

CHURCH URBAN FUND

CHANGING LIVES AND
COMMUNITIES TOGETHER



Working well with Volunteers

Resource Guide 2020



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1. Agreeing principles

The idea of developing a volunteer policy or agreeing the principles about how you work with volunteers can seem a bit daunting, but in practice it gives you the opportunity to consider the answers to questions that will inevitably crop up during your work with volunteers. Doing this in an organised way helps with consistency and transparency, can identify any gaps in guidelines and procedures and can help to ensure that volunteers have a good experience – all hopefully things to be welcomed!

For a church-based organisation working with volunteers, a volunteer policy is pretty indispensable and may well be required by external partners or funders. Some local churches may feel that a policy is too bureaucratic for the varied and often informal way in which they work with volunteers, an agreement of principles can still be very helpful.

A volunteer policy, or statement of agreed principles need not be a long, overly complicated document.

A succinct, clearly written summary of the main points will be a useful tool which can save a great deal of time further down the line, particularly, for example, if a leader of a project moves on and a new person takes over.



1. Agreeing principles – Starting points

It is helpful to agree the way in which you work with volunteers as this enables consistency and clarity.

The decisions that you agree can then lay a foundation for your work with volunteers throughout the church or organisation.

Consistency

Taking time to agree overall principles for your work with volunteers can be very positive:

- It helps to ensure fairness and avoid some groups of volunteers inadvertently being treated differently from others
- It can save time in the long run as you make decisions once and can then use those decisions as the basis for future work. This doesn't mean that decisions are set in stone; they can be reviewed in the light of how they work in practice but avoiding piecemeal decisions is a real aid to consistency, fairness and time-saving.

Clarity

Agreeing principles aids clarity, which can have many benefits for your ongoing work with volunteers:

- Making considered decisions and being explicit about the basis on which you work with volunteers helps to manage the expectations of all those involved and tends to reduce the likelihood of conflict in the long term. For example, are expenses reimbursed? Can volunteers expect to contribute to decisions about the future of the organisation?
- Clarity is linked to transparency, which can also minimise conflict in the long term. Making thoughtful decisions and communicating them openly, gives an opportunity for people to discuss whether principles are right and avoids the sense that decisions are made arbitrarily.

1. Agreeing principles – practicalities

A volunteer policy, or agreed statement, is really a series of answers to questions that then provide the framework for working with volunteers.

A full policy is more likely to be appropriate for a church based group or organisation with fairly formal structures, but even more informal setups can find that it is fruitful in the long run to go through some generic questions in a planned way.

For a policy to have credibility, and to work in practice, it needs to be honest, agreed and realistic; and those people working with volunteers need to be aware that it exists as a working document and guide.

Thinking about how you work with volunteers

Whether or not you develop a full volunteer policy, it is good to take some time to think about and celebrate what volunteers contribute and how you can best work together. Some questions to discuss could be:

1. What different groups of volunteers are involved?

These might include groups such as the coffee rota, crèche leaders, committees, authorised lay ministers etc.

2. How do people become volunteers?

Is that done in a way that is open and enables people to use their gifts?

3. Which groups of volunteers have a strong voice in the life of the church?

If some don't, should that be addressed? How can you involve volunteers in thinking about what you do and in shaping any policy or principles?

4. Have you covered any administrative or legal issues relating to volunteers?

- a. Do you cover any expenses?
- b. Insurance
- c. Safeguarding
- d. Health and Safety

For more information, see:
Managing Formalities

1. Agreeing principles – practicalities cont'd

5. Do different groups of volunteers have a coordinator?

Does this person act as a point of reference, look after that group of volunteers, help them develop and nurture their particular ministry?

6. What do you do if something goes wrong?

Are issues that arise dealt with in a way that is consistent with your Christian values?

For more ideas see: *Tackling Difficulties*.

7. How are volunteers valued and thanked?

Do all groups of volunteers get thanked or is the contribution of some more publicly acknowledged than others?

How can you ensure that roles are explicitly and implicitly valued?

8. How easy is it for volunteers to rotate between roles?

Research shows that churches with rotation among people in volunteer leadership roles also report more growth –

www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk

9. How do you communicate with volunteers?

Is it easy for all groups of volunteers to hear about, and be involved with, key developments and decisions that happen?

If not, how could this be done better?

Writing a full policy

A volunteer policy is a really useful working document and if you want to advertise for volunteers through a volunteer centre they may well expect you to have a policy in place.

For a Volunteer Policy Template in the form of a series of questions and an example of the process of writing a policy, plus a case study, please see the www.cuf.org.uk: **resources**

1. Agreeing principles –

Illustrative Case Study: Agreeing a volunteer policy

Holy Nativity Church set up a Drop-in Centre and wanted to recruit volunteers from the church and the community. The Drop-in is run by Esther, a member of the congregation but not on the PCC (Holy Nativity's governing body).

Esther met with the churchwardens and advised them that a volunteer policy would be a good idea. As the Drop-in Centre was set up by the parish, they decided that the PCC (church council) needed to pass any policy but didn't have the expertise to write it.

Esther drafted a policy, using a suitable template, with the support of one of the Churchwardens. They agreed a date for it to go onto the PCC agenda, when Esther would introduce the draft and answer questions.

Esther went through the template and drafted the sections that were straightforward. For issues like insurance, expenses and DBS check where she needed to know the existing church systems she asked the churchwarden for guidance.

Esther and the churchwarden went through the draft policy together and realised that the issue of expenses was likely to provoke most discussion, since many members of the congregation volunteered without getting any expenses.

The draft policy went to PCC members in advance of the meeting to allow them time to consider it.

Most of the policy was easily agreed but there were questions about expenses. Esther explained that by offering to reimburse volunteers' travel expenses the church was opening itself up to volunteers who might otherwise not be able to volunteer. There was discussion around this point but the support of the churchwarden helped Esther make her case.

After the meeting, Esther produced a final copy of the policy. This was circulated to the whole PCC by e-mail but final sign off was delegated to Esther, the churchwarden and the vicar. Esther returned to the PCC six months after the Drop-in opened to report back on progress and to contribute to a review of the policy, including how the expenses system was working in practice

The agreed policy was circulated to the PCC, made available in the church office and used as the source of information about what volunteers can expect in terms of training, expenses, insurance etc. The key information from the policy is shared with each Drop-in volunteer during their induction.



2. Taking on Volunteers

One of the distinctive things about recruiting in a church context is that you are often recruiting volunteers who are already known to you and part of your church community, rather than people joining you to fulfil a specific role. This fluidity is very positive in many ways, but it is worth bearing in mind that if things go wrong it can be particularly challenging.

It is worth the effort to consider how you recruit people to the right roles in the first place. This can help to ensure that volunteers have a good experience, loving relationships are maintained and the tasks get done.

Starting Points

For a church based project you may have a ready source of volunteers or you may want to look more widely.

One consideration is whether a role actually requires the volunteer to be an active Christian or member of your congregation or whether you could cast your net more widely as a part of your outreach into and involvement with the community.

When finding volunteers, an immediate concern may be filling a rota or getting a task done. However you also want volunteers to flourish in their role, develop as individuals and to enable Christians to grow in their discipleship. People have “gifts that differ” (as St Paul reminded the early church), and you want to empower volunteers to use the gifts that God has given them.

Volunteering can also be an opportunity for people to take on a role and discover a gift that had not previously been obvious to them, so recruiting volunteers may not always be about finding people who are already highly competent. It can be helpful for the growth of individuals and church communities to look for opportunities to involve people in ways that will enable them to participate and develop.

Sometimes the focus of volunteering will be on the volunteer’s opportunity for development rather than on getting a task done. It may be that volunteering can help someone develop confidence, enhance their CV or that involvement in volunteering can help them develop skills. This type of volunteering can be hugely beneficial for all concerned but requires you to be able to invest energy and time in making it work.

On the next page there are some key points to consider when a volunteer takes on a new role.

2. Taking on Volunteers

Starting Points cont'd

Before a volunteer takes on a new role there are 3 key areas to consider:

1. What are they going to do?

- Do you have a task or role that you have already identified needs doing?
- Alternatively, has someone come to you offering a skill or wanting to do something new?
- Are there ways of involving people so that everyone has the opportunity to participate?

Whichever is the starting point, some exploration of what might be involved is going to be necessary to clarify what will be done.

2. How will you match people to suitable roles?

- How will you find out about people's existing skills and experience or their potential to develop into new roles?
- What will you do if someone wants to take on a role for which they don't appear to be suited?
- How will you support people who have the potential to develop through a role but are not yet ready to take full responsibility for it?

3. What are the practical considerations?

- Does the role need to be done at a particular time or place?
- Do you have the right support in place to help things work successfully?
- Have you clarified practicalities such as travel expenses?

2. Taking on Volunteers – practicalities

The practicalities of recruiting volunteers will depend on your starting points and on how formal your set-up is but there are a number of questions that you may find it helpful to ask.

Not all questions will apply everywhere but considering in advance appropriate responses in your situation will be helpful.

1. Do you have a specific task that needs doing?

See *Clarifying Tasks* for guidance on defining a clear volunteer role

2. Does the task have any particular requirements?

Identifying these will help you work out where you might find people who are likely to be well-suited to the task

- Does it require particular skills? If so, where might you find someone with those skills?
- Does it need to be done at a particular time? If so, who might be available at those times?
- Does it need to be done in a particular place or could it be done by someone at home?
- Does it need to be done by a practising Christian or could this be an opportunity for outreach into the wider community?
- Does it need to be taken on as a long term commitment or is it the sort of thing that people can dip in and out of?
- Does it require a DBS check? (Safeguarding check for some types of work involving children or vulnerable adults. This was formerly a CRB check)

3. Do you need someone to help immediately, soon, or are you planning ahead?

This will have an impact on where it makes sense to look for volunteers. If you need someone to stack the chairs tomorrow you aren't going to advertise in the local paper!

4. Will you be able to pay any out of pocket expenses?

For example can travel expenses be claimed? This may not be common in a local church where many people are within walking distance but it can affect who is able to afford to volunteer.

5. How will you let people know you need volunteers?

- Where might you 'advertise' for volunteers? See Taking On Volunteers – Sources for suggestions
- How can you be positive and specific about what needs to be done, avoiding a generic appeal for volunteers?
- Do people who are not members of your church or organisation know that you exist and what you do? If not, how can you raise awareness so that it's easier to attract volunteers now and in the future?

2. Taking on Volunteers – practicalities cont'd

6. What will happen if someone is interested?

- Have you made it easy for someone to let you know that they are interested in volunteering?
- Is there someone coordinating the search for volunteers for a particular task so that things don't get confused?
- If you have quite a formal structure and might have lots of enquiries, will you use an enquiry form?

7. What will you do if someone is interested in volunteering to do something but the role may not be right for them?

- Do you have a process that will help everyone judge whether or not the role matches the individual concerned? For example a trial period, a training course, an informal interview etc.
- Will you say no to someone if they are not suitable? If so, how? If not, how will you support them or adapt the task to make it work?
- Can you offer an alternative role that would suit them?

8. How will a volunteer know what is expected of them?

- Is there a description (written or verbal) of what is involved and why it matters? For more information see *Clarifying the task*
- When the volunteer starts, how will you introduce them to anything they need to know? (e.g. informal starting chat, some written instructions, buddying with existing volunteer, structured induction). For more information see *Encouraging Development*
- How will you establish what expectations are involved on both sides? For ways of clarifying expectations see *Mutual Expectations Template* and *Volunteer Role Card + Mutual Expectations*

9. How will you approach things if someone gradually takes on regular volunteering tasks?

- This may be someone who begins by attending something and then offers casual help that grows into regular involvement. This can be a common and very positive situation both for churches and activities like Drop-ins.
- How will you encourage involvement and still cover any important information or guidance that they might need?

2. Taking on Volunteers – sources

There are loads of ways of getting the recruitment message out there. The methods you choose will depend on who you are trying to reach (which will depend on what you want them to do).

Some have the advantage of being very easy to target at 'known quantities' but can limit your pool of volunteers; some are much broader in their target but can give you more work selecting those who will thrive in a particular role.

It is helpful to look at:

- the role and what sort of person it will suit
- the number of volunteers needed
- the time frame – is it urgent or a long term project?

You can then decide where and how you would be most likely to attract suitable volunteers.

Advert in the church pew sheet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Easy to do and means that people will probably take the details home with them● Some people just don't read them or don't think the information applies to them
Mention in the spoken notices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Means that everyone in church is aware that you are looking for a volunteer, not just those 'in the know'● Doesn't limit audience to those who like reading things.● Not everyone listens!● Not everyone is in church
Article in church magazine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● May get out to people beyond those in church on a particular week● May go to people in parish who are not regulars so might be more inclusive and access a bigger pool● Not everyone reads things● Sometimes people read things and don't realise it's addressed to them

2. Taking on Volunteers – sources cont'd

Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Can get out to a broad audience ● Easy to keep updated and can make relevant documents easy to download for people ● Can be a very broad brush approach and so can end up with lots of very speculative enquiries. ● Not everyone has web access.
Word of mouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Often incredibly effective – people like to be asked ● Often a speedy way of recruiting as it's so direct ● You can target people you know have the skills/vocation ● You can encourage people to think of other people who might like to do something ● Can lead to lots of similar volunteers – people tend to ask people like them ● Can end up always asking the same people to do things and overlook those who are less established
Via your existing volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If your existing volunteers value their roles they are likely to be good at encouraging others to get involved ● If you are wanting to recruit, your existing volunteers should be kept in the loop anyway and they may have ideas about advertising that you've never thought of ● Like word of mouth, there is the danger of 'more of the same'.
Posters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Eye catching and can be widely distributed ● Can be ignored if they're up for too long ● Not great if they just say 'we need volunteers'!
Article in local paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gets beyond the usual audience ● Helps raise awareness of what you're doing which can bring long term benefits even if not short term volunteers ● Can mean there's more work in selecting if you have very specific criteria for the role
Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Easy to put things up if you have a Facebook page and easy to update ● Can link to documents like role descriptions or application form if you have them ● Can reach a wide audience ● Not everyone is on Facebook – but then not everyone reads the papers or goes to church either!

2. Taking on Volunteers – sources cont'd

Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quick to send out to your followers ● Can be retweeted and reach a wide audience ● Can direct people to more information or a contact person ● Very broad brush approach won't suit every role
Local volunteer centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recruiting volunteers is what they do! ● They can advise about other sources for specific things like business expertise, pro bono work etc. ● Gives access to a wider pool with a huge range of skills, including some people who need to volunteer for their own personal development, skills development, confidence etc. This can be a strong act of outreach. ● A volunteer centre will expect you to have some documentation in place – but should also be able to help you put it together if necessary. ● If you are open to a broader selection of volunteers you will need to select carefully and consciously – will someone fit with the ethos of how you work? If they have extra support needs are you equipped to meet them?
Local school/ college/university	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Many universities, and some schools and colleges, have teams specifically employed to encourage students to volunteer because they know how valuable it is for them. ● This can help you access an age range and set of skills not always well represented in church congregations and enable you to help support young people in building their skills base, CVs and confidence. ● Can be time consuming to set up and manage. ● Can end up being short term commitment from student or restricted to term time.
Church Urban Fund Volunteer Page	<p><i>Available for groups involved in tackling poverty around England. For more information, contact amy.page@cuf.org.uk</i></p>
Do-it.org – National Volunteer Database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Can give you access to a huge range of volunteers ● Can set up entries on Do-it either via Volunteer Centre or can upload them yourself (www.do-it.org) ● A larger pool can mean more work selecting and can open you up to a lot of very speculative enquiries.

If you have suggestions of other common scenarios or solutions that you are happy to share, please send them to amy.page@cuf.org.uk



3. Building good relationships

Volunteering, because it isn't contractual or paid, is dependent on relationships. Having open, mutually beneficial and respectful relationships with volunteers is an enormous help to making things run smoothly and getting things done.

Within the church, Christians are used to hearing the commandment to "love one another". There is usually a strong commitment to the principle of building good relationships and many of the following suggestions are already likely to be happening. However sometimes, particularly in churches where people already know each other, it can be assumed that there is no need to give extra attention to nurturing and developing relationships and so opportunities to do so can be overlooked. Having good patterns and checklists in place (even if they are mental ones) can make it easier to ensure that some useful ways of building positive relationships are not forgotten.

Starting Points

1. The volunteer is the focus – the 'person', not just the 'task.'

This is important because care of one another is crucial and the additional benefit is that people who feel cared for and valued usually operate more effectively.

2. Relationships develop when people feel valued members of a team rather than invisible cogs in a mechanism.

For example it is good to take opportunities to publicly acknowledge the contribution that is made by volunteers, or groups of volunteers, as well as doing that individually.

3. People vary, and one way of relating to some volunteers may not be appropriate to all.

People will feel valued if you recognise their individual starting point so that:

- You do not patronise them (e.g. by telling an experienced person how to do something basic).
- You do not embarrass them (e.g. by putting them in a position where it is difficult for them to ask for help).
- You do not exploit them (e.g. by taking them for granted, expecting unreasonable timescales, not providing suitable equipment or resources to do the task required).

3. Building good relationships – practicalities

Good interpersonal skills and an interest in enabling people to use their gifts help to foster good relationships in innumerable ways. But here are a few key points to bear in mind:

1. Notice volunteers and engage with them.

It sounds obvious but is surprisingly easy to overlook! Say hello, remember people's names, thank people for specific things they have done, listen to their ideas, take an interest in them, answer messages promptly, and include thanks when sending things like rotas.

2. Communicate.

Keep the lines of communication open – both ways! Communicate regularly – let people know what is happening and anything that might be changing. This could include face to face communication, phone calls, updates by e-mail etc. The methods you choose to use will depend on your volunteers. Be careful about methods that might exclude some.

Make it easy for volunteers to communicate with you, both by being receptive when they do and by letting them know the best times and ways of getting hold of you. Try to respond quickly but if you can't, then let them know so that they don't feel ignored.

3. Arrange opportunities to meet.

These may be informal or more formal opportunities. Less formal opportunities can include social events which enable those volunteering to get together with other volunteers, or board members or trustees of a project if you have them. Sometimes volunteers doing the same task or role don't all do it at the same time and so enabling them to meet together can be helpful and affirming. More formal opportunities to meet might include a regular chat to catch up or a formal supervision or discussion about how a role is going.

4. Affirm the value of what the volunteer is doing.

Explain the value of the task itself and also its contribution to such things as a church mission action plan or a project vision statement. (See Clarifying Tasks guidance). As well as doing this when someone takes on a role, it is helpful to reinforce the message both privately and publicly.

3. Building good relationships – practicalities cont'd

5. Ensure that volunteering is mutually beneficial.

Be aware of what volunteers can gain from the experience and try to facilitate it. Remember that people change – in motivation and circumstances. Try to make it easy for people to update you about these, and make it easy for people to change roles. (*Research in churches indicates that in healthy growing churches there is a lot of rotation among people in volunteer roles, rather than the same people always fulfilling the same roles.*¹)

6. Tackle potential difficulties.

Difficulties can arise when expectations, on either side, don't match what happens in practice.

Many difficulties can be avoided by being clear about expectations at the beginning and by encouraging volunteers to contribute ideas. This can enable them to mention things that need changing within a positive framework, rather than as a complaint. Where problems do emerge they are best addressed before they grow and damage good relationships.

See more on *Tackling Difficulties*.

7. Remember people vary.

In all sorts of ways, such as the amount of support they want and need, and the extent to which they want to develop through their role. For some volunteers the chance to chat is crucial for motivation; others will appreciate a positive hello but won't want you to linger so you will need to find other ways to develop relationships.

Good relationships are often a balance between the corporate and the individual. To use St Paul's analogy, the eye is not the same as the hand but both are part of the body. Volunteers, and relationships, are most likely to flourish if individual characteristics and preferences are valued alongside a recognition of the importance of functioning as a whole.

8. Help people leave well.

Endings matter and so when a volunteer finishes a role, look for a way to mark their contribution positively and ensure that they know they have been valued.

Developing a good relationship with volunteers is also about ensuring that they are valued and empowered and have opportunities to develop. (See Encouraging Development).

¹ From Anecdote to Evidence – 2014
www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk



4. Managing formalities

Churches vary enormously in how formally they work with volunteers and some flourishing churches will have almost everyone in the congregation involved without anything needing to be committed to paper. Putting things on paper is not virtuous in itself but can sometimes help with clarity and consistency and is sometimes a legal or church requirement.

The table below offers an explanation of some key documents and processes that represent fairly standard 'good practice' when working formally with volunteers. These may be useful to you in the form suggested or you may simply use the principles behind them to inform what you do. Whatever you choose to do has to fit your situation and help you achieve your aims, whether that is offering hospitality to the lonely or sharing Bible stories with children.

The sample documents suggested are a starting point or guide rather a finished product. In all documents relating to volunteers it is important to avoid the language of employment as that can cause legal difficulties. For suggestions of language to use or avoid see *Volunteer-friendly vocabulary*.

Working well with volunteers

Volunteer Role Description	Volunteer Expenses	Problem Solving Procedure
Mutual Expectations	Volunteer Enquiry Form	Health and Safety (H&S)
Recruitment Process	Confidentiality and Data Protection	Safeguarding
Induction	Emergency contact information	Insurance
Volunteer Policy		

4. Managing formalities

Working well with volunteers – cont'd

What	Why	How & help
<p>Volunteer Role Description</p> <p>An outline of what the role involves, avoiding language like Job Description, which could imply employment</p>	<p>To give clarity to both the volunteer and organisation about what they are being asked to do</p> <p>Clarifying what a role involves makes it easier to think about who it might suit and where to find them</p> <p>Clarifying a role can help identify what equipment, training or support might be needed to make it work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Decide a clear description of what you are asking a volunteer to do (in whatever format) ● Ensure that anything necessary to do the role is available for a volunteer if they start ● Use the role description to discuss the role with potential volunteers and identify things that they will enjoy or find easy and anything that might bore or challenge them <p>Guidance available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Guidance on <i>Clarifying the task</i> ● Guidance on <i>Volunteer friendly language</i>, to avoid implying a contract ● <i>Clarifying tasks</i> checklist ● <i>Sample Role Description</i> ● Sample <i>role welcome card for new volunteers</i> <p><i>Guidance on writing role descriptions is also available on NCVO's KnowHowNonProfit website</i></p>
<p>Mutual Expectations</p> <p>A statement of things like cooperation, support, cover with insurance etc. Not a contract as this can imply employment and cause legal problems</p>	<p>Clarity that it is right for volunteers to have certain expectations of you and vice versa</p> <p>Because it's easy to assume that everyone shares the same expectations and this is not always true so it can be useful to have a way of discussing what the expectations actually are</p> <p>As a reference point if things begin to go wrong, as the organisation and the volunteer can be brought back to what was explicitly agreed at the outset</p>	<p>Mutual expectations are ideally addressed when first discussing a particular role and/or when a volunteer has an induction or similar. It is much harder to begin to raise the topic when a lack of shared expectations becomes apparent</p> <p>Guidance available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sample <i>Mutual Expectations</i> document that can be adapted ● Sample <i>role and mutual expectations welcome card</i> for new volunteers

4. Managing formalities

Working well with volunteers – cont'd

What	Why	How & Help
<p>Recruitment Process</p> <p>Especially for church based projects – how you get from having identified a task that needs doing to a suitable person taking on the role (the level of formality varies enormously depending on the situation)</p>	<p>It pays to think about processes for recruiting volunteers because if it doesn't work it can be time consuming and a drain on an organisation</p> <p>Part of recruitment is selection. It's helpful to consider in advance what you can do if someone is not suitable for a particular role. A considered process, even if informal, can make saying no easier to do well</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clarify what you would like a volunteer to help with or do ● Think imaginatively about where to find suitable people ● Decide what needs doing to let people know about the role, enable them to express an interest and enable them to take it on if you agree it will work (Don't be afraid to explore whether the role is right for the person and redirect them to something else if it isn't) <p>Guidance available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Guidance on <i>Taking On Volunteers</i> who can help ● Checklist for <i>Taking On Volunteers</i> ● <i>Suggestions for places to advertise for volunteers</i>
<p>Induction</p> <p>Starting someone off in a new role in a way that gives everyone confidence</p>	<p>So that whoever volunteers understands what they are going to do, why it matters and has information that will help them flourish in the role and provide the best support possible to those they serve</p>	<p>Requires some time to be set aside when the volunteer starts, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure they understand purpose of the organisation, any key relationships etc ● Ensure they understand their role, how it fits in with the bigger picture and can ask questions as necessary ● Cover any essential policies or procedures ● Cover things like expenses, contacts, making hot drinks and any practicalities that they will need to know for their role and happiness <p>An induction doesn't necessarily need to be one session; it can be an introductory period. Inductions can be done individually or in groups, whichever is most practical</p>

4. Managing formalities

Working well with volunteers – cont'd

What	Why	How & Help
<p>Volunteer Policy</p> <p>A statement of your agreed principles and practice when working with volunteers</p>	<p>To be clear about why and how you involve volunteers</p> <p>It offers consistency and transparency and gives the answers to standard questions that will need answering</p>	<p>It is important that any policy or statement is a true reflection of your culture and intentions when working with volunteers. All other documents should then be consistent with the policy. It can be useful to use a policy template to facilitate a discussion and then finalise the policy, ensuring that it is agreed by any governing body</p> <p>Information available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Agreeing Principles</i> guidance ● <i>Volunteer policy template</i>
<p>Volunteer Expenses</p> <p>Any out of pocket expenses that you agree to reimburse</p>	<p>Avoids excluding people who can't afford expenses like travel costs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Need to decide whether expenses are available for all roles and if there is a cap on expenses ● You may only reimburse actual out of pocket expenses that are related to a volunteer's specific role. You may not pay an allowance or pay for things that do not clearly relate to the role ● A simple expenses form can help with clarity and admin is <p>Guidance available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Expenses form template</i> to adapt

4. Managing formalities

Working well with volunteers – cont'd

What	Why	How & Help
<p>Volunteer Enquiry Form</p> <p>Only necessary for more formal volunteering roles. Similar to an application form but should be as simple as possible and you should be prepared to substitute it with a chat</p>	<p>Can be an efficient way of getting basic information from prospective volunteers</p> <p>Some people prefer a more impersonal route to get in touch initially</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It should never be the only way of expressing an interest. Some people struggle with forms and some people are bored by them ● Include things like contact details, why they are interested in getting involved, what their availability is ● If you have a website then have it available to download as well as paper copies – including one that they can fill in and e-mail rather than just a pdf <p>Guidance available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Enquiry form template</i> to adapt
<p>Confidentiality and Data Protection</p>	<p>Both for the sake of good relationships with people with whom you work and to ensure that you meet your legal responsibilities with regard to data protection</p> <p>The meaning and limits of confidentiality are differently understood in different contexts so it is important to clarify what it means in your context</p>	<p>People will need explanations of why confidentiality and data protection matter and how to act. [Real examples are more likely to be memorable]</p> <p>Churches and other groups may need to discuss, with volunteers, approaches and limits to confidentiality in specific contexts – e.g. in safeguarding situations</p> <p>In a formal situation, if volunteers will have access to confidential information, a confidentiality agreement can be covered at induction, including an explanation of why you are asking them to sign it, why it matters, what sort of information is confidential and who to ask if they are unsure</p> <p>Guidance available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Information Commissioners Office has excellent information about the principles of data protection – including useful examples – <i>Data protection principles</i>

4. Managing formalities

Working well with volunteers – cont'd

What	Why	How & Help
<p>Emergency contact information</p> <p>In situations where people are not well known, this gives a note of who to contact if your volunteer has an accident</p>	<p>As part of your care for your volunteers – you are unlikely to need it but it's no good waiting until an emergency happens before you realise you don't know who to contact</p>	<p>A simple form can be completed at induction, although it can be better to send it in advance and ask them to bring it in so that they can check details for their emergency contact</p> <p>Guidance available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Emergency Contact form template</i> to adapt
<p>Problem Solving Procedure</p> <p>Similar to a staff Grievance & Disciplinary procedure but must be different, to avoid implying that volunteers are employees and to respect the distinctive contribution of volunteers</p>	<p>So that if problems occur there is a fair and transparent process for dealing with them – whether the problem is perceived by you or the volunteer</p> <p>It will hopefully never be used but having it in place gives clarity to all and acknowledges that problems occur and need resolving</p>	<p>It needs to be simple and clear, as protracted procedures are really stressful for everyone. The basic idea is to acknowledge that you try to tackle most things informally but that if that doesn't work, more formal solutions are available</p> <p>Make volunteers aware of this procedure at induction. Not as a threat but as an open acknowledgment that sometimes things go wrong – for both sides – and that you are committed to finding solutions when that happens</p> <p>Guidance available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Guidance on <i>Tackling Difficulties</i> ● <i>Problem Solving Procedure template</i> to adapt. This is suitable for more formal situations or larger organisations

4. Managing formalities

Working well with volunteers – cont'd

What	Why	How & Help
<p>Health and Safety (H&S)</p> <p>Thinking about what volunteers are doing and ensuring that they (and others) should be able to stay safe and healthy. This is about care not about paranoia or box-ticking</p>	<p>It is morally right</p> <p>All people are important, and you need to care for them, whether they are volunteers, staff or anyone else involved</p> <p>It is legally necessary</p> <p>You need to exercise a duty of care to all and to assess and manage risk</p> <p>It is a legal requirement to have written H&S policies and assessments of risk if you have 5 or more employees. It is also best practice to do so irrespective of the number of people involved in your activities</p> <p>Your insurance policy may also require that you assess risks for your volunteers</p> <p>It is practically important</p> <p>Any accidents will affect both the volunteer and the organisation's ability to function, and could damage your reputation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider any risks involved in particular tasks and how to reduce the risks, especially on risks that are highly likely to happen or would have a really serious outcome ● Make sure that when you introduce someone to a new role you make them aware of Health and Safety issues, how to avoid problems and who to talk to if there is a problem ● If you already have an H&S policy, make sure it includes your volunteers ● If you don't have an H&S policy, write one, even if you are technically exempt, because you still have a duty in law to operate in a safe manner <p>Guidance available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Health and Safety Executive website (www.hse.gov.uk) has clear information, specifically aimed at voluntary organisations ● <i>Doing a Risk Assessment flowchart</i> (examples and templates) ● <i>Risk Assessment Template based on HSE</i> sample risk assessments ● <i>Risk Assessment Template using a scoring system</i> to give a risk rating combining severity and likelihood

4. Managing formalities

Working well with volunteers – cont'd

What	Why	How & Help
<p>Safeguarding Having systems in place to make sure that children and vulnerable adults are safe from harm</p>	<p>It is morally right It is a Christian responsibility to care for those who are vulnerable It is legally necessary Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is a statutory duty. The church also has policies that must be complied with It is practically important Children and vulnerable adults are kept safe from harm Safeguarding guidelines also help volunteers and staff protect themselves from damaging accusations People can be made aware how to raise concerns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If you have regular contact with children (under 18) or vulnerable adults you need to consider safeguarding and have a statement of how you safeguard people ● This statement needs to be backed up by ways of operating that are realistic and embedded within a culture that encourages people to raise concerns. ● Ensure that volunteers are aware of the importance of safeguarding right from the start and communicate this as part of your ethos rather than just as a requirement of law. ● Some roles may require DBS checks (previously CRB checks) but it is illegal so it is important to be sure which roles are eligible. Checks for volunteers are free but if you use an organisation to do them for you, you may have to pay an administration charge. It is worth checking whether your diocese is able to process checks for you <p>Guidance available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contact your diocesan safeguarding officer who will be up to date with legalities, so that you can ensure that your safeguarding is in line with diocesan policies. They may well have templates to offer ● Current guidance on safeguarding is available from the House of Bishops ● Your local volunteer centre should be able to give you up to date guidance ● To clarify about the eligibility of roles for DBS checks ● NCVO have some excellent flowcharts for working out which roles are eligible for a check. For the flow chart on regulated activity relating to children and young people. (https://knowhownonprofit.org) ● You can contact DBS with an eligibility query. E-mail them at customerservices@dbs.gsi.gov.uk, giving them details of the role ● MSVC (https://www.mvsc.co.uk/) provides safeguarding information for activities involving children. It is jointly managed by the NSPCC and Children England

4. Managing formalities

Working well with volunteers – cont'd

What	Why	How & Help
<p>Insurance</p> <p>This can cover a range of potential risks where volunteers may be involved in activities of churches or projects</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Employers' liability insurance ● Public liability insurance ● Pastoral care indemnity (Free unstructured care is included in 'EIG Parishguard Policies' but extra cover is needed for more formal counselling or advice) ● Church council and trustee indemnity (check if extra cover is needed if you are handling large grants or projects) 	<p>As part of your care for volunteers and those with whom they come into contact</p> <p>The Association of British Insurers state that voluntary organisations need to have Employers' liability insurance to cover all volunteers and employees who are not family members. Churches with no employees should therefore have this to cover activity undertaken on their behalf. <i>(EIG parishguard polices include this for all authorised volunteers, including churchwardens)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make sure that you have followed good practice guidelines relating to Health and Safety, risk assessments and Safeguarding. (see sections above) ● Let your insurer know that you involve volunteers and in what roles and activities. Many roles do not incur additional charges (but some may – e.g. night shelters, debt advice or formal counselling) ● Ensure that it is clearly defined what the volunteer is doing on behalf of the church / project. (Volunteers should know that only these activities are covered by insurance unless there is formal agreement otherwise). The agreed tasks should be described in a written role description or recorded in minutes of the PCC/project. See <i>Clarifying Tasks</i> <p>Guidance available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contact your diocesan safeguarding officer who will be up to date with legalities, so that you can ensure that your safeguarding is in line with diocesan policies. They may well have templates to offer ● EIG offers useful guidance – including an <i>FAQ section</i> ● The Association of British Insurers has produced a guide to insurance products for individuals and organisations and has a dedicated area of their website on <i>voluntary organisations</i>



5. Encouraging development

St Paul's metaphor of the church as the Body of Christ reminds us that all the parts of the body have their own important function. Valuing and nurturing all volunteer roles, however small, is one way of honouring every member of a community so that, as well as getting the task done well, people volunteering can flourish and grow.

Making sure that there are suitable opportunities for people to serve is one of the ways in which churches can encourage people to develop and mature as disciples, as well as building a community where all are valued. For some people, becoming a volunteer can be part of a conscious desire for development and it is often through activities and group involvement that individuals grow and learn.

Starting Points

In order to decide what development will be appropriate, it is important to think about the starting point for both the task and the volunteer undertaking it.

1. Tasks and roles vary

- There are times when people will fill a 'gap' on a one-off basis, and where long term plans for training and development are not necessarily relevant.
- For other roles, or where a role is being taken on for the first time, a planned induction is valuable.
- Some roles involve tasks where following specific guidance is important, e.g. volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults.

2. Volunteers vary

To enable any person to develop, a key principle is to recognise their existing experience and their particular hopes and needs, hopes and needs, including:

- different reasons for volunteering
- different skills and experiences
- different needs in terms of levels

5. Encouraging development – practicalities

It is useful to have a chat early on with those who volunteer. Any information you find out can be invaluable for thinking of ways to help people grow and develop through their volunteering.

1. It is helpful to be aware of these issues during a discussion:

- What do people think they will find easy to do? What might they need a bit of support with? Are there things they are terrified of tackling? This sort of initial benchmark can be really helpful to find out early on, even though people don't necessarily identify themselves accurately!
- It can also be useful to ascertain the ways in which different individuals are likely to learn best – whether by just getting on with an activity, or by having more theoretical understanding of the role or expectations.
- Check what are each volunteer's specific expectations and hopes: otherwise it is easy to make assumptions. Sometimes a volunteer may assume you will want them to stay for ever, so may need permission to say that they want to volunteer in order to go on to something else. Similarly, sometimes people feel that you expect them to know everything right from the start and need reassuring that you don't expect that to be the case.

2. It is also useful to remember that there are various different reasons why people offer to volunteer

Reasons might include:

- they can use a skill or gift they already have in the service of the Church and community
- to develop their abilities
- to lead on to other opportunities e.g. by improving their CV
- to use their time profitably during unemployment or retirement
- to give them a new social network

5. Encouraging development

Support and Development needs

Offering appropriate development opportunities can involve finding a delicate balance. Some people volunteering may start with a lot of experience or knowledge gained elsewhere and may feel patronised by simplistic training.

Some people just want to do a particular task, are not focused on development and could feel pressurised if you keep trying to develop them.

It is valuable to remember:

- Volunteering can be a route into developing confidence and self-esteem for many people.
- For some, the provision of training may be a way of demonstrating that the church or organisation takes their ministry/role seriously and invests in it.
- Some may feel anxious about their ability to fulfil a role and will need support either to learn what is involved or simply to be reassured that they are capable and valued.
- Some people may outgrow particular roles or get bored and for them development means a new challenge. They may be helped by moving to a new role, or taking on more responsibility within a role (e.g. sorting out rotas, leading sessions, mentoring or buddying others).

Support and training when people begin

Giving people the opportunity to make a good start when taking on a new task lays the foundations for future effectiveness. For some tasks, there will be individuals who need minimal induction, whilst others will need more support and might need the induction done over a longer period.

Induction includes enabling volunteers to understand their role in context and how the task contributes to the aims, outreach and mission of the Church or organisation. It is an opportunity to establish who will be the key person to provide support and their role in providing guidance. It is also an opportunity to establish that volunteers have permission to ask questions and contribute ideas.

Some approaches will be informal, and others more formal. Some of the decisions you make will be pragmatic - is it easier to do introductory sessions on pre-booked dates or to just see people individually as they are ready? Is a volunteer likely to value written information to refer back to, or will they find it easier to have a more verbal introduction? Whatever you do, it has to be manageable for you and useful for the volunteer. Below are some suggestions.

5. Encouraging development

Support and training when people begin – cont'd

Some suggestions for getting volunteers started

1. One to one chat or discussion

People could be offered written information, followed by an opportunity to meet to discuss and clarify.

2. Group Sessions

These can be useful when a person starts a volunteering role. As well as using sessions during induction training, they can be helpful for ongoing development or building a team.

3. Doing the role alongside another first

'Buddying' a new volunteer with an established volunteer, for example, can help ease a new volunteer in and help develop an existing volunteer.

4. A trial opportunity or period

This can give someone the chance to try a role so that both you and they can then see whether it suits them. If you do have a trial period, make sure that it's clear when it has ended so that the volunteer knows they are now considered to be an established part of the team – this is a chance to affirm them.

5. Alongside a role description, a mutual expectations document can clarify the expectations of a mutually beneficial relationship right from the outset

See *Mutual Expectations Template* for a sample to adapt.

On-going support and development

For those undertaking specific roles over a longer period of time, more formal developmental opportunities could be appropriate, but some approaches will be more formal than others.

In the church there have been various roles where people are familiar with a pattern of front loading training for a role, and then authorising (or ordaining/commissioning/licensing) them to do it. This can mean that on-going development training or support may be given less attention than could be valuable for the volunteer's ongoing development.

5. Encouraging development

On-going support and development – cont'd

Some suggestions for ongoing development

1. Meetings with individuals or a group where you review how things are going

These can include opportunities to report back or discuss ways in which shared tasks can be improved, and ask questions etc. These gatherings could be formal, or semi-social and involve a meal.

2. Having a mentor

Various definitions exist for mentor or buddy so make sure that understandings are shared.

3. Team gatherings with a training focus

This might be formal training or a session to discuss specific questions or look at a case study.

4. Finding specialist expertise to help people do the role and develop

Think about other organisations or partners who offer opportunities for training (e.g. volunteer bureaux or organisations with specific expertise). Training could be offered to participants from several churches or projects. (Note that training offered to volunteers has to be relevant to their role otherwise it can be seen as a form of payment.)

5. Taking time out together for theological discussion and reflection

This can give all an opportunity to consider how the work being done is rooted in Christian faith.

6. Arranging a visit or short term placement

This could help a volunteer see how a similar task is undertaken in a different place or context.

5. Encouraging development

On-going support and development – cont'd

Some suggestions for ongoing development

7. Arranging formal task-focussed supervision from a specialist

This will be particularly important for certain roles that may be undertaken by volunteers, e.g. counselling.

8. A regular review (e.g. annually) with each volunteer

There is huge value for everyone in having a recognised opportunity to ask specific questions, and identify ongoing development opportunities. This can be a useful opportunity for you to discover how things are going and draw out responses you might not have expected.

“Volunteers who are appropriately supported are more effective in their role and are thus able to help secure better outcomes for the individuals and communities with whom they work. Equally, volunteers whose own development needs are addressed are better equipped to progress into further learning, volunteering or paid work” (Community Learning and Volunteering – NIACE 2014)



6. Clarifying tasks

Everything done in a church context is an outward sign of Christian faith and values: how a task is done matters as much as getting the job done. The person who serves drinks in a way that makes people feel valued is not only offering refreshment but is also sharing God's love for the world. The converse is also true!

If a task matters enough for someone to give up their time to do it then it matters enough to make sure that the person doing it actually knows what they're meant to be doing and why. It also matters that they feel that they are valued for their contribution.

Starting points

1. What is the task?

What needs to be done? Are there assumptions that you or the volunteer may be making about what a task involves? Are there aspects of the task that are essential, or which need to be done in a particular way? Are there aspects of the task that the volunteer can shape more flexibly?

2. Why does the task matter?

What are the reasons for doing this task? As well as the immediate effect, how does the task contribute to the bigger picture? How might the task, and the way in which it is done, reflect the values of the church or project?

3. Who will be a reference point and provide guidance for the volunteer?

Who will ensure that a volunteer knows what they are doing, answer any questions, and help them feel appreciated and supported? This doesn't have to default to 'the person at the top'. Designating who is to provide support can help share the load and can help develop those who take on the role.

4. Are there things that need to be in place to enable the task to be done, and done safely?

Does the volunteer have access to any equipment that may be needed? Are there particular risks and hazards associated with doing the task? What can you do to help the volunteer minimize potential problems for themselves or others? For more guidance on formalities like insurance, risk assessment and safeguarding see [Managing Formalities](#).

6. Clarifying tasks

Practicalities

Every time that someone is asked to do something, those four basic questions should be asked and answered but how formally that is done will depend on the context. It's important not to put unnecessary barriers in the way of simple or one-off acts of service.

Below are a some possible ways to ensure that it's clear what someone is being asked to do. The suggestions range from behind the scenes to fairly formal and structured and they are ideas to get you started: you may well have other ideas of what could be helpful where you are.

Suggestions for clarifying tasks

1. Checklists

In an informal situation you may not want to give the volunteer any written information about the task but it can still be useful for the person responsible to use a checklist to ensure that they have communicated all the important information.

Depending on your situation, the checklist could be the responsibility of an administrator, churchwarden or clergy person, or of the person responsible for a group of volunteers.

See *Clarifying Tasks Checklist*

2. Welcome Card

When someone takes on a role like a Godparent, they are sometimes given a card welcoming them to their responsibilities. A welcome card, also containing some key information, could be given to new volunteers when they take on a role. This could either be given informally or it could be given as part of a service or other occasion when that person's new ministry is prayed for.

See *Sample Task Card*, which can be adapted

6. Clarifying tasks

Suggestions for clarifying tasks – cont'd

3. Role Description

This is the most formal option but can still be kept quite simple and is very useful.

It represents standard good practice when working with volunteers. Like a job description, it tells someone what they are taking on, who they report to and what the role involves. Some role descriptions go into more detail, like how often someone is volunteering and on what days but this is not essential.

Please remember that although it is similar to a job description, it is important not to stray into the vocabulary of 'job' and 'work' as this blurs the legal boundaries between working and volunteering and can cause problems.

See *Sample Role Description* which can be adapted

See *Volunteer-Friendly Vocabulary* to use

6. Clarifying tasks – Case Study

We need someone new for the 'coffee' rota

Someone is going to join the rota for serving drinks at a weekly drop in session or after a service.

What is the task?

The essential task is to serve drinks to people, but does that involve

- bringing fresh milk and if so, can cost be reimbursed?
- setting up beforehand and washing up afterwards?
- leaving the service, or a session, early in order to be ready?
- responsibility for anything additional like washing tea towels?

In addition

- are donations expected or welcome from those who have drinks? How is that handled?
- is there flexibility for any personal touches about how things are done, like bringing in home made cakes, using different coffee etc?

Why does the task matter?

Serving people in this way

- gives them a drink that they otherwise wouldn't have
- makes people feel welcome and valued
- is part of creating an atmosphere where people can relax and talk to each other.

Who is going to provide support and guidance?

This could either be the person responsible for the rota or another specific person. They will

- give practical guidance on where everything is for making drinks
- explain any systems used and answer questions
- explain exactly what they do, and don't, have to do e.g. do they have to set up, wash up, bring the milk etc or does someone else do that?
- provide ongoing support, including thanking the person and sorting out any problems

What needs to be in place to enable the task to be done safely?

Who will ensure that risks have been assessed and minimised?

For example

- Is the equipment safe – has electrical equipment been checked and does the person know how to use it correctly?
- Are there hygiene guidelines to follow?
- Is there insurance to cover any accidents that might happen?
- Are there any safeguarding issues to consider?



7. Tackling difficulties

Any organisation is going to experience moments when things are misunderstood, assumptions are not shared or there is a different view of what the best future looks like. Sometimes these differences will be relatively minor and easy to resolve, sometimes they will require more conscious interventions.

For Christians, understanding that we inevitably fall short of perfection and can be forgiven may be helpful in avoiding any tendency to panic when things don't go as hoped.

Starting points

There are some particular things that it's helpful to remember when working to minimise or resolve differences with volunteers:

1. Challenges will arise

No human being is perfect so some challenges are inevitable.

2. Keep the purpose central

What you are doing has a purpose – the purpose of the church as a whole and of a particular task.

3. Set up volunteer roles in a clear way

This can minimise problems that arise, as well as giving a better foundation for dealing with those that do.

4. Be alert to issues as they emerge

This can help you find simple ways forward before things get out of hand.

5. People vary enormously

Even when you remember and act on all the points mentioned, you won't be able to control every volunteer's reaction.

Sometimes a reasonable, considered way forward will still not satisfy everyone and sometimes it's right to decide that the task takes precedence over keeping everyone happy.

7. Tackling difficulties – practicalities

Coping with differences and challenges encompasses both trying to avoid unnecessary problems and dealing with them when they arise. Below are some suggestions for both situations.

Avoiding problems

This is mostly about setting things up clearly.

It is also useful to be aware of assumptions that you or the volunteer may have. Different churches and projects have often evolved varied approaches that may deal with local priorities or challenges that have arisen in that specific place. It is better not to assume that everyone will automatically know and understand your local patterns. Giving people an early opportunity to raise issues and questions is helpful.

It is important for a new volunteer to:

- know what they are doing and why
- know who is responsible for offering guidance and support
- know and understands the current systems and any relevant guidance or procedures
- know how to raise questions and make suggestions

In a more formal situation with volunteers, clarity is aided by things like volunteer role descriptions, a simple document that outlines mutual expectations and an induction. These enable everyone to be aware of what is being done, why and how.

Go to: www.cuf.org.uk for a Sample Role Description and Mutual Expectations templates.

7. Tackling difficulties – practicalities cont'd

Tackling challenges that arise

Once you have set things up clearly, addressing issues is often about listening and responding positively when it is apparent that systems or relationships are not working as well as they might.

Almost irrespective of context, there are some issues that often arise with volunteers. For some suggested responses see *Tackling Specific Difficulties*.

If you work fairly formally with volunteers it can be worth having an agreed process to work through, that starts with an informal chat but shows ways forward to a more formalised resolution, including, if necessary, asking a volunteer not to continue in a particular role. Different approaches could be more appropriate in a parish church context, for example using mediation, but for an example of a simple but formal problem solving procedure see *Problem Solving Procedure Template*.

The following informal process can be useful for working through issues

Listen – attentively to the people involved

Respond positively – attentively to the people involved

Reflect – on what they have said and what impact their comments and suggestions might have on how you do things and on other people involved

Consult – if necessary. Will others be affected by this? Who do you need to consult so that a final decision is positively accepted? (And avoid just asking 'favourites' what they think).

Decide – is the decision yours or someone else's? What is the response to the suggestion or complaint? You don't have to agree with every suggestion or complaint but you do need to decide a way forward.

Communicate – the decision and the reasons to the individual and to others who have been involved.

7. Tackling difficulties – Case Study

A volunteer not following guidance given

Martha is a fairly new volunteer helping with a young people's group. She has had an induction, including guidance on expectations for working safely with young people. During one of the sessions the group leader finds that Martha is in a room alone with one of the 12 year olds, having a chat.

How might this be followed up by the group leader?

Listen – the group leader listens to what is going on in the room, without comment about her concern. By listening to both the helper and the young person she finds out why they were having a private chat and is also able to judge whether the atmosphere is supportive and healthy.

Respond – the group leader remains in the room and at a suitable moment checks whether the young person would like to go down to help make the drinks for the break, go back to her group or remain where she is. She opts to return to the group.

Reflect – The group leader reflects whilst she is listening. Is it better to speak to the helper immediately or at a later date? Which will be most effective in helping Martha to follow the guidance about not being in a private space with a young person but avoid her feeling undermined or accused? She also reflects that if Martha hasn't followed the guidance given to her, it may be necessary to make the point more clearly in future to new volunteers.

Consult – this isn't necessary in this case. The group leader knows that Martha has not followed the guidance and consulting others would just magnify the issue.

Decide – The group leader decides to have a quiet word with Martha after the young person has returned to her group. She decides that this is best because the session is half way through and Martha will then be able to finish the session and the leader can check at the end of the session whether Martha seems happy and affirm her before she goes home.

Communicate – The group leader compliments Martha on her positive, supportive relationship with the young person and mentions that although there will be times when it is helpful to talk to a young person alone, this must be done somewhere visible to others, either by being in a quiet corner of a public space or by leaving the door open. She listens to Martha's reaction to this information. If Martha acknowledges that she now remembers the guidance the group leader simply affirms this. If she is more defensive, the group leader reminds her of the guidance and that it is designed both to keep young people safe from harm and to protect volunteers from damaging accusations.

The group leader could then have a more general chat to help Martha move on from this particular issue.

The group leader makes a note of this incident so that if questions arise or follow up is necessary she can refer back to her notes.

Take heart! This may sound like a huge amount of thinking or action but it all takes place in a relatively short space of time and although it can feel briefly awkward, effective action is best for all concerned.

8. Tackling specific difficulties

When differences arise, there are almost limitless options for finding a way forward: the ideas below are just some suggestions. You will know your volunteers best and what works with one person or group might be something you would never do with another. It is helpful for work with volunteers to include opportunities for open and honest conversation, which offers you the chance to notice, hear and reflect on what is happening.

Issue	Some possible responses
<p>Volunteer not doing what they were asked to do</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Notice what they are doing. Compliment them on the things they are doing well. Ask them about anything that they aren't doing – and take it from there.● If they have a role description – or similar – then you can review that with them to find out what they enjoy doing and what they don't.● Are they in the right role? Could they try a different role or could this role be adapted to suit them better?● Is there some additional support they may need to be able to fulfil the role?
<p>Volunteer is operating in a way that isn't working (e.g. not turning up when expected, not operating cooperatively, not doing the things that are part of their role etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 'How are things.....?' Check if the person is enjoying the role. Start with a completely open question and if that doesn't elicit an answer then possibly give an indication of why you were concerned about them.● Work out what the problem is – Swap the rota around so that you or someone else can do some sessions alongside the person to learn more about what is going on.● Additional support/training – Arrange for them to shadow someone else to learn more about the role.● Group sessions – A session with all volunteers to consider why the task is important will not focus criticism on one individual and can enable all volunteers to share ideas of how to makes things work well.● Refer to the role description or a mutual expectations document if you have one. This could help you to have a conversation about expectations in the role.

8. Tackling specific difficulties

Issue	Some possible responses
<p>Volunteer constantly negative</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are they alright? Are there other things going on for them – do they need a bit more individual attention? ● Meet and ask them about whether they enjoy the role – this may be done informally over a cup of tea. You may discover that they do enjoy it! You can then explore what things frustrate them and whether they are things that can be changed or not. It may be that they would prefer another role and that this one isn't working for them anymore. ● Sometimes some dedicated time really listening to them can defuse things and help put relationships on a more positive footing. ● Sometimes it's worth explicitly reminding volunteers to come to you with problems so that you can help with a solution rather than people grumbling to one another.
<p>Relatively new volunteer makes a suggestion about something that could be done differently</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Try the listen, respond, reflect, consult, decide, communicate process as outlined in <i>Tackling Difficulties</i>. ● If it's simple and uncontroversial and you think it might make a positive improvement, making suggested changes demonstrates that you value your volunteers and their views. ● If you think the idea needs more thought then you could let the volunteer know that you'll ensure there is an opportunity to raise it in the next meeting if appropriate. There could then be an open discussion, allowing all volunteers to share their views.
<p>Volunteer(s) not being welcoming to a new volunteer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask the 'unfriendly' volunteer how they think the new person is getting on. This can then lead into a conversation where you have a chance to affirm how important it is to help someone settle in, be able to ask questions, feel part of the team etc. ● Consider whether you could have a meeting/training session where you get the volunteers together and include activities that split people into groups/pairs and give opportunities for new volunteer to contribute in a structured environment. ● Possibly have a social session where volunteers have a chance to get together.

8. Tackling specific difficulties

Issue	Some possible responses
<p>A new volunteer has experience from another place but the existing volunteers appear to feel threatened</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Talk to the volunteer about why some of their suggestions worked in that other place- spend time listening attentively and also help them reflect about how the new context might be different – taking it seriously but helping them to analyse and recognise the differences. ● Look at the rota. Find someone confident and well established and pair them up so that the new volunteer can be affirmed by someone who doesn't feel threatened and the established volunteer can help the new volunteer settle into the different context and tease out which ideas might transfer and which might not.
<p>A volunteer with a strong personality is becoming dominant in the group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Actively look for opportunities to ask others in the group to take a lead. ● Re-establish the parity of the group. Perhaps in a meeting or event that gets feedback, ensuring that whatever questions are asked of the group you then take feedback in a structured way that gives everyone a chance to speak rather than defaulting to the usual suspects.
<p>A volunteer in a public role talks about people negatively and audibly (e.g. at a Drop-in or welcoming people to services)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If you are around when it happens then a clear look or a gentle comment might be enough to highlight that the volunteer has strayed away from their role. You need to judge whether this has hit home though. ● 'I was surprised to hear...' could be a good opener for a conversation. ● Find the chance (or pre-arrange it) to have a chat directly with that volunteer. Make them aware that you have heard them making comments, refer them back to the purpose of the role and make it clear that negative judgements are not part of that – and why.

If you have suggestions of other common scenarios or solutions that you are happy to share, please send to: amy.page@cuf.org.uk



9. Taking on volunteers with additional support needs

We are all created in the image of God and have our unique part to play in God's world. When the church is able to welcome and affirm the gifts of all it mirrors the inclusive nature of God and the diversity of God's world.

Sometimes it is easy to see what people's abilities are. Sometimes it requires a bit more effort to discern potential and to provide the support necessary for that potential to be realised.

Starting points

The points below may help you to consider what is involved:

1. People have "gifts that differ" as St Paul reminded the early church.

- You want to empower volunteers to use the gifts that God has given them.
- For some that will be using skills they are already aware of.
- For some it will be about developing in new ways.

2. Involvement is important and is one the ways in which churches can encourage people to develop and mature as disciples, as well as building a community where all are valued.

- Sometimes the focus of volunteering will be on the volunteer's opportunity for involvement rather than on just getting something done.
- This type of volunteering can be hugely beneficial for all concerned but requires you to be able to invest energy and time in considering how to make it work.

3. There may be obstacles that hinder some people getting involved

- These might include things like lack of confidence, a need for additional support, some adjustments to how the task has previously been done, physical adjustments to space or equipment etc.
- It pays to be realistic (but also imaginative) about the obstacles and how it is possible to overcome them.

4. Some may have a ministry to enable others to be involved

- Some people are good at enabling others to use or discover their potential and overcome any possible obstacles.
- Some may have specific skills or experience, such as mentoring, while other may have unnamed but invaluable gifts.

9. Taking on volunteers with additional support needs – practicalities

1. Identifying different volunteers' needs

All volunteers have needs: some are standard and some require more thought to respond to. In order to adapt to different people's needs, it is necessary to identify any barriers that might make it hard for them to be involved.

- Sometimes the need will be for physical or practical adjustments (e.g. the volunteer using a wheelchair).
- Sometimes a volunteer will have particular support needs. (e.g. fuller explanations, another volunteer alongside to mentor them etc).
- Some volunteer involvement will include addressing particular formalities (e.g. for those claiming benefits or with a criminal record).

2. Making reasonable adjustments

There is no legal requirement to make adjustments for volunteers, because they are not paid employees. However the church can reflect the inclusive nature of God by enabling all people to use their gifts.

- A lot of advice and guidance is available about making adjustments in order to overcome particular barriers experienced by people with specific conditions. Many specialist organisations supporting people with a particular need can offer valuable guidance and suggestions.
- NCVO has useful *information about* equality and diversity including some straightforward guidance on inclusive volunteering.

3. Volunteers in specific circumstances

It is possible, and often helpful, for people to volunteer whilst on benefits.

- See www.gov.uk/volunteering for guidance about volunteering when on benefits.
- Be aware of the complexity of getting involved in volunteer schemes that are linked directly to people's benefits.

A criminal record need not be a bar to all types of volunteering and it can be important for those with criminal records to be given an opportunity to provide evidence of their skills and willingness to be involved.

4. Balancing idealism and reality

The church rightly wants to involve and support people, but needs to discern which particular roles and contexts will enable a volunteer to flourish and which will not be appropriate. This is for the benefit of the volunteer as well as the church.

- A realistic conversation about what someone is hoping for and what can be provided is an important part of matching volunteers to roles in a way that is positive for all.
- It is important to treat people as individuals rather than make assumptions based on stereotypes.

10. Doing a risk assessment

This flowchart takes you through the process of doing a risk assessment, based on the Health and Safety Executive's excellent leaflet *'Five steps to risk assessment'*. The HSE website has sample risk assessments for a *charity shop* and for a *café* that might be helpful guides.



Word templates are available for you to adapt for your own use:

- A *Risk Assessment template based on the HSE samples*
- A *Risk Assessment template using a scoring system* to give a Risk Rating (combining severity and likelihood)

Volunteer-friendly vocabulary

Volunteering, because it isn't contractual or paid, is dependent on good relationships and any language used should reflect that. Documents should use the language of mutual agreement rather than of employment, contract and obligation.

This is important not only because it helps contribute to a foundation of mutually respectful relationships but also because if you imply that volunteers are in an employment relationship then there is a potential danger that employment legislation could be said to apply (e.g. minimum wage, unfair dismissal etc.)

There are words that can be used to help clarify expectations for everyone, but without implying contractual obligations on either side. In a church setting you may choose to use language that recognises volunteering as an act of discipleship or service but you may still find the suggestions below useful supplements.

Terms to avoid	Terms you might use	
Contract	● Volunteer agreement	● Covenant
Job / employment / job description	● Role ● Ministry description	● Role description ● Role profile
Vacancy	● Volunteering opportunity	● Opportunity to serve
Person specification	● Personal qualities	● Useful skills
Interview	● Informal chat	● Informal interview
Payment / pay	● Reimburse expenses	● Cover expenses
Work	● Activity	● Task
Duties	● Key elements of the role	● Key tasks
Disciplinary or grievance procedure	● Problem solving procedures ● Strategies for tackling difficulties	
Voluntary worker / employee	● Volunteer	
Terms & conditions / obligations / rights / entitlements	● Hopes	● Expectations

Sample – Volunteer role card

Remember to offer to show hospitality. There are some who by doing so have entertained angels unaware.
Hebrews 13:2

The Welcome Team greets people who visit our Drop-In Centre.

Thank you for taking on this important role, which helps us to ensure that every visitor to the centre feels welcome and valued in the way that God values all of us. We hope that you enjoy this role and that it will help you grow and flourish.

Remember to offer to show hospitality. There are some who by doing so have entertained angels unaware.
Hebrews 13:2


Sharon Someone coordinates the Welcome Team. Please ask her if you have any questions or suggestions. sharon.someone@churchwebsite.co.uk 01234 567891

If you are unable to speak to Sharon, please get in touch with David Someone2 another.contact@somewhereelse.com or 01987 654321


We are the Body of Christ!

All who help as volunteers in St James are contributing to the ministry of this Church, using each of our gifts to the best of our ability in the service of God and neighbour.

All we do here is our collective responsibility, so support and guidance will be offered by the Welcome Coordinator, and we ask you to let this person know if there are any problems so we can resolve them together.



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Sample – Volunteer task card

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St James Church
Church Lane
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