



## Induction and training

When a child or young person starts volunteering, it is important to give them a thorough induction so they are aware of all aspects of their role, the tasks they will be doing and the environment they will be working in.

You must treat young volunteers as staff members and provide them with the same health and safety protection you give to your staff.

Provide young volunteers with the opportunity to access training to enhance their knowledge and/or gain qualification, also provide them with opportunities to use their skills. Organisations can ask other agencies to support training, often at no cost.

Young people need training most when they start volunteering; they need it to increase their capabilities and competencies to a level where they can volunteer without putting themselves and others at risk. It is not enough to make training available. You should make sure it is undertaken and check that key messages have been understood. Young people will also need training and instruction on the hazards and risks present in the workplace and on the preventive and control measures put in place to protect their health and safety. This training should include a basic introduction to health and safety, for example including first aid, fire and evacuation procedures, safeguarding – who to go to if concerns arise, professional relationships, equal opportunities and emergency procedures.

Young volunteers are likely to need more supervision than adults. You will find that effective supervision will help you assess whether the young person has the necessary capacity and competence for the role. This training and the proper supervision of young people is essential because of their relative immaturity and unfamiliarity with the working environment. As such, young volunteers should not be left unattended and it is safer if young volunteers are supervised by two or more adults.

### **Provide appropriate equipment**

If you have children or young people volunteering you will need to ensure you provide appropriate equipment for their size and strength. For example, if they are undertaking a gardening project you may need small sized protective gloves and smaller or lighter spades.

### **Brief your team**

When working with young volunteers at least one person should be present at all times who has a successful DBS clearance. Young people shouldn't be left alone with members of the public or other staff who are not DBS checked. In order to ensure all staff have a clear understanding of safeguarding procedures and professional boundaries it is good practice to provide training and information for staff before they undertake supporting young volunteers.

Points to consider:

- Who is going to take full responsibility for the young people and ensure full training and support is given to the young people and staff?
- Who is going to deliver training and when?
- Who is the contact for safeguarding issues?
- What is included in training – safeguarding, rights and responsibilities, professional boundaries, health and safety, communication, dealing with difficult situations?

An organisation needs to ensure young people have its contact number, so they can inform you if they cannot make a session. Likewise, you need emergency contact numbers for the young people.

### **Support**

Young volunteers may require additional support in order to be able to carry out their role in a safe and effective way. An important point to remember is that everyone is an individual and some young people may not yet be very mature and may be unfamiliar with the working environment. Some volunteers will need a lot of support, where others may be more confident and not require this additional level of attention. Consider buddying new young volunteers up with experienced volunteers.

Support does not have to have a formal character: it can be a friendly chat over a cup of coffee. Having an open door policy can prove to be a great support tool for young volunteers, with them being able to approach you whenever they feel they need your advice.

Holding one-to-one meetings can provide a great opportunity for an open two-way conversation that gives volunteers a chance to provide and receive feedback about their volunteering work.

Finally, respect your young volunteers. Thank them for their efforts, show them that they are needed, and provide them with opportunity to contribute with their ideas. Showing young people gratitude does not need to be at a cost - good supervision and saying thank you makes a difference. However, small celebrations and awards evenings aid recognition and bring volunteers together.