

Inclusive Volunteering Toolkit

Key issues:

- **Recruiting volunteers** - ensure that your organisation appeals to diverse groups.
- **Retaining volunteers** - ensure all volunteers know that you recognise their needs and value their contributions.
- **Resourcing participation** - may require some adjustments, which can be in the form of equipment or of changing roles and tasks.

Introduction

The voluntary community sector (VCS) has many significant roles including campaigner, innovator, employer of paid workers, and provider of services to the most vulnerable and neglected groups in society. Unpaid volunteers (with VCS and other organisations) make an increasingly important contribution to social and economic wellbeing. Volunteering is a freely given gift of time to benefit communities, organisations and individuals. Volunteers themselves can gain friendships, skills, enjoyment and confidence. This toolkit is for organisations that involve volunteers. Its aim is to assist them in recruiting, retaining and supporting volunteers from groups whose participation tends to be low, in particular older people and people with disabilities.

Ensuring that volunteering is inclusive and open to all is not easy. It requires active commitment and hard work from many individuals, each with special knowledge and their own stake in your organisation - volunteers, staff, clients, funders, governing bodies and others. This toolkit is designed to alert you, and your organisation and stakeholders, to key issues. It will encourage you to have fruitful discussions, and to turn them into action. It is not cast in stone. You may choose to change, develop or adapt it to meet your own needs.

The nature and size of organisations that use volunteers are extremely varied. Small charities constitute the vast majority of the UK based voluntary sector but just 14 organisations generate 10% of the sector's income. Volunteer roles include a vast range of activities and levels of responsibility. Not all components of the toolkit will be equally relevant to local community groups, to national 'super charities' and other volunteer involving organisations. It will require judgement to select the tools from the toolkit that are useful and relevant.

Using the Inclusive Volunteering Toolkit

The toolkit sets the scene with a **'did you know?'** section. Then it is organised around 3 headings, each beginning with the letter R. They reflect the most significant sets of challenges associated with inclusive volunteering. They are intended to encourage participants to ask themselves and others useful questions.

The three Rs

Resourcing participation

Recruiting volunteers

Retaining volunteers

The toolkit includes, under each of the three Rs, a series of 'self assessment statements' designed to provide a framework for evaluating readiness to work towards more inclusive volunteering. You are invited to rate your organisation on a scale 0 – 3, where:

0 = Nothing - we have not thought about this yet

1 = We are aware of this but have not acted

2 = We are aware and have taken some action

3 = We are confident on this point

This simple form of scoring is intended as a device for helping you to assemble ideas on what you already do well, and to consider further action you could take. There is no 'right' answer. The value of the exercise lies not so much in the score itself as in the process of discussion and reflection by which you arrive at it.

There follows a **"next steps" section** with suggestions for practical activities. A wealth of evidence from research, consultation and published sources has been drawn upon in making this toolkit. It is intended to complement, not duplicate, other material.

The final section is an annotated guide to **freely available sources of information**, advice and support.

The Inclusive Volunteering Toolkit can be used in a number of ways:

- Individually, for example by a volunteer manager to help assess gaps in existing practice and to identify action for more inclusive volunteering.
- Collectively, as set of tools that a group within an organisation (or more than one organisation) can use to help them to work together to plan and implement more inclusive volunteering.
- Prospectively - to help to envision, plan and manage inclusive volunteering.
- Retrospectively/diagnostically - to explore strengths and weaknesses.

Did You Know?

- An estimated 1.1 million full-time workers would be needed to replace the contribution of volunteers in the UK.
- People aged 60 and over made up more than a fifth of the UK population in 2001, for the first time outnumbering children aged under 16.
- The number of people aged under 50 is set to fall by two per cent by 2016, while the number aged between 50 and 69 is set to increase by 17 per cent.
- More people (29%) report suffering age discrimination than any other form of discrimination.
- There are 11 million disabled adults in Great Britain, over one in five of the adult population.
- Currently only 6% of all volunteers are disabled people.
- The Disability Discrimination Act (1995), rules that services and employment should be accessible to disabled people. Volunteering is not mentioned but some forms of volunteering (e.g. volunteering required in training for a job and volunteering in some public participation roles) can be covered.
- Barriers to volunteering are both practical and psychological. There is evidence that organisations tend to stress the practical barriers whereas individuals feel that psychological barriers are more damaging.

Resourcing participation

Issues to be aware of

Provision of specialist equipment may be needed to enable some individuals to participate, for example a screen reader for a visually impaired person who needs to use a computer.

Adjustments may include: taxis, interpreters, IT equipment, high-contrast colours on internal signs and edges of steps, personal care assistants.

Not all adjustments cost money – for some people changing working arrangements, swapping duties around or allocating additional rest breaks will help.

If you are unsure of what adjustments are needed, ask the volunteer.

Self assessment checklist - How are you doing?

We always consult with the individual when considering making adjustments.

- 0 - Nothing - we have not thought about this yet
- 1 - We are aware of this but have not acted
- 2 - We are aware and have taken some action
- 3 - We are confident on this point

All volunteers know what forms of support the organisation offers them, and who to contact in the case of any problems.

- 0 - Nothing - we have not thought about this yet
- 1 - We are aware of this but have not acted
- 2 - We are aware and have taken some action
- 3 - We are confident on this point

There is an individual responsible for ensuring all barriers are identified and adjustments made.

- 0 - Nothing - we have not thought about this yet
- 1 - We are aware of this but have not acted
- 2 - We are aware and have taken some action
- 3 - We are confident on this point

Recruiting volunteers

Issues to be aware of

People may not know where to go to find out about volunteering.

Word of mouth is an effective way of recruiting volunteers but relying on it alone can lead to new volunteers always coming from the same groups of people.

Over-formal recruitment procedures can put people off.

Staff, volunteers or clients may have unhelpful pre-conceptions about the capabilities of older people and disabled people.

Excluded groups may believe that volunteering is not for them.

Psychological barriers include **myths which equate volunteering with the activities of 'mainstream' groups within society**

Be aware of potential practical barriers to volunteering, e.g. lack of money and lack of transport.

Self assessment checklist - How are you doing?

Our local Volunteer Centre has regularly updated information about our organisation and the volunteer roles available in it.

- 0 - Nothing - we have not thought about this yet
- 1 - We are aware of this but have not acted
- 2 - We are aware and have taken some action
- 3 - We are confident on this point

Our profile encourages people from diverse backgrounds to consider volunteering (e.g. older people and disabled people appear in case studies and publicity as volunteers and not only as people receiving services)

- 0 - Nothing - we have not thought about this yet
- 1 - We are aware of this but have not acted
- 2 - We are aware and have taken some action
- 3 - We are confident on this point

When we interview people who are thinking of becoming volunteers we ensure they are confident that we are interested in their strengths and the skills they wish to develop.

- 0 - Nothing - we have not thought about this yet
- 1 - We are aware of this but have not acted
- 2 - We are aware and have taken some action
- 3 - We are confident on this point

We have compared our own volunteer-force with the community in which we work and with our client/user group.

- 0 - Nothing - we have not thought about this yet
- 1 - We are aware of this but have not acted
- 2 - We are aware and have taken some action
- 3 - We are confident on this point

We are aware of what prevents people from volunteering with us and actively try to overcome these barriers.

- 0 - Nothing - we have not thought about this yet
- 1 - We are aware of this but have not acted
- 2 - We are aware and have taken some action
- 3 - We are confident on this point

We use a range of different approaches to reach potential volunteers, including those who may not yet have considered volunteering as something they want to try.

- 0 - Nothing - we have not thought about this yet
- 1 - We are aware of this but have not acted
- 2 - We are aware and have taken some action
- 3 - We are confident on this point

Retaining volunteers

Issues to be aware of

Volunteers are more likely to stay if they see that their contribution to your organisation is valued.

Successful volunteering occurs where there is balance between the volunteer's needs and the organisation's needs being met.

Volunteers' expectations and needs can change over time.

Small tokens of recognition (e.g. social events, certificates) can make an enormous difference to individuals' sense of belonging and to their continued commitment.

Volunteer managers need advice, guidance and support, whether that be internal or from volunteer managers from other organisations.

Health & Safety should not be used as a pretext to justify treating people less favourably simply because of their age or disability.

Recognise the wide range of disabilities - only a minority of people with disabilities are wheelchair users.

Self assessment checklist - How are you doing?

The organisation has a written policy on volunteer involvement, based on equal opportunities principles, which sets out the procedures for supporting and protecting volunteers

- 0 - Nothing - we have not thought about this yet
- 1 - We are aware of this but have not acted
- 2 - We are aware and have taken some action
- 3 - We are confident on this point

A variety of tasks is available which can be undertaken by a range of people, while still meeting our needs and aims.

- 0 - Nothing - we have not thought about this yet
- 1 - We are aware of this but have not acted
- 2 - We are aware and have taken some action
- 3 - We are confident on this point

Tasks are adapted to suit the needs and interests of individual volunteers

- 0 - Nothing - we have not thought about this yet
- 1 - We are aware of this but have not acted
- 2 - We are aware and have taken some action
- 3 - We are confident on this point

We have procedures in place to ensure we know whether or not we are meeting our volunteers' expectations

- 0 - Nothing - we have not thought about this yet
- 1 - We are aware of this but have not acted
- 2 - We are aware and have taken some action
- 3 - We are confident on this point

Volunteers are advised of, and understand, guidelines for addressing situations where volunteers act in discriminatory ways, or where volunteers themselves are in receipt of such treatment.

- 0 - Nothing - we have not thought about this yet
- 1 - We are aware of this but have not acted
- 2 - We are aware and have taken some action
- 3 - We are confident on this point

Volunteers are informed of all relevant changes in the organisation which affect their work.

- 0 - Nothing - we have not thought about this yet
- 1 - We are aware of this but have not acted
- 2 - We are aware and have taken some action
- 3 - We are confident on this point

Next Steps

Suggestion for Resourcing, Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers

The issues and checklists in this toolkit will help to identify what you are already doing well, and point to ways of making your policy and day to day practice more inclusive. There follows a set of practical steps you can take under each of the **three Rs**.

Resourcing - things to do

Consult with the individual when considering making adjustments as they will know their own condition and what adjustments might be best.

Ensure you have allowed sufficient budget and staff time to support and manage the volunteers.

Note the Disability Equality Duty (DED) that has applied to public sector bodies since December 2006. When seeking funding from the public sector highlight any additional costs for making adjustments which may be needed for disabled volunteers and link this to the requirements of the Duty.

Recruiting - things to do

Take care to ensure that role specifications are not discriminatory, for example requiring a person to hold a driving license when other arrangements could be made.

Use positive images so that older people and disabled people are seen as the volunteers and not always as those being helped.

Analyse the diversity of the community you work with compared to the volunteer team.

Ask the question, 'who isn't volunteering with us?' If people from certain groups are not included, look for the possible reasons.

Be creative in thinking of volunteer roles that are very part time

Be creative in thinking of volunteer roles that make use of different life experiences.

Provide information on how to overcome practical barriers, e.g. we pay expenses.

Retaining - things to do

Build positive attitudes towards older and disabled people e.g. equality training, briefing sessions, videos, information booklets.

Within your organisation ask what attitudes to older and disabled volunteers exist among staff and volunteers.

Ensure your policy includes specific issues which apply to disabled people, e.g., approach to making adjustments.

Carry out a risk assessment to ensure that risky situations are anticipated and managed. This assessment should help you to avoid health & safety or insurance being used automatically to justify unequal treatment. (There is a toolkit on Risk Assessment available from Volunteer England – see ‘Useful Resources’).

Say “thank you” to volunteers and demonstrate that their contribution is appreciated, through social events and award ceremonies involving local dignitaries.

Use Volunteers’ Week (1st-7th June) to celebrate your volunteers’ achievements.

Useful resources

Volunteering England works to support an increase in the quality, quantity, impact and accessibility of volunteering throughout England. **Volunteering England’s** website <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/> has a wealth of useful resources. Of particular relevance to inclusive volunteering is an article on taking a creative approach to designing ways volunteers can contribute <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/Resources/goodpracticebank/Core+Themes/recruitment/creatingafairandwelcomingapplicationprocess.htm>

There is also a valuable **Risk Assessment Toolkit** which is likely to help volunteer-involving organizations to avoid unequal treatment on grounds of assumed risk. http://www.volunteering.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/2B108CBD-0BBD-4DB3-A4D2-D987B885D1F3/0/Risk_toolkit.pdf

The **Goldstar exemplar programme** is a national initiative which aims to encourage and enable voluntary organisations and projects to realise the potential of volunteers from socially excluded or disadvantaged groups. It highlights good practices that already exist. It also provides useful material such as examples of posters, applications packs and interview templates. http://www.goldstar.org.uk/practice_guides.html

Volunteering in the Third Age (VITA) aims to remove barriers to volunteering by people over 65. The VITA website provides FAQs, case studies and links to a wide range of information about ways in which organisations can benefit from recruiting and retaining older volunteers. <http://www.wrvs.org.uk/vita/home.htm>

The **Disability Right Commission (DRC)** seeks to improve access to volunteering opportunities for disabled people by providing advice and guidance to organisations offering these opportunities. The DRC's thorough guidance document ***Recruiting, Retaining and Developing Disabled Volunteers*** is designed to help organisations create barrier free volunteering opportunities for disabled people. The guidance includes an overview of the Disability Discrimination Act and Disability Equality Duty (DED), and practical advice on making adjustments and funding them. Available at http://www.drc-gb.org/employers_and_service_provider/employment/recruiting_retaining_and_deve.aspx

Investing in Volunteers Standard is the UK quality standard for organisations which involve volunteers in their work. There is a toolkit at <http://iiv.investinginvolunteers.org.uk/> (Registration necessary).

The **Association of Volunteer Managers** provides support to volunteer managers. Access to the website is free (registration required to participate in discussions) www.volunteermanagers.org.uk. Full membership is available for a small fee.

MENCAP is an organisation that works with people with a learning disability and their families and carers, professionals working in the field, and volunteers. Mencap wants to raise awareness of how organisations and communities can recruit, support and value volunteers with a learning disability. It has produced a booklet *Volunteering for Everyone*, which included case studies and pointers on good practice. Available at http://www.volunteering.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/E24F3E46-5033-4134-A83D-2E858CC49330/0/mencap_final.pdf

SCOPE campaigns against disablism, which it defines as discriminatory, oppressive or abusive behaviour arising from the belief that disabled people are inferior to others. Volunteers are vital for leading and delivering Scope's work and it proactively promotes inclusive volunteering. Scope is creating an 'Inclusive Volunteering' training programme to ensure volunteer involving organisations are aware of the needs and benefits of disabled volunteers. For more information see <http://www.scope.org.uk/support/volunteer/index.shtml>.

A summary Scope report *Time to get Equal in Volunteering* can be viewed at <http://www.ozvpm.com/resourcebank/documents/ExecutiveSummary.pdf>

CONNECT is a national charity working towards a world where people with aphasia (a communication disability usually caused by stroke) can find opportunity and fulfilment. Connect supports people with aphasia to take up volunteering opportunities. Connect's 'Access to Volunteering' project demonstrates how people with aphasia can contribute as volunteers in a wide range of volunteering organisations

http://www.ukconnect.org/innovationprojects_32_161.aspx

Connect has drawn upon these experiences to produce an 'ideas guide' that will give guidance to organisations who wish to recruit volunteers who have aphasia. (Available from July 2007)

Retired and Senior Volunteers (RSVP) is a free standing programme within Community Service Volunteers (CSV). RSVP encourages people aged 50+ to volunteer in their local area in England, Scotland and Wales. It particularly welcomes those aged 80+. For more information see

<http://www.csv-rsvp.org.uk/site/home.htm>

The 21st Century Volunteer is not specifically about disabled or older volunteers. It argues for rethinking volunteer roles to fit busy lives and meet high expectations. It proposes 'packaging' volunteering opportunities into small specific blocks of tasks with clear outcomes

Available at

http://www.nfpsynergy.net/downloads/nfpSynergy-The_21st_Century_volunteer-November_2005.pdf

This document has been prepared by Professor Irene Hardill, Nottingham Trent University and Dr Susan Baines, Newcastle University. It has been sponsored by the Economic and Social Research Council under the IMPACT Grant Scheme.