

A guide to involving, supporting and celebrating volunteers

May 2024 version



Community First
Yorkshire

Introduction

This guide is for any organisation that is thinking of involving volunteers for the first time or is evaluating how it currently works with volunteers and is seeking to develop these processes.

Community First Yorkshire is funded by North Yorkshire Council and NHS North Yorkshire to offer a range of services to voluntary and community groups, including advice for people wanting to volunteer and help for organisations wishing to recruit and manage volunteers in North Yorkshire. We have a wealth of knowledge and expertise in volunteer management and can advise organisations on best practise when welcoming and supporting volunteers. We are passionate about what volunteers can bring to an organisation and would like to share our knowledge with you through this step by step guide. We aim to walk you through how to more confidently recruit, manage and celebrate volunteers – something you will certainly want to do if you get the process right!

There are lots of useful resources throughout including a range of our factsheets, which we have linked to within each step of the process. You will also find links to useful external resources. We know that, once you embark upon your journey into recruiting your first or new volunteers, you will see how much potential has been unlocked to grow and thrive as an organisation. We wish you every success with your exciting new venture!

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Step 1: Plan to involve volunteers

It is important to understand what is meant by volunteering and NCVO define this as “...any activity that involves someone spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) who they’re not closely related to. It should be a choice freely made and of mutual benefit.”

Volunteers are at the heart of most charities and community groups in North Yorkshire and beyond. Benefits for volunteers are widely recognised as including: supporting health and wellbeing, providing opportunities to meet people and to get to know the community, and develop skills and experiences.

Aside from the benefits volunteers may gain themselves, you’ll be interested in the significant advantages your organisation can gain from welcoming them. Some of these include:

- Adding value to what your organisation does and helping you to achieve your strategic aims
- Engaging with a more diverse range of skills, experience and knowledge
- Reaching more of your beneficiaries
- Awareness raising and enhancing your profile
- Lending your organisation credibility – the fact volunteers are there suggests that what you do is valuable
- Building relationships within the community in which you work
- Informing the development and delivery of your activities, projects or services through bringing fresh perspectives
- Bringing a new energy from people who really want to be there
- Identifying opportunities to improve and diversify
- Running your organisation more effectively and efficiently.



This insight may help you to more clearly understand the reasons for recruiting volunteers and will therefore help you to develop a business case. This is important so that your organisation's leaders and staff can be clear on why volunteers are there and to develop their commitment to supporting them. If you would like to find out more about the benefits volunteering can bring to your organisation, take a look at the [research and evidence collated by NCVO](#).

The next step is to try and get 'buy in' from staff, trustees and other stakeholders so that you have some support in setting up your volunteer programme. By discussing your proposals with others, it will help you to promote the value volunteers may bring to your organisation, its beneficiaries and wider community. At this stage, it is a good idea to develop or update your Volunteer Strategy, ensuring your vision and ethos aligns with the missions and objectives of your organisation. This strategy will change and develop over time and should form the foundation from which your volunteering programme grows. A good example of a Volunteer Strategy can be found on page 58 of [NHS's practical guide to recruiting and managing volunteers](#).

You will see from the NCVO data that the Covid pandemic changed the nature of volunteering. Communities witnessed an influx of informal offers of help when they most needed it. This led to an evolution in how people engaged with volunteering as well as higher levels of expectation. There was also an increase in remote volunteering opportunities using digital tools in new and imaginative ways.

Volunteering as a whole continues to recover post-pandemic, so with this in mind over 300 organisations came together to write [The Vision for Volunteering](#)- a ten-year collaborative project designed to create a better and more sustainable future for volunteering. It depicts the ideal form volunteering should take and the impact it will have on volunteers' sense of fulfillment. The strategy offers a framework to enable organisations to ask:

- What requirements do volunteers need for them to make their most effective contributions?
- How can we use new methods and technologies to enable volunteering to be more flexible and accessible?



The framework is set out around 5 themes- all of which explore and support ways of engaging volunteers into meaningful opportunities which support positive physical and mental health:

- Awareness and Appreciation
- Power
- Equity and Inclusion
- Collaboration
- Experimentation

Volunteering takes many different forms. The Vision for Volunteering is relevant to all of them. Signing up to the vision will aid conversations with colleagues and stakeholders as you work on your volunteering objectives.

The Principles of Volunteering in North Yorkshire

The North Yorkshire VCSE has adopted The National [Vision for Volunteering](#) strategy 2022 – 2032. We will align our principles, strategy and practice to have the maximum impact for volunteering across the county.

A set of guiding principles that summarises the Vision for Volunteering in North Yorkshire:

- to enhance an individual’s volunteering experience
- to define the volunteering involving standards that an organisation can aspire to
- to give a framework for volunteering infrastructure organisations to provide support to both

You might like to sign up to North Yorkshire’s Vision for Volunteering-

North Yorkshire will be a place:

- with a strong and sustainable volunteering culture throughout, that benefits both local people and their community
- where people have the opportunity to volunteer and obtain personal enrichment
- where every volunteer’s contribution is recognised and valued
- where organisations are enabled to deliver a quality volunteering experience
- where everyone can access volunteering opportunities suitable to their circumstances and with differing levels of support as required.

Using these principles and the Vision for Volunteering framework should guide your plans for involving and supporting volunteers in your organisation.

Key things to think about when developing your plans to involve volunteers:

- What roles can volunteers carry out and where this will happen (you can develop detailed role descriptions at a later stage)? Ensure these are clearly defined so that paid staff do not feel threatened or undermined

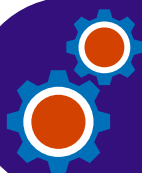
- Consider practical issues such as whether you have sufficient space and equipment
- Think about how much it will cost- it is good practice to have a budget so that you can reimburse volunteer expenses incurred while volunteering
- Consider training for volunteers – who will deliver this and how much this will cost?
- Think about who will co-ordinate and manage the volunteers – don't forget about all the administration involved in terms of processing application forms, producing recruitment materials, and supporting volunteers. Ensure you have the capacity to do a good job.
- Ensure you can commit to delivering a quality experience which will encourage volunteers to stay
- Ensure you're prepared to recognise and value volunteer contributions
- Think about how you'll measure whether your investment in recruiting volunteers is paying off
- Think about the need to develop publicity materials for recruiting volunteers
- If your project is time-limited or limited by funding, you should plan from the beginning how to make the project sustainable or what to do when it comes to an end and ensure you share this with volunteers.

Community First Yorkshire has developed a worksheet: [Becoming a Volunteer Ready Organisation](#) which offers a best practice guide to ensure you are setting yourself up for success. We would encourage you to read this as an overview at this stage before consulting the remaining steps within this guide which covers these topics in greater detail.

It's a good idea to think about any gaps and needs your volunteers may have, including the diversity of your volunteer group and think about how to best develop its make-up. Our [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Volunteering factsheet](#) looks at how to broaden the diversity of your volunteers, how to work with a diverse organisation and provides a glossary of terms and additional resources.

One further thing to think about is whether you are considering involving young people as volunteers as there are specific steps you may need to take. Our Community First Yorkshire [Involving young people as volunteers factsheet](#) gives guidance on things to consider.

Finally, page 5 of [Sheffield Volunteer Centre's Guide to Involving Volunteers](#) contains a checklist for involving volunteers which you might find helpful to refer to within this planning stage.



Step 1 Resources:

- [Research and evidence collated by NCVO](#)
- [NHS's practical guide to recruiting and managing volunteers](#)
- [Becoming a Volunteer Ready Organisation](#)
- [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Volunteering](#)
- [Involving Young People as Volunteers](#)
- [Sheffield Volunteer Centre's Guide to Involving Volunteers](#)

Step 2: Develop policies and processes

We have provided a breakdown of the key policies and documents you will need to have in place to ensure effective volunteer management and that a consistent approach is applied across your organisation.

Please note that these policies are those which Community First Yorkshire would suggest are important for an organisation to have in order to set up a volunteering programme. The first 3 in bold are those which are made essential if an organisation wishes to advertise a volunteer vacancy on Community First Yorkshire's directory of volunteer opportunities- [VINY](#) (Volunteering in North Yorkshire):

Volunteering Policy

Your volunteering policy should describe the role of volunteers in the organisation and the policies and procedures which will define how volunteers should be supported. Most volunteering policies will refer to other relevant organisational policies. Key information to cover within this policy includes: volunteer recruitment and selection, equal opportunities and diversity, safeguarding, induction and training, health, safety and welfare, supervision and support for volunteers, expenses and the process for claiming expenses, confidentiality and data protection, a problem-solving process or policy on how complaints will be dealt with, approach to reward and recognition for volunteers.

Good examples of volunteer policies can be found on page 20 of [NHS's practical guide to recruiting and managing volunteers](#) and [NCVO](#) have also produced some useful templates for members.

Community First Yorkshire has also developed a [Sample Volunteering Policy](#) which you could use and adapt for your own organisation.





Volunteer Agreement

It is important that your Volunteer Agreement defines what is required from the volunteer and the support they will have available from the organisation. The role description you have developed will clearly explain what the volunteer's responsibilities are in a particular role. However, the volunteer agreement will explain this in a wider context in terms of what to expect from the organisation. It is distinctly different from an employment contract in that it sets out mutual expectations and not contractual obligations. [NHS's practical guide to recruiting and managing volunteers](#) provides some useful examples of volunteer agreements on pages 16 and 17.

Community First Yorkshire have also developed a [Sample Volunteer Agreement](#) which you could use and adapt for your organisation.

Health & Safety Policy

Your organisation is likely to have a Health & Safety Policy in place already relating to the health and safety of your employees. The policy should cover: procedures for training staff and volunteers in health and safety, when risk assessments are to be done and who does them, first aid cover and what happens in emergencies. Further information can be found on the [Health and Safety Executive website](#) and in our factsheet on [volunteering and employment law](#).

Support & Supervision Procedure

It is important that there is a clear structure in place and recorded for supporting and managing volunteers. Central to this is ensuring that there is an identified person with overall responsibility for volunteering and that this is included within their job description. It might be that this is an identified volunteer co-ordinator who will oversee support and supervision and that this is included in their role description.

Induction & Training Policy

The purpose of an induction and training policy is to ensure that volunteers have the benefit of a properly structured induction programme that will help them to integrate into their role quickly and demonstrates a commitment to training and developing volunteers in relation to the organisation's objectives.

Out of Pocket Expenses Policy

You will need to have a volunteer expenses policy in place which clearly outlines the process for volunteers on how they can claim out of pocket expenses. It is good practise to reimburse volunteers for expenses incurred while volunteering with you, for example for travel and subsistence, which should always be evidenced by a receipt.

Confidentiality and Respect Policy

You will need to have a confidentiality policy to ensure that volunteers are made aware of the organisation's requirements about the disclosure of personal data and confidential information.

Complaints Procedure

Your complaints procedure should clearly outline a process for dealing with situations where there may be an issue with the performance or behaviour of volunteers. Ensure volunteers and staff are clear about these so that they can be dealt with fairly and consistently. Developing proper robust processes should help you to resolve matters easily and will help you to demonstrate the steps you've taken to do so.



Volunteer Insurance Cover

Your organisation should have an insurance policy that covers volunteers.

Volunteers should be covered, either under your organisation's employer's liability insurance, or public liability insurance. It is worth checking whether your current insurance policy covers volunteers and that there are no specific exclusions e.g. for young people under 16 or over 80s.

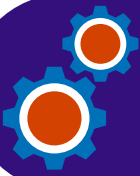
Please take a look at our factsheet on [volunteering and employment law](#) for further details.

Equal Opportunities Policy

Your organisation is likely to have an equal opportunities policy in place already which sets out an organisation's approach to equal opportunities and establishes guidelines for dealing with workplace discrimination.

In addition to the above, you may also consider developing:

- **GDPR policy**- this should detail the information you collect and store about your volunteers. You should be aware that data protection law applies to volunteers and so you must ensure that volunteer data is dealt with in line with legislation and good practise. Please take a look at our [GDPR factsheet](#) for further information.
- **Safeguarding Policy**- please be aware that if your organisation is working directly with vulnerable adults and/or children or vulnerable young people under the age of 18, then you will need to write a separate safeguarding policy and procedure to cover this. Please see our factsheet on [volunteering and employment law](#) for further details and support or access our [safeguarding training](#).



Step 2 Resources:

- [NHS's practical guide to recruiting and managing volunteers](#)
- [NCVO](#)
- [Sample Volunteer Policy](#)
- [Sample Volunteer Agreement](#)
- [Government website](#)
- [Volunteering and Employment Law](#)

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Step 3: Recruit and welcome volunteers

The volunteer recruitment should be broken down into a number of manageable steps. A useful resource is our [Guide to Trustee Recruitment toolkit](#). The guide outlines a similar recruitment process to the one you will need to follow to recruit volunteers and provides lots of templates and top tips which you may find useful.



The key steps for recruiting and welcoming volunteers are:

Describing the volunteer's role

You will need to describe the volunteer role and what skills, if any, you are looking for in a role description. We have developed a [Volunteer Role Descriptions](#) information sheet to help you. In essence, the role description will help to explain to volunteers what you need them to do and what you wouldn't expect them to do.

At this point, you will need to check whether you are legally permitted to ask that a DBS check is undertaken for the role you are recruiting for and, if so, which level of check will be required. A helpful tool to guide you is the Government's [DBS eligibility checker](#). This information should be included within your role description and advert so that potential candidates know whether this is essential to the role.

There are lots of other resources out there to help you with developing your role descriptions: NCVO have developed a [quick guide to preparing descriptions for voluntary roles](#) and [Sheffield Volunteer Centre's Guide to Involving Volunteers](#) provide a great explanation of how to go about this and also include examples. Appendix 5 of NHS's practical guide to recruiting and managing volunteers also provides a sample role description.

Remember that volunteer role descriptions aren't set in stone and they should be reviewed regularly with the volunteer and modified to reflect any changes.

Design an application form

You should only need a fairly simple application form; however, it is important that it is accessible for all and takes account of equal opportunities and diversity. It is worth mentioning that asylum seekers, volunteers from overseas and ex-offenders are allowed to volunteer. Please read our [Recruiting Volunteers](#) factsheet for more information.

At this stage you might want to consider whether you need to make any other information available as part of the application pack. Our toolkit: [A Guide to Trustee Recruitment](#) can help; it contains sample application pack documents which you may be able to adapt for your own organisation.

Another useful resource is Appendix 4 of [Sheffield Volunteer Centre's Guide to Involving Volunteers](#) which provides details about creating an application form, including an example to get you started.

Advertise your role

You will need to work on an advert which grabs the attention of potential candidates and encourages them to submit an application to volunteer with your organisation. It is probably best to keep this at one page if possible as some sites require this or have word limits in some of the editable fields. Don't forget to include key information: closing date if this applies, interview date if you are conducting informal interviews and key contact information for how prospective volunteers can find out more. Ensure there is someone available to dedicate the time needed to speak to volunteers as they may wish to chat to you first before submitting an application. Offering taster sessions or shadowing opportunities can help those considering volunteering with your organisation to make an informed choice.

You will also need to prepare a 'case for support' in reader friendly terms which will help the potential volunteer to understand what they will be doing and how they can make a difference. This is key to encouraging them to submit an application. To find out more about how to do this, please visit [NCVO's website](#) for details.

Don't forget to have some fun when creating your advert to help it stand out from the crowd!



Promote your vacancy

This stage is all about creating a promotions strategy to inform people you are recruiting and don't worry if you haven't had much experience at this in the past, as there is plenty of help out there for you. You will need to decide who you are hoping to target and how to reach them. Our factsheet, [Finding Volunteers](#), can help here. You can also advertise your role for free, and find volunteers, on our online volunteering directory, [Volunteering in North Yorkshire \(VINY\)](#). Please [contact us](#) if you would like to advertise a vacancy using VINY.



We have also developed some social media training which covers how to find and recruit volunteers. If you would like details of relevant training which may support you with your promotions strategy, please visit our [website](#) or [get in touch](#) and we will advise you on any relevant scheduled training available.

NCVO has developed a [volunteer recruitment process guide](#) which provides lots of useful information about creative ways to advertise for volunteers.

Before you dive into advertising, you will need to consider whether you are going to incur advertising costs and, if so, this is a good time to get these agreed by the relevant person within your organisation. It may also be useful to involve your marketing and communications team at this stage if you have one. You can alert them to the fact you may need their help in advertising the vacancies, particularly on social media and you will gain their valuable expertise about where might be good places to advertise. Your recruitment may even fit within a wider organisation marketing campaign, helping to raise its profile to a higher level.

You will have completed a lot of hard work up to this stage and you are now ready to go live with your adverts, so good luck!

Interviewing volunteers

Volunteer interviews should not be overly formal. It is a two-way process; the volunteer needs to find out if the organisation is right for them, as much as you need to find out if the volunteer is right for the organisation by assessing their motivations for volunteering. For more detailed information about good practise when conducting volunteer interviews and how to decline volunteers, please take a look at our [Recruiting Volunteers](#) factsheet.

Appointing volunteers

You have now reached the exciting stage of being able to contact your chosen volunteers to give them the good news. When you speak to them, you'll need to give them with a provisional start date and induction time. Before the induction however, there are a number of things you'll need to do which are summarised below:

- Take up references if you have deemed them necessary as part of the recruitment process
- Initiate DBS checks if they are relevant to the role

We strongly recommend that you read our factsheet on [Recruiting Volunteers](#) for important details with regards to these checks and how we can support you.

Develop a volunteer agreement

When all checks have been completed it is good practise to share and sign a volunteer agreement. This is a document which clearly states what the organisation will do and in return, what it is hoped the volunteer will do. This is not a legally binding document. You may find it helpful to take a look at our factsheet about [developing a volunteer agreement](#) to find out why you might require one and what you need to include. Community First Yorkshire have also developed a sample [volunteer agreement](#) to start you off which you could adapt for your own organisation.

A further useful resource at this stage is Appendix 3 of [Sheffield Volunteer Centre's Guide to Involving Volunteers](#) which provides two further sample volunteer agreements for you to work with.

Welcome and induct volunteers

Your new volunteers should hopefully be really enthusiastic and eager to get going! Regardless of this, settling into a new role can take a little time. To support your volunteers, it is good practise to develop a volunteer handbook. The handbook should include everything a volunteer needs to know about volunteering with your organisation and it should inform all stakeholders about how volunteers will be involved.



We would recommend reading pages 39 and 40 of the [NHS's guide to recruiting and managing volunteers](#) which includes detailed information about what should be included within a volunteer handbook, including a table of contents.

There are many different forms the induction itself may take including physical introductions to key people and places or Zoom sessions and videos. For further ideas, please take a look at our [Recruiting Volunteers](#) factsheet.

You may wish to develop an induction timetable to help you plan all the tasks you need to complete prior to the volunteer starting and to plot their training across a number of sessions.

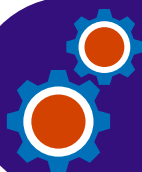
Page 16 of [Sheffield Volunteer Centre's Guide to Involving Volunteers](#) provides further details and explains how this could be done. Appendices 5 and 6 of this guide also provide an induction checklist and induction spreadsheet examples which you could adapt for your own organisation.

Train your volunteers

You will now need to decide whether your new volunteers are adequately equipped to get started within the role or whether they require further training. This will depend upon the nature of your organisation and whether they will be carrying out specialist tasks which might require more detailed input. Our [Recruiting Volunteers](#) factsheet has ideas about how to get your volunteers off to a flying start, such as developing a buddying scheme.

It is important to mention here that, although involving young people as volunteers can be really rewarding for them and you, it comes with its own set of guidelines and considerations. Please refer to our [Involving Young People as Volunteers](#) factsheet for lots more information on this topic.

Once you get volunteer recruitment embedded within your organisation, you may wish to develop it further. If you would like to assess the quality of your volunteer management and involvement processes with a view to improving the effectiveness, you could consider researching the Investing in Volunteers (IiV) UK quality standard for good practise in volunteer management. Please visit [Investing in Volunteers quality standard framework for further information](#) for all the details.



Step 3 Resources:

- [A Guide to Trustee Recruitment](#)
- [Volunteer Role Descriptions](#)
- [DBS eligibility checker](#)
- [Quick guide to preparing descriptions for voluntary roles](#)
- [Sheffield Volunteer Centre's Guide to Involving Volunteers](#)
- [NHS's practical guide to recruiting and managing volunteers](#)
- [Recruiting Volunteers](#)
- [NCVO's website](#)
- [Volunteering in North Yorkshire \(VINY\)](#)
- [Finding your Volunteers](#)
- [Volunteers' Week](#)
- [Volunteer recruitment process guide](#)
- [Volunteer agreement](#)
- [Developing a volunteer agreement](#)
- [Involving young people](#)
- [Investing in Volunteers quality standard framework for further information](#)

Step 4: Supervise, support and develop volunteers

It is really important that volunteers receive the [support and supervision](#) they need to help them to make a useful contribution, and to ensure that they have a positive experience which can help with volunteer retention.

There must be a clear management structure in place for volunteers and an identified person with overall responsibility for volunteering. In some organisations this role is undertaken by staff, but it can also be a role that volunteers undertake. For some people, volunteer management may just be part of their role, whereas for other organisations they may have a dedicated member of staff who focuses upon this. Either way, it is important to recognise the skilled and complex role of whoever is appointed to manage volunteers. This may mean that, if you are asking a member of staff to take on this role, you should consider what training they may require and the costs associated with this. You need to ensure they have access to materials and resources to help them such as relevant policies and procedures. It may also impact on the time they are able to spend on other work and they may need additional support. This responsibility should be included within their job description and should be built into relevant induction and training plans.

We have developed a useful information sheet on [Support and Supervision](#) aimed at providing you with useful information and tips. Some of the key considerations under this topic are outlined below.



Forms of support

The form of support you choose to provide will depend on the needs of the individual and their role. In general most support you provide will be informal. However, it is good practise to also provide a one-to-one catch up. This will allow the volunteer the chance to give and receive feedback and enables a more structured conversation to take place. You will need to consider an appropriate frequency for these. Our [Support and Supervision](#) factsheet includes some example questions you could ask at your one-to-one sessions which might help you to develop your own structure for these sessions.

It is important that you thank the volunteer for their time and make a note of any actions points, ensuring that these are followed up.

Some things to think about when organising support sessions may include:

- Choose an approach that considers the time volunteers have available
- Consider the amount of staff time available
- Keep a record or note of supervisions
- Include a process for giving feedback
- Provide opportunities to discuss issues or concerns
- Deal with issues sensitively.

What you will need

[NHS's practical guide to recruiting and managing volunteers](#) provides useful detail about what you will need in order to manage volunteers effectively. These can be summarised as:

- Clearly outlined roles and expectations
- A named support contact for volunteers
- A flexible approach which can be adapted
- An understanding of volunteer's motivation and that this may change.





What to do if there are problems

Problems about the volunteer's work or behaviour should be addressed. It is important to discuss what steps you need to take together to address them.

We recognise that this aspect of volunteering can be quite difficult to manage and have therefore developed a detailed information sheet specifically aimed at [what to do when things go wrong](#) to help you. We recommend you read this sheet to learn more about informal and formal problem solving procedures. If the steps within this toolkit are carefully followed, it is less likely that you will encounter difficulties. However, it is good to be prepared so that you can deal with any issues which may arise fairly and effectively.

Training and developing volunteers

Good volunteer management includes ensuring volunteers are trained to fulfil their roles effectively (please refer to **'Training volunteers'** in [Step 2](#) of this guide for more information). The amount of support volunteers need will vary, but overall you will need to think about capacity, time, location, materials and budget. Not all organisations will be able to offer externally run and accredited courses for example, but may be able to offer their own tailor-made training. It is about striking the right balance between completing actual volunteer work versus taking time out to attend courses. There are lots of other factors at play here too such as volunteers needing to feel confident that they are fulfilling their role well and wanting to widen their skills and knowledge base as much as possible. Some will see volunteering as a route into employment and will therefore want to do as much training as possible. One idea to enable you to manage multiple training requests, is for volunteer managers to use access to training courses as a 'perk'.

For further details about training volunteers, please visit [NCVO's training volunteers section](#) which provides lots of information on this topic as well as useful links to training providers and relevant schemes. Also, take a look at [North Yorkshire Council's Adult Learning Courses](#) to check out relevant training.

Community First Yorkshire also regularly offers a [wide range of training](#), as well [Volunteer Co-ordinator Network meetings and tea breaks](#) to give you a chance to share good practice and network with other volunteer co-ordinators. Please [get in touch](#) if you would like to find out more.

How to retain volunteers

After all the time and effort you've put into recruiting your volunteers, you will want them to be happy in their role so that they stay with you. It is important to:

- Create rewarding volunteer roles which provide new opportunities for the volunteer
- Create flexible roles which can be adapted to suit an individual and allow them some input (read our [flexible volunteering](#) factsheet for tips and advice)
- Provide opportunities to discuss the role on an ongoing basis
- Appoint a volunteer supervisor – some volunteers may find it rewarding to take on this role and will see it as a developmental opportunity
- Consider motivations for volunteering, including what people are hoping to gain from their experiences.

[NCVO](#) provides some great ideas on their website about recognising volunteer contributions in order to improve retention. They suggest a range of informal and formal ways of demonstrating recognition of volunteers to all staff including: telling volunteers that they are doing a great job, organising volunteer events, awarding certificates and helping volunteers gain accreditation.

Finally, for ideas about retaining young people as volunteers, please take a look at our [Involving Young People as Volunteers factsheet](#).

Volunteer wellbeing

We regularly run training on wellbeing at work and looking at how to prevent burn out among your volunteers. Find out when the next session is on our [training calendar](#).

[NCVO](#) has useful page on 'How to how to support and manage volunteers'. In essence it suggests that having great communication skills and modelling a positive attitude are the key tools required to look after volunteers.

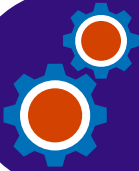
Our [Community Support North Yorkshire website](#) has lots of useful tools and information to support you with looking after the wellbeing of your volunteers, for example there is a free [mental health and wellbeing toolkit](#) provided by York and North Yorkshire Growth Hub.

Saying goodbye and exit interviews

If a volunteer does decide to move on, or you are worried about a high turnover of volunteers, it's a good idea to talk to those who are leaving either through a questionnaire or an informal chat. Exit interviews are a useful tool for monitoring your approach to volunteers.

Developing partnerships with other organisations who involve volunteers in similar roles can be a way to ensure that you can signpost volunteers to other opportunities should they wish to continue volunteering beyond the life of your project or programme.

Taking these steps to look after your volunteers should promote positive volunteering experiences to allow your organisation to maximise the benefits volunteers can bring. Read on for our final step on how to celebrate volunteers and how to measure the impact they are having on your organisation.



Step 4 Resources:

- [Support and Supervision](#)
- [Flexible volunteering](#)
- [NHS's practical guide to recruiting and managing volunteers](#)
- [What to do if things go wrong](#)
- [NCVO's training volunteers section](#)
- [North Yorkshire Council's Adult Learning Courses](#)
- [Community First Yorkshire's training](#)
- [NCVO guide on motivating your volunteers](#)
- [5 useful top tips for retaining volunteers](#)
- [Involving Young People as Volunteers](#)
- [Community Support North Yorkshire website](#)
- [Mental health and wellbeing toolkit](#)

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Step 5: Value and recognise volunteer contributions

By this stage, you will recognise that volunteers are an important part of your organisation and it is important therefore that their contribution and achievements are acknowledged. In doing so, it will help you as an organisation to encourage volunteers to invest further in your organisational aims. Volunteers value being recognised and like to know how their help makes a difference. Recognition promotes motivation, morale and volunteer retention. Public recognition can also help to raise the profile of volunteering in the organisation.



There are many approaches for making volunteers feel involved, valued and recognised. Our [Support and Supervision](#) factsheet has some ideas to get you started.

Most of the techniques suggested are simple and don't cost anything; they are just about saying 'thank you' and ensuring volunteers have engaging tasks to complete.

The [NHS guide to recruiting and managing volunteers](#) provides lots of creative ideas about recognising and celebrating volunteers:

- Organising volunteer social events and meetings to ensure volunteers feel valued and to support the motivations of volunteers for giving up their time to help. Often people are keen to meet new people and make friends and this is a great way to support this.
- Sending out volunteer newsletters help volunteers feel they belong and are connected to the wider organisation. Maintaining contact with volunteers is really important in making people feel valued, involved and engaged.
- Awards for service or contribution over time.
- Awards for special achievement – a top tip here is to keep an eye out for county and district council awards which you could nominate your volunteers for North Yorkshire Council's Community Awards Scheme is a good example of this, whose awards honour local people and organisations that help the County Council deliver critical services.
- Hosting an organisational volunteer day, perhaps linking in with [Volunteers Week](#).

- A simple personalised thank you – you could send a letter, ecard from staff (with pictures or embedded videos), or even just a personal phone call. Take every opportunity to say Thank You.
- Offer opportunities for skills development.
- Offer references or recognition of skills/experience gained.
- Share volunteer stories or case studies – this could be done via social media.
- Collect feedback from volunteers on their experiences.
- Offer ways for volunteers to be involved in decision making.

Whatever the gesture, big or small, it is likely to mean a lot to the volunteer, so get thinking about how to recognise the important difference they are having.

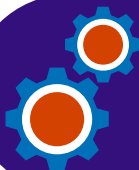
Measuring impact

It's a good idea to think about how you're going to measure the impact of volunteering at an early stage in the development of your volunteering plans, so that you can ensure your chosen techniques complement your volunteering programme and that you have the resources you need to manage this.

Some key pointers include:

- You will need to identify a set of indicators that you want to measure in order to help demonstrate the impact and value of volunteering
- Ensure that the data you collect feeds into your monitoring, review and reporting process
- Ensure the indicators you choose are meaningful to the range of stakeholders involved, including those at a strategic level
- Include information about the impact of volunteering in your annual report or produce a separate impact report. This helps to ensure that the whole organisation, including senior management and the governance of the organisation understand how volunteering makes a difference.

You could refer to the [NHS guide to recruiting and managing volunteers](#) for a range of tools and frameworks to support you with impact measurement and evaluation of volunteering. Inspiring Impact have a [volunteering impact assessment](#) which you might find useful.



Step 5 Resources:

- [Support and Supervision](#)
- [NHS guide to recruiting and managing volunteers](#)
- [Volunteers' Week](#)
- [Inspiring Impact's volunteering impact assessment toolkit](#)

Useful sources and credits

[Community First Yorkshire volunteering resources](#)

[Community First Yorkshire marketing resources](#)

[North Yorkshire Connect](#)

[The National Council for Voluntary Organisations](#)

[National Association for Voluntary and Community Action](#)

[Association of Volunteer Managers](#)

[Clinks](#)

[Museum Galleries Scotland](#)

[Voluntary Action Leicester](#)

[NHS guide to recruiting and managing volunteers](#)

[Volunteers' Week](#)

[Sheffield Volunteer Centre's Guide to Involving Volunteers](#)

Additional support

Community First Yorkshire can help you with many aspects of Volunteer Management, from recruiting and training volunteers to looking after and retaining them. Simply fill in an [enquiry form](#) and we'll get back to you. You can also join our [Volunteer Co-ordinators' Network](#) and sign up for our news bulletins [here](#):

- Our monthly Funding Bulletin lists updated funding opportunities.
- Our weekly newsletter has information about the charity sector, including training.

[Introduction](#)



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