure their time with you feels productive and rewarding. At the end of this document, you can find a list of resources on developing good practice in working with volunteers.

Local Volunteer Centres and other specialists

Volunteer Centres

Volunteer Centres act as a 'go-between' to refer potential volunteers to groups or organisations which need help. Recruiting through a Volunteer Centre can be a good source of new skills or experience, because you can reach out to people who wouldn't normally contact you directly.

When registering your need for volunteers or trustees, you will need to describe what kinds of tasks or activities need to be done. You should also confirm that suitable insurance cover is in place and explain whether training and volunteer expenses are provided. Volunteer Centres can offer you help with phrasing your volunteering adverts or developing a volunteer policy. Many of them also run regular training courses or volunteer co-ordinator forums to assist you in your work with volunteers.

Find your nearest Volunteer Centre in England:

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

Many Volunteer Centres hold Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation (VCQA) from Volunteering England.

(For Volunteer Centres in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland, please refer to section 8)

Councils for Voluntary Service

If you don't have a Volunteer Centre near to you, your local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) may be able to help you with advertising for volunteers.

Find your nearest CVS: <http://webdb.navca.org.uk/home.aspx>

Other specialists

To reach a particular group of the population, you could try the following:

Students

Most higher and further education institutions, such as universities and colleges, have volunteering offices for their students and staff. These are usually based within the students' union or careers centre.

Find contact details for your nearest higher education institution at

<http://www.ucas.ac.uk/instit/index.html>

or find out more on Volunteering England's website at

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

Employees

Some employers organise group volunteering events for their staff to help the local community. If you have any suitable tasks, you can contact a 'broker' that specialises in arranging these types of events. You could also build a longer term relationship with a local employer and encourage their staff to volunteer with you on a regular basis.

Find out more about brokers of employer-supported volunteering

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

People aged 16-25

Local "involved teams" can advise you on working with volunteers aged 16-25 and advertise your volunteering opportunities to this age group.

Find your nearest involved Team:

<http://www.vinspired.com/opportunities/involvedsearch>

People aged 50+

RSVP, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme, is coordinated by CSV and can help you to recruit volunteers over the age of 50.

Visit RSVP's website at <http://www.csv-rsvp.org.uk/>

Filling particular roles or finding a specific set of skills

Trustees, chairs, treasurers

The Trustee Network website contains a 'Trustee Finder' database:

<http://trusteenet.org.uk/jobs-search>

Business, management, consultancy, technical, and legal expertise

Reach: <http://www.reachskills.org.uk/>

Pro Help:

http://www.bitc.org.uk/community/employee_volunteering/prohelp/index.html

Business in the Community: <http://www.bitc.org.uk/>

The Cranfield Trust: <http://www.cranfieldtrust.org/>

Pilotlight: <http://www.pilotlight.org.uk/>

IT and computing

IT 4 Communities:

<http://www.it4communities.org.uk/>

Media and communications professionals

Media Trust

<http://www.mediatrust.org/media-matching>

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The internet

Do-it.org.uk

The do-it.org.uk website provides details of volunteering opportunities throughout the UK. It's free and is easy to search online by postcode or town name: <http://www.do-it.org.uk>

To advertise for volunteers through the do-it.org.uk website, you will need to contact a local intermediary, such as a Volunteer Centre, to upload the details for you.

Alternatively, if you would like to directly upload a large number of volunteering roles across the country, you should contact YouthNet who own the do-it.org.uk website: <http://www.youthnet.org/>

Other ideas

There is a huge range of other ways to use the internet to recruit volunteers. Here are a few ideas:

- Guidestar UK is a database of UK charities that can be searched by members of the public: <http://www.guidestar.org.uk/>
- Social networking websites such as Facebook, Bebo, MySpace etc
- Online discussion forums based on locality or interest area

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Places in your local area

If you produce leaflets, posters or adverts to recruit volunteers, try distributing them in a wide range of local places to reach a broader audience. You might already have advertised in lots of public and community organisations, but there may be a few in this list which you haven't tried:

(The underlined words are hyperlinks. If you are reading an electronic copy of this document, you can access directory listings for each place by clicking on the link.)

- Places of worship, eg mosques, churches, temples, synagogues
- Meeting/leisure places, parks, clubs, cafes, pubs
- Sports/leisure centres and fitness groups
- Shopping centres, markets, supermarkets and shops
- [Jobcentres](#), [Disability Benefit Centres](#), [Council offices](#)
- Community centres running key skills or English classes
- [Health centres](#), eg GP surgeries or hospital waiting rooms
- Nurseries, schools or [adult education colleges](#)
- Information centres, e.g. [law centres](#) or [Citizens Advice Bureaux](#)
- Public libraries
- Hostels, housing providers or [housing associations'](#) newsletters
- Local facilities, e.g. laundrettes and [post offices](#)
- Weekly groups, such as women's groups or toddler groups
- Local and free newspapers (through adverts or a weekly column)
- Community and hospital radio stations
- Seasonal and community events, such as fairs or car boot sales

You can search the Yellow Pages website at www.yell.com to find local amenities and organisations based in your area.

Using the media

TV, radio, newspapers or online news media can be a great way to attract attention to your cause, but it's not always easy or cheap. The Volunteer Genie website offers tips and case studies about using the power of the media to recruit volunteers.

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

Word of mouth

'Word of mouth' can be a very effective publicity tool. Volunteers, staff and clients who feel good about their involvement with your organisation are likely to tell their friends. But, relying heavily on this method can reduce the diversity of backgrounds and skills within your organisation because you will generally be recruiting from similar groups of people.

Don't forget that current volunteers can also provide valuable support as 'recruitment champions' or 'volunteer ambassadors' by speaking at a recruitment day, helping run an information stall or assisting with developing publicity materials.

Appealing to the widest range of people

Make sure that your recruitment messages present a welcoming and supportive image. It may help to consider whether there are any particular groups you want to reach, or any groups you have so far excluded by omission. In Volunteering England's online Good Practice Bank, you can find a range of resources about working with volunteers from different backgrounds, such as refugees, asylum seekers, disabled people, people with past criminal convictions or people of different faiths or sexual orientation.

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

Good practice with volunteers

Remember that volunteers are giving a valuable gift of their time and that people usually stay when they feel needed and appreciated. The following national and local resources should help with developing your work with volunteers.

Volunteering England's Good Practice Bank

This contains Information Sheets, articles, toolkits and useful website links on a range of themes focusing on practical topics concerning volunteer management, including creating volunteer roles, volunteer expenses, dealing with problems, and equal opportunities and diversity. Most themes also contain real examples donated by organisations around the country. You can also find links to a number of resources about trusteeship. <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/goodpractice>

Investing in Volunteers quality standard

Investing in Volunteers is the UK quality standard for all organisations which involve volunteers in their work. The award enables organisations to comprehensively review their volunteer management, and is a valuable way of publicly demonstrating your commitment to volunteering. Two separate versions of the quality mark recognise either volunteer-involving organisations or employers running schemes to support their staff to volunteer as part of their work/life balance.

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

Local good practice and development support

Volunteer Centres can provide good practice support on working with volunteers. The majority of Volunteer Centres in England have quality accreditation from Volunteering England, known as Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation (VCQA). If your local Volunteer Centre is accredited, they are assessed against core functions of volunteering infrastructure at a local level, and will be able to help you with the following aspects of your work:

- Brokerage (matching volunteers to opportunities)
- Marketing volunteering
- Good practice development
- Developing volunteering opportunities

As part of their core functions, Volunteer Centres also play a role in local campaigning, policy response and strategic development of volunteering.

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

Contact details for Volunteer Centres outside England

Volunteering Wales: <http://www.volunteering-wales.net>

Volunteer Development Scotland: <http://www.vds.org.uk/>

Volunteer Development Agency Northern Ireland: <http://www.volunteering-ni.org/>

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For more information on managing volunteers, please visit
The Good Practice Bank at www.volunteering.org.uk/goodpractice

A full list of Volunteering England's Information Sheets is available at:
www.volunteering.org.uk/information sheets