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## Application and selection

Selecting volunteers is about finding a good match between the prospective volunteer and the opportunity on offer. It is an attempt to find a successful blend where the person has the right skills, experience and approach; and the opportunity satisfies the needs and interests of the volunteer.

Lack of care in recruitment and selection can lead to dissatisfaction and disappointment for both the individual and the organisation.

Robust selection procedures are particularly important if your organisation provides services or activities for under 18s or vulnerable adults. In this case, your selection procedures should be just one part of your organisation's overall approach to safeguarding vulnerable people, alongside systems for good support, supervision, training and dealing with concerns/allegations. See the Safeguarding section on **Sheet 20 'How to find out more'** for further sources of help and advice on working with vulnerable people.

Application and selection procedures could include any or all of the following. The methods you choose to assess suitability should be appropriate for the role and the nature of the work you want volunteers to undertake:

- Application or registration form
- Informal chat
- Structured interview
- References
- Vetting and Barring Scheme Registration (proposed scheme, subject to government review)
- CRB Disclosure
- Trial period

### Record keeping

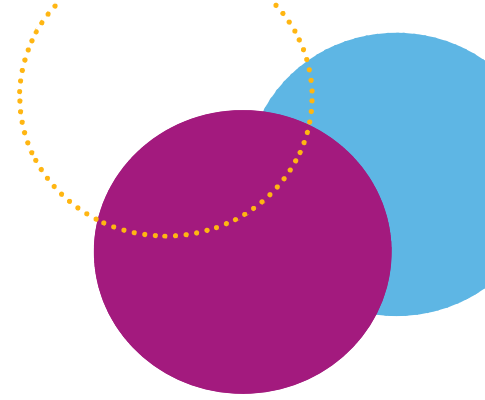
However informal or short-term the volunteer opportunity, even if you don't need a formal selection or screening process, it is wise to ask for and keep a record of:

- The volunteer's name and full contact details
- Details of their next-of-kin or an emergency contact
- Information about any medical conditions or allergies which their manager and/or colleagues might need to know about in connection with the work

You may find it useful to collect statistical information on the demographic profile of your volunteers. An anonymous equal opportunities monitoring form is a way of collecting information about volunteers age range, gender, ethnic background etc in a way that does not link the information to individuals in an identifiable way.

### Application / registration form

Try to ensure that forms are as simple as possible and only ask for the information you actually need. Some volunteers may need help to complete forms – this is especially important to consider if you are offering roles where literacy skills are not actually required in order to do the work. However, application forms do give potential volunteers an opportunity to tell you about their experience in relation to the role and their reasons for volunteering, and also provide you with a basic personnel record.



## Interview or informal chat?

You need to get the right balance between professionalism and informality, so that the experience gives the volunteer confidence that the organisation is efficient and well-organised, but is not so intimidating that it scares them away! See **Sheet 8 'Interviews and references'** for more guidance and tips.

## Vetting and Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks

For organisations providing services or activities for children, young people under 18 or 'vulnerable adults', there are additional checks to run when recruiting to roles where volunteers will have close contact with these groups.

The proposed Vetting and Barring Scheme from the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) is currently on hold pending a government review, however some provisions already in place as a result of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 do still apply. Enhanced 'disclosures' (criminal record checks) from the CRB are available for roles that involve working with children or vulnerable adults in 'regulated activity' as defined by this legislation.

See **Sheet 9 'Vetting and Barring Scheme / CRB checks'** for more on both these systems. To find out if your clients or service users are 'vulnerable adults' or if the work you do is 'regulated activity', see the guidance issued by the ISA on their website at [www.isa.gov.org.uk](http://www.isa.gov.org.uk) or contact your local Volunteer Centre for help.

## Trial period

You may want to set up a short 'trial period' for new volunteers. This can be as much about you assessing their suitability as it is about them finding out if the role is what they want to do. It is important to agree a timescale for a review of the trial period right at the start of the volunteer's involvement, and for each of you to understand the purpose of the trial period, and the review meeting.

## Turning a volunteer down

Sometimes there may be a good reason why you are unable to accept someone's offer to volunteer. The best way to handle this is to let them know quickly and explain why. It may be tempting to avoid the issue and hope that they will lose interest, but this gives a very bad image of your organisation and of volunteering in general.

Let the person know that you appreciate their offer and be as honest as you can. It's important to handle this sensitively – think how upsetting it is to be rejected after a job interview, and how much more so when the person is offering to work for nothing. Make a point of referring them to your local Volunteer Centre to explore other options.