

Management of Volunteers

Involving and Consulting Volunteers

Why do we need to consult with and involve our volunteers?

It is important to ensure that your volunteers have some say in what goes on within your organisation, particularly when it comes to decisions about volunteer roles and the development of volunteering generally. Volunteers who feel they have a real input are more likely to feel valued and, as a result, are likely to remain as volunteers with your organisation.

What do we need to consult our volunteers about?

You need to decide what issues you will consult your volunteers about and how far you will involve them in your decision making processes. As a rule, you should always consult your volunteers about anything which directly affects them, e.g. changes to your service delivery that has a significant impact on their roles. You should also involve your volunteers in any consultation process where you would usually consult with your paid staff. You also need to decide what level you will consult on and how you will act on the results of your consultation – see InfoSheet 1.2 for more information about this.

How do we go about consulting with and involving our volunteers?

Consider how you will consult with your volunteers about important issues. Focus groups, questionnaires and individual interviews are just a few methods you could use. Consider what questions you want to ask and what you will do with the results of the consultation. There is no point in consulting your volunteers if you have no mechanisms for acting upon what they say. You will need to give your volunteers feedback on what you did with their comments and views and how you have taken these into consideration in your decision making process – see InfoSheet 1.2 for further guidance.

Involving volunteers in the life of your organisation

You will need to think about how you will involve volunteers in the life of your organisation generally. Think about whether you need to invite your volunteers to your staff/team meetings or whether your volunteers can together nominate one volunteer representative to attend. Consider whether you need to circulate minutes of meetings to volunteers and the processes you will use for doing this.

Make sure you involve your volunteers in any celebratory events such as staff parties and ensure you show your thanks and appreciation on a regular basis.