



## Using volunteers within your organisation

### Planning for volunteers in your organisation

Careful planning is the key to building a good foundation for involving volunteers.

Consider the following:

- Is everyone in the organisation aware of plans to involve volunteers?
- How will different people be affected – staff, trustees, service users, other volunteers?
- Do we have the human resources to adequately support volunteers?
- Are the people who will support volunteers suitably skilled and trained?
- Have we budgeted the costs of involving volunteers such as payment of out of pocket expenses, training, staff costs for supervision and admin costs for DBS checks if required?
- Are we able to provide roles that are rewarding for volunteers and meet the needs of the organisation?
- Do we have the necessary space and resources (such as a spare desk or computer)?
- Volunteers bring fresh ideas, enthusiasm and experience – are we ready for this?
- Have we considered any risks associated with involving volunteers? (this includes risks to the volunteers and to the organisation)
- Is our insurance cover adequate?
- What policies and procedures do we already have that should be reviewed in the light of involving volunteers?
- Do we need any new policies and/or procedures such as a Volunteer Policy?

### When is it not appropriate to involve volunteers?

- When answers to the questions above have raised issues for the organisation that cannot be resolved
- To replace a paid member of staff
- When volunteers will be delivering a service that is usually paid for and the recipients could clearly pay
- When the work is intended to make a profit

## Creating roles for volunteers

For a successful volunteer programme the benefits need to be two way. The roles that the volunteers undertake should assist the organisation to meet its aims whilst at the same time being of benefit to the volunteer.

The key when designing new roles is to ensure that this is so. For roles to be meaningful it should be possible to describe how they contribute to the organisations overall aim.

## Different ways of volunteering



## Who should be involved in the process?

Everyone in the organisation should be aware of that you intend to introduce volunteering or when you create new roles.

- Staff should be consulted, particularly when the involvement of the volunteer/s will affect their workload
- Existing volunteers may have valuable insights and it is always helpful to look at roles from a volunteer's perspective
- Service users/clients may have ideas about how services could be enhanced or developed with the help of volunteers
- Be aware that all three groups could feel threatened by the introduction of new roles and may need re-assurance - for example that volunteers will not be used as a substitute for paid staff or that the quality of a service will not be less because it is delivered by volunteers
- Trustees, though volunteers themselves, will through their governance role need to ensure that any organisational policies are consistent with involving volunteers and include the volunteers where appropriate

## Some points to consider

- Are you able to attract a broad range of people by having opportunities that include those that can be done by any willing helper and those that are more specialised and require particular expertise?
- Is there flexibility in when the role/s can be carried out to fit in with the availability of volunteers?
- Is the role of benefit to the volunteer? How interesting/challenging is it? What will they gain through it?
- Are you able to involve volunteers who may have additional needs? What support is available? What form could this take?
- Do you have the resources available to support the role/s - supervision time, physical resources (desk, PC etc.)?
- Does the nature of the role require taking up references and/or DBS checks