

Set 2

InfoSheet 2.1

Recruitment and Selection

First steps – Why do People Volunteer? Providing the Inspiration...

Recruitment should only begin once you have worked through all of the areas that are covered in this pack. You will need to have comprehensive volunteer policies in place and a clear understanding of Bradford's Statement of Good Practice in Working with Volunteers.

You need to consider where and how you will recruit, what formal or informal skills and experience you are looking for as well as how will you reach volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds, including minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities. However, before you begin to plan your recruitment strategy, it may help to have an understanding of what volunteering means and the reasons why people become volunteers.

The meaning of voluntary work and what it involves

Volunteering is working without pay (except for actual out-of-pocket expenses) in order to benefit someone else. In many cases, it involves volunteering for an organisation such as a charity but people also volunteer informally, for example, to garden for an elderly resident in their locality. Local Authority Social Services Departments and Community Development Departments usually also welcome volunteers and see them as a vital and complimentary part of the services they provide.

Why do people volunteer?

Most people volunteer either because they want to give something back to society or because they want to play a part in their community. People volunteer for many different organisations, from charities like MENCAP to local community groups. Here are some of the other reasons why people choose to volunteer...

- To share a skill
- To get to know their community better
- To show their commitment to a cause
- To obtain leadership skills
- To keep busy
- To make new friends
- To explore a career
- To help someone
- To feel good
- To be part of a team
- To test themselves

Selling your opportunities to volunteers

When you are recruiting volunteers you are asking them to participate for free. Selling opportunities with your organisation comes down to advertising because you need to sell the benefits of volunteering. Your adverts should have a clear, easy-to-understand message - aim for simplicity. Your advert will usually include:

- What the volunteer will have to do
- What your organisation is about
- What the volunteer will get out of it
- How the volunteer can make a real difference
- How simple it is to become a volunteer
- How to get more information

Providing inspiration

Some people volunteer simply because they really want to make a difference, but most need a bit of tempting. Some people volunteer because they see a celebrity or someone in a position of power doing it whilst others were motivated by reading a touching story or seeing a documentary or news item. While your organisation can't make people have these experiences, it can be useful to think about the reasons that lead people to become volunteers. This can help you to design appealing volunteering opportunities and create an effective recruitment message. Here are some things you can do to make your recruitment campaign inspiring:

- Show how one person's contribution can make a real difference
- Explain why your organisation's work is so important
- Show that volunteering can be a great way to meet others and have a more active social life
- Emphasise the skills and experience that volunteers can gain
- Tell people that their existing skills are useful and important
- Tell people it's a great way of keeping active

Even after they are inspired, people may still have reservations about volunteering. For example, they might be worried that they won't be able to cope or that the commitment will become more than they first wanted. Therefore, you should make the volunteering process as simple and pain-free as possible:

- If possible, let volunteers choose how much or how little time they want to give.
- Make it easy for new volunteers to join by having simple registration forms available.
- Show volunteers that you have clear policies and guidelines and ensure they know about the supervision and support you will provide.
- Have someone at hand who volunteers can sort out any problems with - it's better for a volunteer to talk to someone about cutting their hours than drop out altogether.

The remaining InfoSheets in this Set take you through the more detailed aspects of volunteer recruitment and selection.