

How to Do-it
How?
Part 2

Managing and Supporting
Volunteers

What's in it:

1	<u>Managing and organising volunteers</u>	4
2	<u>Support and supervision</u>	5
3	<u>Role specific training</u>	8
4	<u>Opportunities for development</u>	9
5	<u>Say thank you</u>	10
6	<u>Build your network</u>	11
7	<u>Useful things</u>	13

There are two **How to Do-it - How?** guides. This guide focuses on managing and supporting volunteers – the other guide covers recruitment, selection and induction.



Every volunteer should know ‘who’s in charge’

Which is possibly all this guide needs to say. But we would be short changing you if we left it there! Within every group or organisation - no matter how big or small - you need to decide on your model of practice for managing or organising your volunteer help. For a small informal community group, one person being the lead for volunteers is probably going to be sufficient. For larger organisations there might be a central team who either manages all the volunteer involvement or supports the work of those who supervise volunteers. But whatever your structure, ensuring that each volunteer knows who is leading the project they are working on and that they can contact them when they need to, is crucial.

Apologies for stating the obvious but **supporting volunteers is different from managing paid staff**. With paid staff you have a contract/payment structure that means it's far easier to make demands and expect them to be done. With volunteers you are relying on goodwill and mutual co-operation so the relationship is a continual negotiation between you as the project leader, and the person that is giving you their time.

Paid staff that work alongside volunteers need to recognise, understand and accept these differences. As highlighted in the guides **Why?** and **Who?** people volunteer for a variety of reasons - from developing their CV, to getting out more or simply because they want to do some good - so understanding their motivation for being there is crucial.

Clarify Expectations around Support and Supervision

Once a volunteer joins your project you need to take a **proactive approach to inducting and/or supporting them**. When we say inducting, simply being clear about what it is that you want a volunteer to do is a good start - you'd be amazed at how many people forget to do this! Then deciding on training and the level of ongoing support or supervision that might be required, will depend on the role that volunteers are doing.

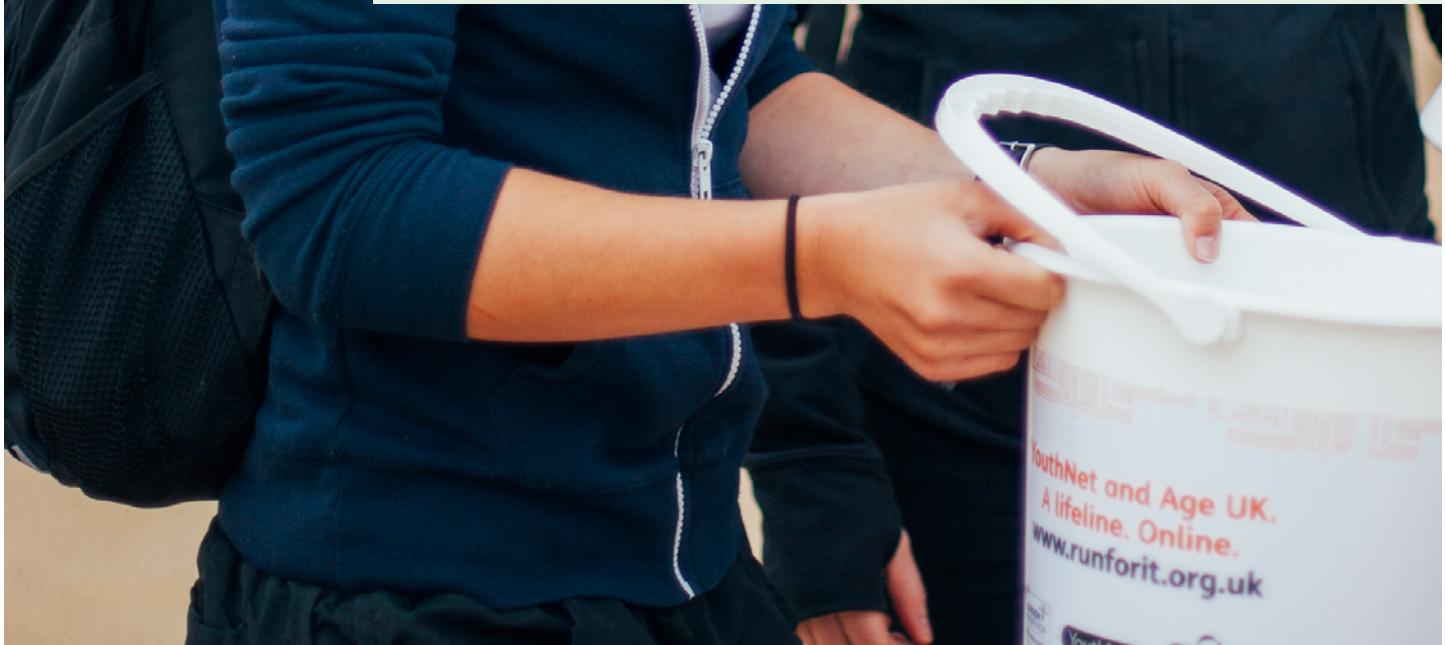
Many volunteers will be happy to simply get on with it - indeed giving people more control over what they do can be a liberating experience and many volunteers are quite capable of managing things with minimal supervision. To assume that just because someone is a volunteer that they have to be micro-managed is daft - learning to let go can result in better volunteering, after all there are numerous community projects that operate successfully without any paid staff at all!

But deciding on the right type of support depends on the role. Volunteers carrying out roles that could be emotionally demanding or who may be lone working with service users, should have regular contact with someone who can offer them support or supervision.

Support and supervision can be offered in a number of different ways which can include 1:1 support, group sessions, telephone support and peer support or buddying.



The support and supervision that will be provided to volunteers should be outlined to them as **part of the induction process** so that both staff and volunteers are clear as to what the expectations are.



1:1 supervision

this is likely to be most useful for those working directly with service users who may need some emotional and developmental support around their roles. If you have a large group of volunteers be realistic about whether you can resource this otherwise look for alternative ways of support volunteers. If you opt for this method it is advised that a record is kept of the content of the sessions.

Group Support

this can work well where you have a lot of volunteers carrying out the same role. This can be done at the end of a session as a 'group debrief' or you may want to bring people together on a regular basis. Volunteer leaders sometimes feedback that volunteers are not good at attending these sessions. Try to address this by ensuring all dates are set for the year, make the sessions appealing by inviting guest speakers, building in a training session and providing refreshments!

Telephone Support

this can be as valuable as a face to face session and more convenient for both the supervisor and the volunteer. Telephone support generally takes up less time than a face to face session and is often much easier to arrange. For those with the facilities, a group session could be organised via telephone conferencing.

Peer Support/Buddying

it can be a good idea to train some of your existing volunteers to take on roles where they act as the supporter or buddy for one of your newer volunteers.

If you experience issues with volunteers attending supervision it is recommended that you deal with this swiftly as it could lead to issues further down the line.

Develop role specific training

As for supervision and support, training and development should be relevant to the roles that volunteers are undertaking. Some roles won't require any training other than 'on the job' learning. More complex roles will require more in-depth training.

In developing training it is always useful to have a look around at what other people are doing and what you can learn from them. If your programme is unique or very specific it will be important to develop training that is going to meet the needs of those undertaking the role. If you are due to deliver training and have not done so before, you might want to consider going on a 'Train the Trainers' course first – many Councils for Voluntary Service offer these.

A useful development in training for volunteers is the option of e-learning. Organisations are beginning to offer access to an e-learning suite which volunteers have access to. This can be expedient where you have large numbers of volunteers or where volunteers are dispersed. It can also be useful for specific areas of your work such as facilitating learning around data protection, health and safety and equal opportunities.

Opportunities for Development

Volunteering provides significant opportunities for personal development. This can include learning new skills, gaining confidence or gaining a better understanding of the wider world around you. Research conducted by TimeBank in 2009 highlighted that 85% of employers value volunteering on an individual's CV and that those who have volunteered felt that it had helped with skills such as time management and team building.

Not all volunteers are looking for development in their role but for those that are you should try to tailor your support to meet their needs.

The key is understanding what motivates your volunteers and ensuring that the volunteering you offer will help to support this motivation, where feasible.

If someone is looking to gain paid employment, be realistic with them as to what you can offer to help them realise this - eg training - and be clear what you expect in return, such as a minimum time commitment to make it worth your while investing in their development.

But remember that the vast majority of people volunteer because they want to do something good for others. Helping them to understand how their role is having an impact on the wider world and what difference they are making can be a huge buzz - so it's always worth taking some time to let them know what difference they are making.

Say Thank You!

Volunteers are often humble souls and will say that they don't seek recognition - they do what they do because they believe in it. Whilst this is often the case it is still important to find ways to say thank you. We all like to feel appreciated. There are various different ways that you can show your volunteers that their contribution is valued.

Listed below are some suggestions:

- Say thank you - no, we're not repeating ourselves (!) but the simple gesture of saying thank you to volunteers at the end of their contribution will go a long way.
- Organise social and/or networking events - some volunteers are motivated by the opportunity to meet new people that volunteering can provide. Try to find ways to bring people together.
- Remember their birthdays if you can, especially if they volunteer for you on them!
- Include them in team away days, events etc where appropriate
- Carry out volunteer surveys - provide them with opportunities to feed back on their experiences
- Offer references and support their education and career aspirations
- Nominate volunteers for external awards either locally or nationally

Materials you might want to develop:

- ✓ Volunteer training and/or learning plans
- ✓ Training for paid staff in supporting and supervising volunteers
- ✓ Volunteer survey

Network!

Find ways to network with others who are doing what you do - there are various different ways of doing this:

Make direct contact with groups or organisations who are local to you and organise some visits. This will help you build relationships as well as finding out what they do and how. Be inquisitive.

Social Media:

Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn - all have different groups, organisations and individuals who have a volunteering specialism that will keep you up to date with current thinking, trends and issues.



twitter.com



facebook.com



linkedin.com

IVO

A social network for those working with volunteers and social action projects; IVO is free to use and enables members to connect with others, share resources and ask questions to get help from the community.



[IVO \(ivo.org\)](https://ivo.org)

UKVPMs

A forum that has been around for over 10 years. Members are made up of volunteer managers in national and local charities who exchange views and ideas about anything to do with involving and supporting volunteers.



[UKVPM \(groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/UKVPMs/info\)](https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/UKVPMs/info)

Association for Volunteer Managers

'A voice, a resource and a network in volunteer management'



[Association for Volunteer Managers \(volunteermanagers.org.uk\)](https://volunteermanagers.org.uk)

National Network for Volunteer Involving Agencies (NNVIA)

The network has over 70 member organisations. NNVIA organises meetings to bring people together to discuss policy and issues relating to volunteering. Further information is available via CSV who established the network in 2004

 [CSV Network for Volunteer Agencies](#)

Useful!

Agencies and online resources

The UK Volunteering Forum is made up of four different organisations who all offer further information and advice about volunteering:

NCVO

 [NCVO \(ncvo.org.uk\)](http://ncvo.org.uk)

Volunteer Scotland

 [Volunteer Scotland \(volunteerscotland.net\)](http://volunteerscotland.net)

Volunteer Now (Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland)

 [Volunteer Now \(volunteernow.co.uk\)](http://volunteernow.co.uk)

Wales Council for Voluntary Action

 [Wales Council for Voluntary Action \(wcva.org.uk\)](http://wcva.org.uk)

Volunteer Centres

Offer advice, information and support for those wanting to establish or develop volunteering as well as assisting with recruitment.

NCVO offers a link for finding your local volunteer centre:

 [NCVO \(volunteering.org.uk/where-do-i-start\)](http://volunteering.org.uk/where-do-i-start)

Know How Non Profit

 [Know How Non Profit \(knowhownonprofit.org\)](http://knowhownonprofit.org) - offers a range of online guides and information on involving volunteers

Literature and documents

From the Top Down: The Executive Role in Successful Volunteer Involvement, Energize Inc. *Ellis, S. (2010)*

On the Safe Side

Explores health, safety and risk management in volunteering, *Gaskin, K.*

 [Institute for Volunteering Research \(ivr.org.uk\)](http://ivr.org.uk)

The Complete Volunteer Management Handbook

Directory of Social Change, London, *McCurley, S., Lynch, R. and R. Jackson (2012)*

Volunteers and the Law

Oversight of key issues relating to volunteers and legal issues,

Restall, M. Free to download at:

 [Volunteering England \(volunteering.org.uk\)](http://volunteeringengland.volunteering.org.uk)

Please enter search term: "Volunteers and the Law"

Volunteering and Society in the 21st Century

Palgrave Macmillan, London, *Rochester, C., Ellis Paine, A. and S. Howlett (2010)*

Do-it Yourself

Want to set up your own community project? Now is a great time to have a go and there are lots of resources available to get you started.

UnLtd

the foundation for social entrepreneurs, a one stop shop of advice and support, including grants, to help people get their community projects off the ground.

 [UnLtd \(unltd.org.uk\)](http://unltd.org.uk)

Kickstarter

the biggest crowd funding platform out there

 [Kickstarter \(kickstarter.com\)](http://kickstarter.com)

O2 Think Big

O2 give out grants to young people set up community projects

 [O2 Think Big \(o2thinkbig.co.uk\)](http://o2thinkbig.co.uk)

Social Startup Funders - Twitter list

A Twitter list of social start up support and funders, compiled by the folks at Year Here

 [Social Startup Funders](http://twitter.com/yearhere/lists/social-startup-funders)
[\(twitter.com/yearhere/lists/social-startup-funders\)](http://twitter.com/yearhere/lists/social-startup-funders)



Written by Sophie Wellings, edited by
Karice Baker-Quow and Jamie Ward-Smith

Copyright Do-it Trust,
www.doitrust.org 2014
all rights reserved