

CAG 'How To' Guide

Recruiting Volunteers Guide

This guide includes some handy tips for writing a volunteer advert and how to structure their first volunteering session. This is a generic guide, if you have any specific queries please contact the CAG Network directly. We are also happy to review volunteer adverts for you.

Things to consider before advertising a volunteer role:

What specific role do you need help with? – It is beneficial to fully define exactly where your group needs help and the kind of skills you are looking for. People are more likely to respond to volunteer adverts if they know exactly what is expected of them so be really clear on the role, the average hours, dates of upcoming events etc. so that people have as much information as possible. This also helps people realise that groups require a wide range of skills and expertise, not just the front facing ones. One of the most common things mentioned at Fixy outreach events is that 'I cant volunteer with Repair Groups as I am no good at repairing'. However, if you have defined volunteer roles clearly, people can see that as well as repairers, these events require a whole host of other skills to run that they may have.

What can you offer volunteers? – People have very different reasons for volunteering and it is worth considering who your target audience may be when creating an advert. Some volunteers are wanting to give back to the local community, so being able to provide details on the impact your group has had would be really meaningful to them. Others are looking to make new friends and like the social side of volunteering, therefore you want to ensure you highlight how friendly and welcoming your group is and how you interact with people in the local community. Others may volunteer for work experience and therefore, can you offer guidance to improve their skills, or if they are competent, offer to provide a reference to potential employers?

What is your group culture? – This is often overlooked but is a really important component. Your advert should embody what makes your group unique. What are the shared values amongst the current group volunteers? What are you working towards? How

would you describe your group? If you can capture the feel of your group it will go a long way to recruiting volunteers who are cohesive and want to help your group achieve your goals.

Places to advertise a volunteer role:

Social media – Social media is a great tool for volunteer recruitment as it is free and a good way to reach a wide audience. Firstly posting on your own page to your following is a great way to see if there is anyone interested in volunteering who already has an understanding of your group and your aspirations. You can also post in local community Facebook groups to try promote your volunteer advert to a large local audience.

Local advertising points – Many people in Somerset still use notice boards for local information (I know I still do!) so these can be great tools for recruiting local volunteers. These are often located near town halls, at the entrance to supermarkets and in leisure centres. You can also advertise in your local library. If your group is in a location where it can recruit volunteers from multiple towns, the library can help you share copies of your advert with other libraries in your area.

Spark A Change – Spark A Change is a great resource offered by SPARK Somerset. You can upload a volunteer advert onto their list for free! <https://www.sparkachange.org.uk/for-organisations>

Looking after volunteers -Their first time:

- Welcome – Ensure that the regular volunteers are made aware that a new volunteer is arriving so that they can be offered a warm welcome. Have an experienced volunteer who can conduct an informal induction by talking through your group and how you operate. Introduce the new volunteer to the others so they know who they can approach for help. Ensure that basics are covered, such as location of the toilet, fire safety points, where they can store their bag and that the new volunteer has been showed any relevant risk assessments and safeguarding policies. Talk the volunteer through role-specific jobs, ensure they can find everything they need and have all the equipment needed to complete their task.

- On the first day of volunteering, if possible, buddy the new volunteer up with someone more experienced with your groups way of working. This provides a clear easy point of contact for any questions, and they can help show the new volunteer the ropes.
- After the event, it is always good to catch up with the new volunteer and answer any questions they may have. Let them know what other events you have coming up so that they have as much notice as possible to plan volunteering again. Make the time to speak to the new volunteer after the event.

One important thing to consider is volunteer wellbeing. Most community groups are all volunteer ran so this applies to you to! Here is a great article on preventing volunteer burnout. <https://teamkinetic.co.uk/blog/2022/07/how-to-prevent-volunteer-burnout/>