

Guide to **Recruiting Volunteers**

June 2025

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1. INTRODUCTION

Volunteering is at the heart of Christian service and discipleship. Whether in a defined role, on a community project, working with children and young people, helping serve tea and coffee after a service, becoming a Reader or other authorised Lay Minister; all churches are dependent on volunteers.

Volunteers are an essential part of our churches and can provide a motivated and flexible work force to those struggling with limited resources looking to achieve their charitable objectives. However, it is important not to blur the distinction between volunteers and paid employees.

2. PLAN

Before recruiting any volunteers, it is important that you have thought about what needs you need to fulfil and whether these require any specific funding, skills, or experience.

2.1 Defining the Role and Responsibilities

Write down precisely why you need volunteers. How much time do you expect them to give? Write down clear role descriptions of the required tasks if you can, so that people know what they are volunteering for, and so you know how to assess the suitability of potential volunteers.

2.2 Budget

Include the costs of using volunteers in your budget, to cover the possible outlay. There may be set-up costs, such as the provision of a desk, mobile phone, computer, or broadband, and there will be running costs such as reimbursing expenses, insurance, training and support, and management time.

2.3 Funding

A community action project, for example, can be funded from a variety of sources, including grants. There are a broad range of funding sources

available, many of which will have an application process. You should check with the funder's grant making policy before you apply to make sure your application fits with the ethos of the project.

3. RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

3.1 Working Status

According to the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, (NCVO), <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/>, volunteers do not have a contract of employment and can come and go as they please. As volunteers are under no formal or contractual obligations, they are not paid for their time, and they are free to give their time whenever they are available.

However, before recruiting a volunteer, it is important that the role is clearly defined and agreed and what policies and procedures they will be expected to follow such as health and safety, confidentiality, and the requirement for safer recruitment checks to be completed before any volunteer work can commence.

Whilst employers are not legally required to pay volunteers, they should agree to cover any expenses, such as food and drink, as well as any travel the individual undertakes as part of their role. Not only does this help improve people's access to opportunities, but it shows that you appreciate the volunteer's time and expense, which will help individuals remain engaged and committed.

3.2 Advertising

Think about where you will advertise for volunteers. It may depend on what you are recruiting for and, for example, whether it is to meet a short-term need or to provide a long term service. Consider social media, as well as posters, notice boards, leaflet drops, and/or local magazine/newspaper ads. Some job-search websites have volunteer sections too.

If recruiting for a community action project or initiative which is aimed at meeting a need, but there are no volunteers who can afford to give up their time without remuneration, consider raising funds to pay for them.

Further information on funding sources is available here:

www.churchofengland.org/JOINplan
[Community Action | The Church of England](#)

3.3 Safer Recruitment

There is a clear safeguarding code of practise from the Church of England about Safer Recruitment and People Management.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safer-recruitment-and-people-management-guidance>

The requirements in this guidance must be followed for the appointment of all roles within a Church body that involve substantial contact with children and/or vulnerable adults.

Even where roles are not identified as having “substantial” contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults, bodies may still wish to implement aspects of safer recruitment practices where an element of safeguarding risk is identified or if individuals hold a position that shapes and influences the culture of a body.

The clearer the pre-information about what will be expected, such as through appropriate job adverts and clear details job descriptions, the more likely it is that appropriate people will put themselves forward, with a clear understanding of what will be required from the application process and role once appointed. The exact responsibilities of a role can impact on certain requirements of the Safer Recruitment process, such as eligibility for an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and the level of safeguarding training required.

The safer recruitment process applies to all role holders including volunteers, although for volunteers the process may be less formal than for employed staff, the safer recruitment process is still important to be able to assess the suitability of the individual for the role.

3.4 Safeguarding Hub

The Safeguarding Hub is an online tool designed to assist parishes with their safeguarding responsibilities around safer recruitment and people management and help them to meet the Church of England's safeguarding requirements.

All Rochester Diocesan Parishes can access the Safeguarding Hub free of charge.

What is the Safeguarding Hub?

The Safeguarding Hub consists of the following suite of tools:

Stage 1: Keep track of DBS checks and safeguarding training.

Stage 2: Create role descriptions and person specifications.

Stage 3: Track the safer recruitment of new volunteers.

Parishes can choose to use one, two or all three of these stages.

The Safeguarding Hub assists by making it easy to identify when actions are outstanding, in progress or completed using a simple 'traffic light' system. Helpful reports can also be generated to assist with keeping track of actions.

The following link provides more information on the Safeguarding Hub including a downloadable brochure, short tutorial videos and FAQs:

<https://www.safeguardinghubs.org.uk/introduction.php>

Important: General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

As the Safeguarding Hub will store personal information (personal data), there are important factors parishes need to be aware of as outlined below:

- Service Agreement - Service Agreement - Safeguarding Hubs
- GDPR Requirements - GDPR requirements - Safeguarding Hubs

Your PCC will need to formally adopt the Safeguarding Hub, accept the Service Agreement and acknowledge and comply with the GDPR requirements.

Where can I get help?

The following links will assist with further information:

<https://www.safeguardinghubs.org.uk/introduction.php>

Introduction resources including a downloadable brochure and short tutorial videos.

Support for parishes - Safeguarding Hubs – FAQs

You can also contact the Diocesan Safeguarding or HR Teams for assistance.

3.5 Selection

The process needs to be thorough and fair without being unnecessarily bureaucratic. Restrictions are justified in certain circumstances, but it is important to be aware of good practice in equal opportunities and the Church of England's safer recruitment practices and safeguarding.

3.5 Volunteer Policy

Think about documenting a policy for volunteers that can be shared with them, setting out your responsibilities to them and theirs to you.

3.6 Volunteer Agreement

When beginning a volunteering arrangement, being clear about the expectations and intentions of both parties is essential. You should consider putting these in writing in the form of a Volunteer Agreement setting out the nature and scope of the volunteer role, including:

- how it benefits the organisation;
- expected time commitments;
- what training and support may be provided;
- arrangements for expenses;

and covering legal obligations such as:

- confidentiality;
- data protection;
- safeguarding;
- DBS checks; and
- health and safety.

4. WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS

4.1 Safeguarding

The Church is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of its ministry and mission, promoting a safer culture and the welfare of every child, young person and adult.

Taking a safeguarding approach to volunteering will help keep people safe. It creates a culture where everyone understands their right to be safe.

This includes:

- planning and putting in place the right policies and procedures to keep your volunteers and others safe;

- taking an appropriate approach to safeguarding when you recruit and induct volunteers;
- taking an appropriate approach to safeguarding during ongoing support, oversight and supervision once in the role;
- safeguarding of volunteer activities such as driving and lone working; and,
- thinking about safeguarding when a volunteer leaves.

The Church of England's "30K Project" aims to recruit up to 30,000 children and youth leaders (volunteers) to work with children, young people and their families (CYPF) by 2030.

Further information can be found by clicking onto the following link:

[Working safely with children and young people](#)

4.2 Management, support and supervision

Support of volunteers requires consideration of their needs, including:

- adequate induction arrangements;
- someone they can turn to for immediate help or advice;
- information about the role or project;
- being thanked and feeling valued; and
- being involved in wider aspects of the role.

The level of supervision will depend upon what they do, how long they have been doing it, and how experienced they are. The effectiveness of both support and supervision will be linked with wider policies, internal communications and working practices, including relationships between volunteers and between them and staff and trustees.

The Church of England have produced a 4-step plan aimed at supporting churches and church groups with the recruitment and retention of volunteers. Further information can be found by clicking onto the following link:

[Journeying with volunteers](#)

4.3 Training

Anyone who is a church officer should complete basic awareness training. A Church officer is anyone appointed or elected by or on behalf of the Church to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid.

Anyone working with children and young people should also complete the foundation training.

Training can be informal or formal and accredited; internal or using outside agencies. It might be a matter of keeping volunteers up to date with what is happening within the project or in the policy context they are working in. It might focus on imparting skills, such as listening or IT skills and, for some, there may be the possibility of volunteers getting accredited qualifications. What is appropriate will depend on the nature of the volunteers, what they are doing, and how long term they are.

For those working with children and vulnerable adults, there are specialist modules available covering *Domestic Abuse* and *Safeguarding*. Your PSO and Diocesan Safeguarding Team can advise on training requirements for each role and how to sign up for them.

Training can be accessed as e-learning from the Church of England's training portal which should be completed by all those involved in the recruitment of staff and/or volunteers.

Further information can be found by clicking onto the following links:

Church of England Training Portal

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/learning-and-development>

Written information about safeguarding, expected behaviour and church procedures

[code-of-safer-working-practice-02.07.2021.pdf](#)

4.4 Expenses

These might include things like travel expenses, subsistence for those working a full day, uniforms or protective clothing, training events or conferences. The process for claiming expenses needs to be simple, clear, and consistent for all volunteers. Payments should be regular, and sometimes in advance for people on low incomes. Beware of making ex gratia payments that could create tax, benefit, or national insurance problems.

5. SAFE PRACTICE

5.1 Insurance

You are legally liable for your volunteers and others, which means taking out suitable insurance to protect from risk. The following types of insurance that can cover volunteers includes:

- public liability insurance;
- employee liability insurance;
- personal accident insurance;
- professional indemnity insurance; and
- motor insurance.

You can find additional information on the Church of England's '*Parish Resources*' website via the following link:

[Working with Volunteers - Parish Resources](#)

5.2 Health and Safety

Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, you must have a Health and Safety Policy. It should include reference to volunteers, and they should be given a copy.

Areas covered may include:

- first aid;
- food hygiene;
- fire and emergencies; and
- risk assessments.

Please see the template policy and health and safety guidance on the diocesan website that you can adapt, by clicking onto the following link:

<https://www.rochester.anglican.org/for-parishes/parish-administration>

5.3 GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)

All churches need to comply with current rules around data protection.

Do you have a GDPR policy?

Do you have a Data Protection Officer (DPO)?

Do you have a GDPR audit?

Do you have procedures to enable people to view the data you hold?

Do you have procedures to follow if there is a breach of GDPR?

Please see the “*GDPR Toolkit for Parishes*” on the diocesan website for further information. This can be found by clicking onto the following link:

[Rochester GDPR Toolkit](#)

5.4 Confidentiality

All volunteers who have access to confidential and sensitive information should be asked to sign a Confidentiality Agreement indicating that they completely understand the importance and safeguarding of confidential information and they also understand the consequences if they break these policies or agreement.

6. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

6.1 Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (D.E.I.)

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination and defines 'protected characteristics' under the act as age; disability; gender; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; and sexual orientation.

It is therefore important to have a diversity policy that sets out your expectations of behaviour for all workers and volunteers. The policy should reflect an aim that you value diversity, actively prevent discrimination, and promote equality.

6.2 Bullying & Harassment

As a family of faith, we seek to foster relationships of the utmost integrity and trustworthiness, and to provide a supportive, caring environment in which the wellbeing of individuals is key and where each person is treated with dignity and respect at all times.

The Diocese's "*Anti Bullying and Harassment policy (2024)*", sets out the indicators of what constitutes both bullying and harassment behaviours, and explains the process by which you can make a complaint if you consider you have been subject to unacceptable behaviour, and what will happen.

Further information can be found by clicking onto the following link:

<https://rochester.anglican.org/content/pages/documents/2024-anti-bullying-and-harrassment-policy.pdf>

7. TEMPLATES & INFORMATION

Here are some useful templates that will take you through the process of recruiting volunteers:

7.1 Volunteer Application Form (General)



Template Volunteer
Application Form-Gen

7.2 Volunteer Application Form (Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults)



Template Volunteer
Application Form-Wo

7.3 Volunteer Role Description



Template Volunteer
Role Description Feb 2

7.4 Volunteer Agreement



Template Volunteers
Agreement Feb 2025-

7.5 Ending a Volunteer Agreement Letter



Ending Volunteer
Agreement Letter Feb

7.6 Equal Opportunities Policy



Equal_Opportunities_
Policy - Template.docx

8. Other sources of information:

"Working With Volunteers"

This is a helpful online resource produced by Church Urban Fund and the Church of England Lay Training Adviser.

Volunteering Resources - CUF

The online resource offers 7 themed guidance sheets around working with volunteers and associated templates that parishes can adapt including:

- *Clarifying Tasks;*
- *Taking on Volunteers;*
- *Building Good Relationships;*
- *Encouraging Development;*
- *Tackling Difficulties;*
- *Agreeing Principles; and*
- *Managing Formalities.*

JOIN campaign

The JOIN campaign is an initiative by the Church of England to double the number of children and young people by 2030 and is actively encouraging churches to recruit volunteers to lead children and young people.

Please see the toolkit for churches to run a successful volunteer recruitment campaign www.churchofengland.org/JOINplan

Additional factsheets, templates and resources are available for information on working and volunteering safely with children and young people at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/30kproject>

Useful information:

[Managing volunteers | The Church of England](#)

<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance>

[Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance | The Church of England](#)

[Working with Volunteers - Parish Resources](#)