

# MAKING YOUR VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE MEANINGFUL

## / OUR GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Walk into any sports club, community centre, or event and practically everyone you meet will be a volunteer. Whether it is the person who welcomes you when you arrive, who encourages you to get involved, or who is 'behind the scenes' to keep everything going. Volunteers are the heart and soul of community sport.

We know how important their time is to others, but what's in it for them? Research shows that people who volunteer have higher self-esteem and emotional wellbeing, and it can be a great way to acquire new skills or to meet new people. These outcomes are described by the Government in its strategy for sport, *Sporting Future*, as mental wellbeing, individual development and social and community development.

To achieve these benefits, organisations must provide meaningful volunteering opportunities that offer individuals engaging, rewarding and enjoyable experiences. Individual needs and aspirations must be considered to ensure volunteers have the right support to get the most from the experience.

We are prioritising volunteers and want to support others to create amazing volunteer experiences within sport and activity. This guide is the starting place for all organisations looking to start a volunteer programme or refresh how they currently work with their volunteers.

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[sportenglandclubmatters.com](https://sportenglandclubmatters.com)

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**VOLUNTEERS  
ARE THE HEART  
AND SOUL OF  
COMMUNITY  
SPORT**



## Know your volunteers.

What do they want? What are the motivations, barriers and expectations of current and prospective volunteers? With this knowledge, create an experience where both the volunteer and organisation thrive.

Keep improving your understanding and tailoring your offer through feedback and conversations.

## UNDERSTAND



# MAKING YOUR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE MEANINGFUL

VOLUNTEERING MUST BE FUN AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE



What are the different ways to achieve your purpose? Think about inclusivity and diversity at this early stage. Be imaginative about roles, skills and commitment levels. **What are you offering prospective volunteers?** How does this opportunity meet their motivations, overcome barriers and show the impact they will have? Write role descriptions to help clarify this. Use club and community noticeboards, websites and social media to make it easier to get involved.

## OFFER



Successful volunteering needs everyone in the organisation, whether paid or voluntary, newcomer or stalwart, to understand and **appreciate what you are achieving together**. Take time in your programme to bring in your existing team members and involve them in volunteer development. All of your team should become 'friend-raisers', supporting and growing your network.

## WHO



Getting the logistics, resources and facilities right is time well spent. Everything from your email system or your volunteer policies, to calendar of social events. Think back to the barriers that stop people volunteering; what can you do to address these? **Think inclusivity.**

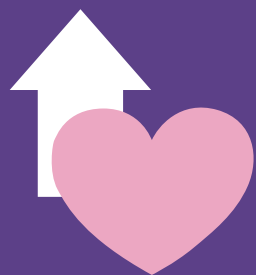
How you run your club day-to-day makes a difference to the success of your volunteers.

## HOW



A great volunteer programme must be clear in its purpose and its impact for individuals, your organisation and the community. Say what your organisation's ambitions are and **what success looks like**.

## IMPACT



Be clear before you start about why you want volunteers, what they will achieve and what they will get out of it. How will your organisation recognise their impact?

A great volunteer experience must be supported and developed over time. To do this, volunteers need **recognition and support** from your organisation.

## GROW



Having a volunteer plan with a variety of options mapped out is useful. Talk about other roles, projects, leadership opportunities, or qualifications with your volunteers to support their development.

## CONNECT



Make a genuine connection with your volunteers. Definitely **make it fun and social**.

Having an induction plan, the boss saying hello, a named contact person, regular emails, social events and up-to-date data all count towards your team making the right impression.

Never forget to take time to thank and recognise the impact of your volunteers.



## WHERE TO FIND OUT MORE

Further resources to support volunteering can be found on our Club Matters website. Club Matters is a free online resource that showcases best practice across all elements of running a local sports club or activity group. Much of it is also relevant to other community groups and charities.

[sportenglandclubmatters.com](http://sportenglandclubmatters.com)



## RESOURCES INCLUDE:

- A checklist of how to find new volunteers, including a list of where to post your volunteer adverts.
- Volunteering Insight Guide, with recent research on volunteer motivations, barriers and benefits, and a focus on recruitment, recognition and building local networks.
- Further ideas on how to connect with your volunteers to keep them giving their time.
- A look at some areas of volunteer management, including leadership, delegation and communication.

## SOCIAL ACTION

We are also proud to be partners of #iwill, a UK-wide campaign to get 6 in 10 young people involved in social action by 2020. Social action is defined as practical activities that benefit others and create positive social change. There's been a surge in recent years in the number of young people taking part, with three-quarters of 16-24 year-olds saying they want to do more social action.



#iwill have produced a guide to the Six Principles of Youth Social Action to support any organisation wishing to develop social action opportunities.

Go to [iwill.org.uk](http://iwill.org.uk) to find out more.



INSTITUTE FOR  
VOLUNTEERING RESEARCH

The NCVO provide excellent resources to support volunteering. Go to [ncvo.org.uk](http://ncvo.org.uk) to find out more. We would like to thank the NCVO Institute for Volunteering Research for their support in the inception of this resource.

## GET IN TOUCH

We support organisations to develop volunteering opportunities in sport and physical activity. If you have any further questions, please get in touch with us at: [volunteering@sportengland.org](mailto:volunteering@sportengland.org)



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