

Management of Volunteers

Induction Training

Thought needs to be put into how volunteers are introduced to both the organisation, and the specific role they are taking on. Volunteers need to be introduced to staff members and other volunteers, told where bathroom and kitchen facilities are, shown the fire exits and so on. A volunteer handbook and induction pack can be very useful.

As well as adequate training in the initial period, the training needs of volunteers should be continually assessed as with any other member of staff. Where appropriate volunteers should be given training to enable them to carry out their role. Ongoing training is covered later in this series (see Set 3 InfoSheet 3.2 Volunteer Tasks, Roles and Personal Development).

Even if a volunteer is already highly skilled, induction is essential. It is the process of preparing volunteers for a clear relationship with the organisation. It should make volunteers feel comfortable and ensure they better understand the organisation's history, ethos, structure and procedures, so that they will contribute more productively to the organisation's work.

Induction must provide answers to three questions:

- Why should I be working here? (what is the 'cause' all about?)
- How will I be working here? (what are the volunteer management systems?)
- Where do I fit in with everyone else? (what is the social environment in which I'll work?)
- What are my responsibilities with regard to personal boundaries, client confidentiality, absence reporting, etc?
- What do I need to do to minimise risk to myself and others (health and safety, etc)? Note – this should be based on your Health and Safety Policy and your Risk Assessment (see InfoSheet 3.5).

The induction process falls into three parts.

- **Orientation:-** the process of preparing volunteers for a clear relationship with the group/organisation
- **Training:-** the process of preparing the volunteer to perform work for the group/organisation
- **Coaching:-** the process of developing and upgrading skills

Every volunteer should know they will be required to attend an induction and/ or training session. Orientation/induction is distinguished from training in that it is usually more general and informal, providing information every volunteer should know. Training is designed to equip volunteers with the specific skills and knowledge required by their position.

The problem of volunteers leaving an organisation soon after being recruited is often due to poor induction procedures. Induction must be relevant and interesting. Try to make your training programme as participative as possible, perhaps allowing your volunteers to work together in small groups to find the answers, solve a problem or discuss the issues.

Induction and initial training

Small group induction coupled with a volunteer handbook is often very effective (see Set 4, InfoSheet 4.2 *Writing Volunteer Handbooks*).

Training needs careful planning and you need to think about the venue, the timings (i.e. not everyone is available during the day or in the evenings – try to vary when and where you hold your training and ensure your venue is accessible) and consider what refreshments you might need to provide.

The Volunteering Unit has its own Induction Training Programme and Volunteer Induction Pack. These can help you decide what you need to include. Contact Bradford Council Volunteering Unit, 1st Floor Jacob's Well, Bradford BD1 5RW, Telephone (01274) 437970.

Information in this InfoSheet is based on guidelines produced by Brighton and Hove Volunteer Bureau and information from the Volunteering England, www.volunteering.org.uk