

Norfolk & Waveney  
Vision for Volunteering

# Supporting Volunteers

A simple guide for local groups

Get InVOLved  
**NORFOLK**



# What is volunteering?



- Volunteering means giving your time and skills for free to help others.
- Helping close friends or family doesn't count—but helping your community or the environment does.
- It can be formal (through organisations) or informal (in your community), but it should always be your choice.

## Where do I start?

Managing volunteers well involves three key stages. Each one benefits from good planning and tracking:

1. **Recruitment** – Find the right person for the right role at the right time.
2. **Retention** – Keep volunteers happy, supported, and engaged.
3. **Recognition** – Show volunteers they are valued and appreciated.



If recruiting and managing volunteers is new for you or your organisation, make sure you have the basics in place, including:

- **A volunteer policy**
- **Safeguarding procedures** (for roles with children or vulnerable adults)
- **Insurance cover**
- **A simple summary of what volunteers will do and what they can expect**

# Recruitment – Getting the right people in

Before you start, agree what you need volunteers for, and what kind of impact you want them to make. But never forget that there needs to be mutual benefit – volunteers will only stay if they enjoy being part of your organisation.

## 1. Offer flexible opportunities

- Write short, friendly role descriptions with clear tasks and time commitments.
- Be flexible and break larger roles into smaller parts, if needed.
- Offer one-off or short-term roles (with a simple application process) as well as long-term ones.
- Make applications available in different formats to improve accessibility.
- Talk about benefits like learning new skills or boosting their CV.
- Be clear about any training required.

## 2. Spread the word

- Ask people directly and don't assume they will say no.
- Involve your current volunteers in identifying new roles and acting as ambassadors.
- Post roles on the Get Involved Norfolk website.
- Use notice boards, newsletters, social media, and local magazines.
- Make your materials eye-catching and easy to understand.
- Tailor your message and reach out to specific and under-represented groups.
- Promote your organisation's mission, not just the role.



### 3. Signing up new volunteers

- Learn about their interests and motivations. Shape roles around their strengths.
- Let them shadow an existing volunteer before committing, especially when safeguarding checks or training are necessary.
- Make the application process simple, welcoming, and available in different formats.
- Support any specific needs (e.g. transport, caring duties, accessibility).
- Explain what expenses can be claimed and how to do so.

### 4. Personal and Community Benefits

- Talk about how volunteering helps wellbeing and mental health.
- Highlight chances to meet people and feel part of the community.
- Mention personal growth, career development and training opportunities.

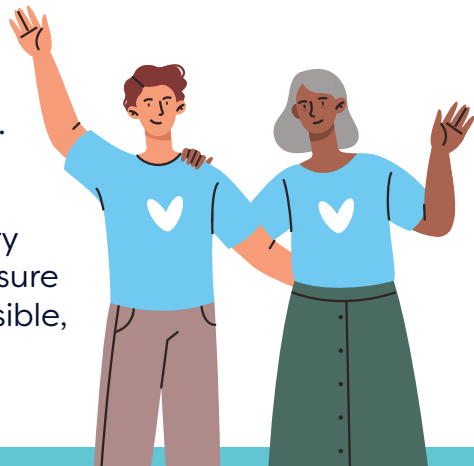


### 5. Partnerships and Collaborations

- Work with local businesses, schools, colleges, Job Centre Plus, and charities such as the Duke of Edinburgh Awards.
- Offer short-term roles (micro-volunteering) to introduce young people and others to volunteering.

### 6. Say hello (properly!)

- Give a warm welcome and a simple induction so they know what is expected of them.
- Explain where to get help and what to do if problems arise.
- Introduce them to others and try running a buddy system. Make sure initial training is relevant, accessible, and not overwhelming.



### Examples of good practice – recruitment

- ★ Listing your roles on [www.getinvolvednorfolk.org.uk](http://www.getinvolvednorfolk.org.uk)
- ★ Creating a simple Volunteers' Handbook with key contact details, policies, Frequently Asked Questions and useful checklist.
- ★ Asking existing volunteers to produce case studies of why they volunteer and how they benefit.

## Retention – keeping volunteers happy

Recruiting volunteers takes time and effort, so once you have them, it's important to keep them. Here's how:

### 1. Keep talking

- Make sure they understand their role clearly.
- Have regular chats to see if they're still getting what they hoped for.
- Offer support and free training – check [www.getinvolvedskills.org.uk](http://www.getinvolvedskills.org.uk)

### 2. Show you value them

- Say thank you – it really matters.
- Ask how they like to be appreciated.
- Use simple, affordable ways to show thanks.
- Cover any out-of-pocket costs.
- Offer different roles or flexible hours to keep things interesting.



### 3. Work with other organisations

- Team up with other groups to share volunteers.
- For one-off events, create a shared pool of trained volunteers.
- Find local groups via the “Discover Organisations” section at the foot of **[www.getinvolvednorfolk.org.uk](http://www.getinvolvednorfolk.org.uk)**

#### Examples of good practice – retention

- ★ Regular check-ins with a simple checklist.
- ★ Easy ways to claim expenses and give feedback.

---

## Recognition – celebrating contributions

### 1. Celebrate and reflect

- Share successes, even small ones.
- Ask for feedback on how things could improve.
- Recognise their events with certificates, milestone badges or t-shirts, or shout-outs.
- Highlight the difference they’re making.

### 2. Make it personal

- Some volunteers like public praise, others prefer quiet thanks – ask what they prefer.
- Create chances for volunteers to socialise and feel part of the team.



### 3. Make it known

- Nominate volunteers for awards.
- Share their stories on social media and in newsletters.
- Feature them in reports and on your website.
- Use data to show their impact.

#### Examples of good practice – recognition

- ★ Send birthday cards.
- ★ Give certificates for 1, 3, 5, or 10 years of service
- ★ Host “Thank You” events during Volunteers Week  
[www.volunteersweek.org](http://www.volunteersweek.org)

**Don't aim for perfection  
– just be kind, clear,  
and consistent.**



## Resources - some helpful websites for managing volunteers:

- Recruit volunteers and pick up tips from other organisations doing the same in Norfolk **[www.getinvolvednorfolk.org.uk](http://www.getinvolvednorfolk.org.uk)** or Suffolk **[www.volunteersuffolk.org.uk](http://www.volunteersuffolk.org.uk)**
- The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) gives advice on involving volunteers in their Help & Guidance section **[www.ncvo.org.uk](http://www.ncvo.org.uk)**
- Scan the QR code to visit Get Involved Skills **[www.getinvolvedskills.org.uk](http://www.getinvolvedskills.org.uk)** for more helpful resources on managing volunteers.



For general support for voluntary and community groups, as well as social enterprises, you can visit the Empowering Communities Partnership in Norfolk **[www.ecnorfolk.org.uk](http://www.ecnorfolk.org.uk)** or Community Action Suffolk **[www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk](http://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk)**

This publication has been researched and compiled by members of the Norfolk & Waveney Vision for Volunteering – a partnership between local government, the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board and Norfolk-based delivery and support organisations within the voluntary and community sector.

This work has been supported by Voluntary Norfolk and Norfolk County Council.

Contact **[volunteercentre@voluntarynorfolk.org.uk](mailto:volunteercentre@voluntarynorfolk.org.uk)** for additional copies, comments or corrections.

**Voluntary Norfolk,  
83-87 Pottergate,  
Norwich,  
NR2 1DZ, UK.**

**Get InVOLved  
NORFOLK**

**Get InVOLved  
SKILLS**