



myplace
support team

Recruiting and Managing Volunteers

Introduction

Volunteers play a very important part in the success of **myplace** centres. They can get involved, offer support, bring skills and enthusiasm that will help your **myplace** centre be world class. However, volunteers need recruiting, managing and supporting just like any other member of the team.

How to recruit and manage volunteers

Why people volunteer

People can have all sorts of motivations for volunteering in your **myplace** project. They may:

- › have a belief in and commitment to the organisation;
- › possess a strong motivation to help and support young people and the community;
- › like meeting people and joining in with what others are doing;
- › be looking to develop themselves and/or gain skills to help progress their career;
- › have some spare time that they would like to give to others;
- › simply want to keep active if they are retired or currently out of work.

The value of volunteers

Volunteers can significantly add to what a **myplace** project can achieve. They mustn't be seen as an alternative to employed staff or as a source of cheap labour.

Each volunteer will bring skills, understanding and a unique perspective that will add to everything **myplace** does and is. They can bring creativity, enterprise, service and they will often have an added credibility with young people. Young people often ask how much a worker is being paid to work with them. If the answer is 'nothing' this can be a powerful statement to the young people about their value and worth.

Volunteers may also bring diversity to the organisation and satisfied volunteers often end up giving their money as well as their time.

What they will do

There are two main types of volunteers; those that simply ask to be involved (there are always gaps to be filled and jobs that need doing in any **myplace** centre) and those that are recruited for a specific task or role (for example, mentoring a young person, being the treasurer, filling in funding applications).

Volunteers will often work unusual hours and may have lots of flexibility in terms of their availability. Irrespective of what they do, how long they work, or who they are, there needs to be a recruitment and selection process for them. There is also the need to maintain consistency in certain processes, like how to run the building efficiently, for example.

The recruitment process

Volunteers should, in many ways, be recruited just like a paid and employed member of staff. You should have a procedure for this recruitment that involves: an application, a selection and appointment process, CRB checks, the taking up of references, a probationary period, induction and training. Further details about these procedures can be found in the 'Recruiting and Managing Staff' guide.

How will volunteers be managed

Consider and decide:

- › Who will manage the volunteers?
- › What training will be provided?
- › How their time and efforts will be recognised
- › If they will be offered expenses?
- › How they will be supervised and how often will supervision take place?
- › That volunteers need role descriptions - who will do these?

Progression

Some volunteers may be happy to continue in their first role. Others may get satisfaction (and therefore motivation and continued involvement) from progressing to other roles. If a volunteer is giving his or her time in order to improve their employability then they'll be looking for opportunities to gain relevant work skills. A young person may find their first volunteering role in their own centre is a step on the road to a career. Planning for and supporting volunteers' progression is key to a strong, effective and sustainable voluntary workforce.

Young people

As well as being the main beneficiaries of **myplace**, young people can also be volunteers. They may help with specific tasks (like running the tuck shop), play a leadership role (like being on a youth forum) and/or help work with younger young people. Research has suggested that young people value the following (FLEXIVOL) when thinking of volunteering:

- › Flexibility - the most important factor, in terms of time and commitment;
- › Legitimacy - they need a favourable image of volunteering;
- › Ease of access - many simply don't know how to volunteer or who to contact;
- › Xperience - they want relevant, useful experience and the chance to learn new skills;
- › Incentives - stress the tangible outcomes of volunteering - what's in it for them;
- › Variety - in terms of both the type of work and the level of commitment;
- › Organisation - volunteering needs to be efficient but informal;
- › Laughs - it must be fun!

Taken from: Generation V: Young People Speak Out on Volunteering
Angela Ellis, Institute for Volunteering Research, UK, 2004.

Action planning

Young People

Draw up a list of ways in which young people can volunteer in your **myplace** centre. Why not advertise these ‘positions’ and encourage young people to apply?

Making a Difference

Volunteers often like to be recognised for their commitment. Why not hold a special event to show your appreciation of all that your volunteers have done, highlighting the contribution they have made to making a difference. When might you do this?

Vision and Values

You may wish to ‘embed’ and make specific, how you value volunteers in your organisation. How might you do this?

Practicality

In challenging economic times, it can be tempting to have an over-reliance on volunteer help. Spend a few minutes thinking about your plans. Are they realistic given the staffing levels and funding you have? Do they need adjusting, and if so, in what ways?

“Volunteers can significantly add to what a **myplace** project can achieve.”

Links and Further Guidance

Many resources and links on this informative site

www.knowhownonprofit.org/people/volunteers/managing-volunteers

A comprehensive selection of links and information

www.volunteering.org.uk/resources/goodpracticebank/index.htm

If you wanted to look at a book, then this one would be a good place to start:

The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Recruiting and Managing Volunteers. John. L. Lipp. Alpha Books

An overview guide to involving volunteers

www.vawd.org.uk/uploads/vawd/mainsite/downloads/Toolkits/involvevol09.pdf

A quality assurance process for volunteers

iiv.investinginvolunteers.org.uk

If you are looking for your volunteers to help manage the facilities, there are good resources about why this role is important at www.cabe.org.uk/buildings/use