



Tips for Engaging and Recruiting Volunteers

If you are planning to recruit volunteers or want to refresh your volunteer engagement process, these tips are a good place to start. Having clear processes and offering an enjoyable experience for volunteers will help you build a strong and committed volunteer team.

1. Planning is Key

Planning for volunteering is important to ensure that both your organisation and your volunteers have a positive experience. Start by asking yourself:

- Why are you involving volunteers?
- What role will volunteers play in your organisation or group?
- What policies and processes do you need to have in place to ensure you are prepared for involving volunteers?

Taking the time to plan and be clear on what you need from volunteers will help you create meaningful and well-structured volunteer roles.

2. Describing your volunteer roles

Having clear and detailed volunteer role descriptions helps potential volunteers understand what is expected of them and whether the role is a good fit. When creating role descriptions, try to include:

- What tasks the volunteer will be doing
- Where and when they will be needed, and how often
- Any training or support you will provide
- The impact the volunteer will make
- What benefits will the volunteers gain, e.g. skills, references etc.

Providing this information up front helps manage expectations and allows volunteers to prepare fully for their role.

3. Offer Flexible and Micro-Volunteering Opportunities

Not everyone can commit to regular, long-term volunteering. Offering flexible or micro-volunteering opportunities, such as one-off tasks, remote volunteering, or short-term projects, allows more people to get involved. This flexibility can appeal to people with busy schedules or those who are looking to try volunteering for the first time.



4. Create a clear and simple process for getting involved

Make it as easy as possible for people to express interest in volunteering. Ensure your website has:

- Clear information about the roles available
- A simple sign-up process or expression of interest form
- Information about what happens next after they sign up
- Offer a chat/interview when you receive their application form – this is a two way meeting enabling you to outline the role in more detail, the expectations and opportunity as well as for them to be confident that this is the right role and organisation for them. It is at this meeting that you can talk about flexibility, commitment and mutual expectations.

Providing a clear and welcoming process reduces barriers and makes it easier for people to take the first step in volunteering with you.

5. Demonstrate the Impact of Volunteering

People are more likely to volunteer if they can see the positive difference they could make. Share the impact your volunteers have through:

- Stories, photos, or videos of volunteer work in action
- Statistics or key achievements made possible by volunteers
- Testimonials from beneficiaries who have benefited from volunteer support
- Demonstrating the value of volunteering helps inspire others to get involved and shows appreciation for your existing volunteers.

It is helpful to ask them what impact looks like to them. Being able to meet their own intrinsic needs will make it easier for you to retain and recognise them.

6. Empower your current volunteers to help with recruitment

Your current volunteers can be some of your best advocates when it comes to engaging new volunteers. Encourage them to:

- Invite friends, family, or colleagues to get involved
- Share their volunteering experiences on social media
- Participate in volunteer recruitment events or open days

Hearing first-hand about someone's positive volunteering experience can often inspire others to get involved.

7. Promote Volunteer Stories

Sharing real-life volunteer stories is a powerful way to inspire others to get involved. Ask current volunteers if they are happy to share their experiences, either in writing or through short videos. These stories can highlight the positive impact of volunteering and help potential volunteers understand what they can expect from getting involved. Share these stories on your website, social media, newsletters, or local community networks. A Volunteer Story template is available in the resources section if your volunteer needs help getting started.

8. Prepare and support your volunteers

A good induction process helps set volunteers up for success. Whether it's a formal induction session or an informal meeting, it's important to:

- Share information about your organisation and its mission
- Clarify expectations and key tasks of their role
- Offer space for them to ask questions or share any concerns
- Ongoing support, regular communication, and opportunities to check in will also help keep your volunteers engaged and motivated.

9. Recognise and celebrate your volunteers

Taking the time to thank and recognise your volunteers is essential for keeping them engaged and motivated. You can do this by:

- Sending personalised thank-you messages
- Hosting small appreciation events or celebrations
- Sharing volunteer success stories publicly
- Presenting certificates or length of service awards

Feeling valued and appreciated encourages volunteers to continue their involvement and recommend volunteering to others.

10. Are You a Volunteer Friendly or an iV Achiever?

If you have achieved the Volunteer Friendly or the Investing in Volunteers (iV) quality standard, make sure to promote it when recruiting volunteers. It shows that your organisation is committed to providing high-quality volunteer experiences and that you meet nationally recognised good practice standards. This can reassure potential volunteers that they will be well-supported and valued within your organisation.

This resource is designed to help you build strong, sustainable volunteer involvement. Taking time to plan, support, and recognise your volunteers will not only help you recruit more people but also retain and empower them to make a difference.