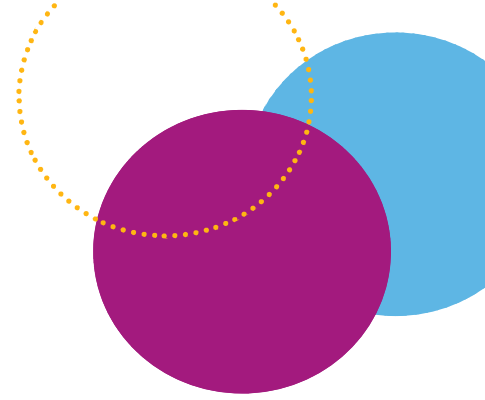


4

Developing a volunteer role



It is good practice to have clear volunteer roles which set out what volunteers can expect to do and what you will provide to enable them to do it. Start by listing all the possible tasks which volunteers could help with, and then group these into smaller, more defined roles.

Role descriptions for volunteers can be much more flexible than those for paid staff. You may sometimes prefer to be able to respond to what volunteers can offer and create a role for them, but it is still a good idea to set out the tasks clearly, and state the kind of support you can offer.

It is worth thinking about how you can create volunteering opportunities that not only help you achieve your objectives, but also match what people want. While altruistic motives are often involved, volunteers also have personal and professional expectations of the experience. The most attractive opportunities are those that look interesting, welcoming and rewarding.

Everyone is different, and reasons for volunteering will vary. Give some thought as to what sort of motivations might fit well with the opportunities you have. Some volunteers will relish a challenge, others may prefer something where they don't need to think too hard. Some volunteers want to learn or gain experience, others may have years of experience or professional skills and want to 'give something back'...

Volunteering opportunities that are too broad, dull or unclear about what's expected often lead to recruitment difficulties and a high turnover of volunteers.

Using a role description like the template on **Sheet 5** included in this Guide can act as a useful checklist of things to consider so that you and the volunteer are both clear about the role and expectations of each other.

If the role is part of a new project or is something your organisation has not done before, make sure you consider the risks and build in reasonable measures to manage or deal with those risks. This could include risks to the volunteer, to clients or service users, or to the organisation as a whole. See **Sheet 20 'How to find out more'** for links to more information on how to assess and manage risks.

Activity

1. Think about why people might want to volunteer. How many people do you know that already do some sort of voluntary work? Why do they do it? Jot down a few ideas about the different reasons and motivations why people choose to give their time.
2. Now think about your own organisation. Focus on what is positive about your organisation. Why should someone choose you, rather than another organisation? What is special or distinctive about volunteering with your organisation? What could a volunteer get out of this opportunity?