

# Devolution Checklist – 07

## Making the most of Volunteers



<b>Context/ Overview</b>		
<p>Communities across Cornwall are continuing to become more resilient and take greater control of their own destiny by making more local decisions, by owning and managing local assets and by delivering the services people need. Many organisations across the county already utilise volunteers to help run their organisation and to help provide local services but this number has the potential to increase in the future.</p> <p>This checklist is aimed at providing guidance to local groups who already use volunteers and those groups that are looking to use volunteers for the first time in an organised way, rather than volunteering in emergencies and spontaneous social action</p>		
<b>Topic/ Issue</b>	<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Useful Links / Further Information</b>
<b>Identifying Opportunities</b>	<p>It is important that as the organisation providing the volunteering opportunity understands the limitations and commitments required when utilising volunteers.</p> <p>A volunteer is someone who gives their time freely for the benefit of others, with no expectation of financial reward. You need to try to understand what motivates people to volunteer in both individual and group activity. This can include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wanting to help people</li> <li>• wanting to help their local community</li> <li>• keeping fit and healthy</li> <li>• learning new skills</li> <li>• meeting needs friends</li> <li>• feeling valued</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• having fun!</li> </ul> <p>Volunteers should not just be used as a cost saving measure but as a way of adding value to existing provision. You need to consider if the role you have in mind appropriate for a volunteer?</p>	
<b>Role Profile</b>	<p>Role Profiles are useful for both volunteers and organisations in defining the relevant responsibilities and expectations of all parties involved. However, it is important that any paperwork cannot be misconstrued as any form of employment or other contract.</p> <p>Therefore it is recommended that you don't alter existing documentation but start from fresh.</p> <p>Consider what pre-requisites are really necessary – you may be missing out on potentially excellent volunteers because they don't have a specific qualification.</p>	
<b>Volunteer Agreement</b>	<p>You may wish to have some kind of Volunteer Agreement that sets out the expectations of both parties. However, you must ensure that this cannot be interpreted as a contract of employment.</p>	
<b>Advertising</b>	<p>In trying to recruit volunteers it is important to utilise all the tools available to you.</p> <p>Volunteer Cornwall host the <i>Do It</i> website which allows you to advertise your opportunity for free.</p> <p>Consider newspapers, noticeboards, local or interest newsletters, websites and social media.</p> <p>Think about developing case studies especially if you have interesting opportunities, this can not only help with recruitment but can also showcase the work of your organisation.</p> <p>Don't forget one of the most effective communication tools is to ask people directly!</p>	<p><a href="https://do-it.org/#/">https://do-it.org/#/</a></p>

<p><b>Recruitment</b></p>	<p>For most volunteering roles a formal interview is unnecessary and potentially a barrier for recruitment however, it is important that there is a discussion so that both the recruiting organisation and volunteer have the opportunity to understand the expectations</p> <p>It may be that a volunteer who comes forward isn't suitable for roles you have available – try to make sure you refer them to someone else who might be able to help and harness their enthusiasm.</p>	<p>Volunteers are not protected by the Equality Act</p>
<p><b>Flexibility</b></p>	<p>The more flexibility you can offer with things like times and roles, the more people will be interested in applying. Consider allowing volunteers to set their own times or volunteer from home.</p>	
<p><b>Expenses</b></p>	<p>Volunteers should be reimbursed for all genuine out of pocket expenses incurred including, but not limited, to parking and meal allowances – often up to a set maximum. Some organisations also cover the travel to the volunteering location and/or care costs.</p> <p>Volunteers should provide receipts and organisations should repay the exact costs.</p> <p>You may decide to cover child care or other caring costs – by talking with potential volunteers you can determine if their caring commitments are a barrier to volunteering that you can assist with.</p> <p>Maximum mileage rates are set by the Inland Revenue. The allowance should be reviewed annually. Benchmarking against other volunteer organisations is a good way of determining the current market rate especially those organisations which use a lot of volunteer drivers such as Age UK.</p> <p>Voluntary work should not affect entitlement to any benefit.</p>	
<p><b>Inductions and</b></p>	<p>Training should be role specific and can be informal.</p>	

<b>Volunteer Training</b>	<p>Inductions should be undertaken, especially for group activity but they can be fairly informal.</p> <p>If the role requires the use of equipment it is important that the relevant training is provided a risk assessment should be undertaken into the tasks to be performed to assess the level of training required.</p> <p>Safeguarding training should be provided where appropriate.</p> <p>Volunteers in some roles may need time to acquire skills and knowledge so be patient and offer support.</p>	
<b>Benefits</b>	<p>Receipt of state benefits should not prevent someone from volunteering, but volunteers should be encouraged to talk to Job Centre Plus before starting volunteering.</p>	
<b>Staff Training</b>	<p>Staff who have been trained in managing volunteers can vastly increase the quality of the volunteering experience.</p> <p>Managing volunteers can be an excellent opportunity for your own employees and can often be the first step to managing staff however, remember volunteers bring additional challenges and your staff should be supported and trained in the role.</p>	
<b>Supervision</b>	<p>Each volunteer should have a named individual supervisor with responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• for agreeing the scope of their role,</li> <li>• providing an induction and appropriate ongoing support,</li> <li>• ensuring that volunteers are aware of and operate within the scope of relevant policies and procedures and</li> <li>• resolving any issues that arise in the course of the volunteering relationship.</li> </ul>	
<b>Safeguarding</b>	<p>It is not always necessary for a DBS check to be undertaken. However, an enhanced criminal record check should be undertaken for all positions in regulated activity as currently defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (and</p>	<p>Disclosure and Barring Service:  <a href="http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/about">www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/about</a></p>

	<p>as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012). You should undertake a criminal record checks for appointment to roles for which a check is required. The Disclosure and Barring Service provides clear guidelines relating to posts that meet the definition of regulated activity and that are eligible for an enhanced disclosure.</p> <p>You should not just rely on a DBS check but ensure that your backend processes are robust e.g. having two people checking money or working with vulnerable people.</p>	
<b>TUPE</b>	You can't TUPE volunteers! If you are taking over a service that traditionally utilises volunteers then you need to ensure that you factor in losing a number in the transfer and therefore will possibly need to recruit.	
<b>Turnover</b>	You must accept that there will be a degree of volunteer turnover. Volunteers may be using the opportunity to gain specific experience or training to gain paid employment. This should be factored in when planning a service utilising volunteers – unlike employees if you pay for a training course you can't make someone pay it back if they leave.	
<b>Reviews</b>	Reviews should be undertaken at appropriate intervals. However, it is important to note that you shouldn't be assessing how well they are performing in the role. Offer individual appraisals to talk about how they are getting on but try and focus too on what difference they are making.	
<b>Underage Volunteers</b>	<p>Volunteers must be at least 14 years of age. Before accepting a volunteer application from an under 18 year old, the consent of a parent or guardian must be obtained. Clear information regarding the activities involved must be provided to the parent or guardian and the volunteer.</p> <p>Volunteers who are under 18 years of age must not volunteer before 7am or after 7pm or for more than two hours on any school day or Sunday. Enhanced supervision is required and</p>	

	<p>robust safeguarding measures should be in place.</p> <p>Volunteers who are under 18 should also have a minimum of 2 weeks free from volunteering activities during the school holidays.</p>	
<b>Recognition and reward</b>	<p>Recognise and reward your volunteers. Certificates to recognise a volunteers efforts or just the occasional "thank you" can make the difference between a volunteer staying put or moving on. Why not nominate your volunteers for the 'Cornwall Celebrates Volunteering' Awards?</p>	<p><a href="http://www.volunteercornwall.org.uk/ccv">www.volunteercornwall.org.uk/ccv</a></p>
<b>Insurance</b>	<p>There is no legal requirement to have volunteers insured however it is recommended that you check with your insurance provider.</p> <p>Recently English law has changed to give volunteers reassurance, to prevent volunteers from being deterred through risk of prosecution when taking part in socially beneficial activities and coming to the aid of those in difficulty.</p>	
<b>Have we missed anything?</b>	<p>This check list is intended to give you a quick overview of what is involved utilising volunteers to help run your organisation and deliver local services. If we have missed out anything important, please email us so that we can update this list.</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:communities.devolution@cornwall.gov.uk">communities.devolution@cornwall.gov.uk</a></p>	

This checklist is designed to help you in preparing to take over a property, service or asset from Cornwall Council.

The Council is aware that it shares the responsibility - in devolving a property, service or asset to a local council, community group or other organisation - of ensuring that the transition is as efficient as possible and the future operation of the asset is successful.

This checklist outlines some of the steps you need to consider and carry out and includes actions you will and will not be expected to undertake; however it is not intended to be a comprehensive list and you will need to ensure you have

sought suitable advice and guidance yourself. To the full extent permitted by law, the Council will not be liable to you for any loss or damage, whether in contract, tort (including negligence), breach of statutory duty, or otherwise, even if foreseeable, arising under or in connection with use of or reliance on any content of this checklist. In particular, the Council will not be liable for loss of profits, sales, or revenue; loss of anticipated savings; loss of opportunity, goodwill or reputation; or any indirect or consequential loss or damage.

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