



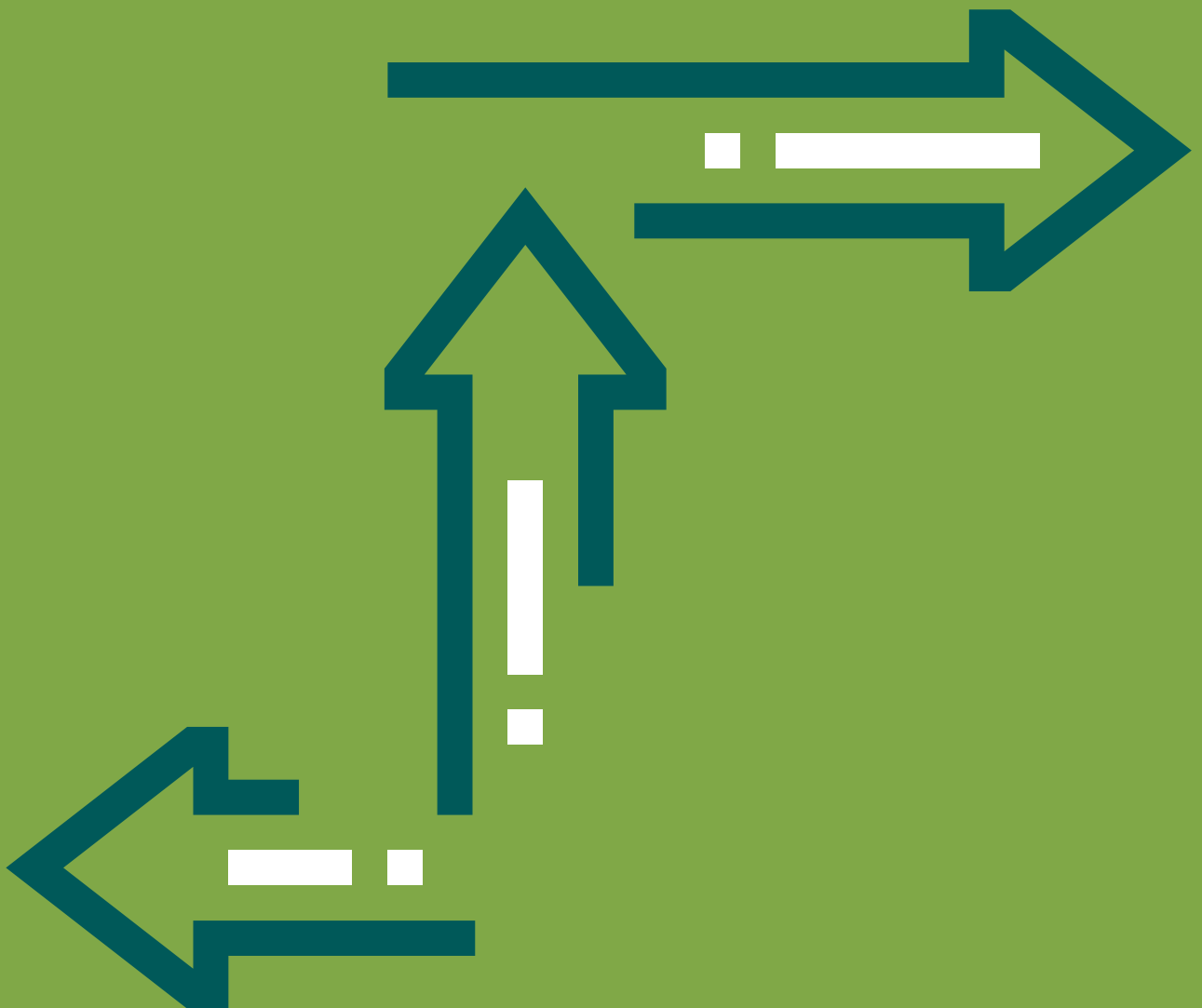
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# Diversifying your Volunteers

A toolkit for volunteer involving organisations



A shared resource for  
developing knowledge





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# Part 1: Diversifying Your Volunteer Base Guide

## Introduction

This Guide gives information, ideas and top tips on how to diversify your volunteer base. It will help enhance your diversity practice and includes practical, tried and tested ideas from volunteer managers working across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.

## Definitions

Let's get started with some definitions

- **Diversity:** everyone is individual and different.
- **Equality:** equal access to volunteering opportunities.
- **Inclusion:** a sense of belonging, feeling respected and valued for who you are.
- **Discrimination:** people are different from each other and they can either build connections and value the differences or treat each other less favourably because of their differences: this is discrimination.



Diversity recognises all the ways in which we are different, i.e. gender, age, race, ethnicity, nationality, language, sexual orientation, health, disabilities, skills, perspectives, beliefs, experiences, thinking style, where we live... the list goes on – just showing how different we all are. Differences bring strengths and creativity to our volunteer programmes, however there are hurdles that can prevent some people from becoming volunteers.

### **Consider diversity and inclusion in two ways:**

- Volunteers reflect the local community or region where the organisation is based – this is about reflecting and understanding the population.
- Volunteers reflect the organisation's service users – this approach might work for organisations that serve a community of interest and would also value volunteers with lived experience.

## **The effects of stereotyping**

When we make assumptions about someone based on things like their gender, sexuality, beliefs or appearance, it's called stereotyping which can be harmful. It is important to avoid stereotyping – each person is unique and different. So, when we recruit volunteers, we choose people based on how well they match the skills, knowledge and experience needed to fulfil the role. Jumping to conclusions based on stereotypes can lead to poor decisions at best and exclusion in the worse-case scenario.





## Why is action on diversity important in volunteering?

**Inclusion doesn't just happen** – it's about taking practical steps to ensure we diversify our volunteer base and create an environment where people feel welcome and want to keep volunteering.

- Organisations often have values around diversity and inclusion – they form part of ethical practice.
- To be more attractive to potential volunteers.
- We're community based, so we want volunteers to be representative of service users and the communities. People who are representative of the world around them have a deeper understanding of service users' needs.
- Diversity brings a wealth of knowledge, skills, abilities and experience, which adds to what the organisation can offer.
- Diversity of thought leads to different ideas, better problem solving and creativity.
- We enhance our reputation by letting people know that we are an inclusive organisation.

## Creating an inclusive volunteering strategy

Putting effort into being more diverse, encourages people from under-represented groups to volunteer. By taking steps to be inclusive, we create a more equitable space for volunteers, and potential volunteers, so they get the most out of their experience. All organisations have competing priorities for time, effort and resources. Diversity is not just a tick box activity – it's about making a real difference and adding value to our volunteering programmes. Ensure diversity is a priority!

### **We can create an inclusive environment by focusing on:**

- **Equity** – by breaking down barriers to participation.
- **Inclusion** – by offering opportunities where people feel they can fully participate and make a meaningful contribution.
- **Belonging** – by creating an atmosphere where volunteers feel part of the organisation, feel safe and feel valued and are connected.



## Plan – Do – Review

- Make sure your volunteering strategy identifies the positive outcomes (for volunteers, service users and the organisation) that will come from having diverse volunteers.
- Tell the world what you hope to achieve by diversifying your volunteer base – your aims and expected outcomes.
- Set out the actions you're going to take to make the outcomes happen.
- Monitor your progress to demonstrate how things are changing and improving.

Strategies and plans are important, but what's critical is how we turn those documents into practical actions that make a difference. See below for more on Action Plans and Measuring Diversity. But it's not just about recruiting diverse volunteers into what already exists – we must ensure all volunteers' experiences are positive. This means reviewing your volunteer policies, procedures and management to make sure current policies do not unintentionally exclude groups of volunteers.

## Inclusion is a measure of quality

Investing in Volunteers (IiV) is a paid for quality framework for volunteer involving organisations. IiV Essentials is a free online version for smaller groups. The new IiV standards, launched in March 2021 have 'volunteer inclusion' as one of six areas that organisations must demonstrate they are achieving. To find out more about either IiV or IiV Essentials contact SCVS, NPTCVS or WCVA.



## Barriers to inclusion and how to break them down

Barriers can exist at all stages of volunteering. Becoming more aware of what is stopping people from engaging in your volunteering programme is essential. The following Top Tips give examples of barriers to engagement for many groups of volunteers, with ideas on how to remove them. Focusing on volunteering overall, some of the most common barriers include:

- **Physical barriers** such as intimidating recruitment processes, overly complicated application forms, inaccessible buildings, distance from public transport.
- **Negative attitudes** from staff and other volunteers who create an exclusive culture and don't welcome new volunteers.
- **Language barriers** focus on communications in English only, using jargon and other inaccessible language or formats.
- **Branding and marketing materials** that leave some people feeling excluded.
- **Inflexible roles** that don't account for people's lives, including those with different working patterns or caring responsibilities.

- **Inflexible processes** e.g. training that requires a long time commitment that is inflexible.
- **Financial barriers** for instance not reimbursing out of pocket expenses.
- **Overly ambitious volunteer roles** and requirements that exclude people who lack confidence or who are less experienced.
- **Lack of action on diversity and inclusion** from the Board and staff, leading to an unwelcoming environment.

If you want to diversify your volunteer base consider how your volunteering opportunities are organised and managed. Make changes that unlock the gates so that everyone has a chance to volunteer. The changes needed may depend on the size of your organisation. However, we can all set realistic goals to make our volunteering base more diverse.





## Making volunteering more diverse and inclusive

### Organisation's culture and values

- Engage volunteers in your diversity plans.
- Promote a culture that is inclusive and welcoming to everyone. Get buy-in from the Board, staff and volunteers; they should set the tone of what is expected!
- Be a role model.
- Talk about discrimination, diversity and inclusion. Review your processes and structure – do they cause discrimination? Have an honest discussion.
- Challenge discrimination and inappropriate behaviour and language.
- Make sure staff, volunteers and the Board have access to diversity training so people can pro-actively contribute and support positive change.
- Understand the barriers to volunteering.
- Treat everyone fairly through your policies and procedures and adapt them to meet diverse needs.
- Talk about diversity when you plan projects, in supervision, at team meetings and at the AGM.
- Provide opportunities for discussion and shared learning.



## Promotion and marketing

- Tell people the organisation welcomes and encourages volunteers from all areas of the community.
- Consider the languages and images you use – do they promote diversity?
- Use a wide range of communication methods, media and formats.
- Avoid digital exclusion.

## Recruitment

Your recruitment practices are the gateway to volunteering – are you closing gates or opening them?

- Before a person commits to the organisation, make it easy for them to have an informal chat to get to know your organisation and the volunteering opportunities.
- Have an honest conversation with people about the right role for them.
- Review your recruitment processes – do they put up barriers? Be sure any requirements in the role descriptions are needed. Can you design a role around the volunteer's skills and experience, rather than recruiting for specific roles?
- Make the interview/chat as friendly, accessible and encouraging as possible – put the potential volunteer at ease. Help people see what they have to offer.
- Offer 'try it out' sessions.





## Managing and supporting volunteers

Support should be ongoing from the point of recruitment – by offering support we enable someone to volunteer or continue to volunteer. Remember everyone is different and we all have different needs.

- **Listen well!** Listen to what motivates the volunteer.
- **Make it clear to all potential volunteers** that the organisation is keen to understand and meet individual support needs. Don't be fearful of asking 'how can I help?'
- **Provide support** and effective supervision.
- **Get to know** your volunteers – tailor support to their needs.
- Ensure volunteers know that they can **discuss concerns** in confidence at any time.
- Make sure volunteers **understand safeguarding**.
- Consider **what well-being support** you can offer.
- **Train volunteers** to become peer mentors.
- **Build in opportunities** for volunteers to connect, so they are not isolated in their roles.
- Let the volunteer know how much staff **appreciate their efforts**.
- **Offer a balanced approach** – be flexible but have structure in place too. Some volunteers flourish better with a structured approach.
- **Review the expenses policy** – does it cover all needs?
- **Explore with people** what motivates them to volunteer and make sure everyone is given the chance to develop.
- If you're implementing change – **check that proposed changes don't have a negative disproportionate effect on some groups** of volunteers above others.
- **Be realistic** about what you can expect from volunteers. Don't overburden people who are already trying to juggle other parts of their lives e.g. caring responsibilities, ill-health, etc.
- All volunteers need support; **some volunteers might need specific support** to be able to take part and get the most out of the experience. For some people, a lack of structured support can be a significant barrier to volunteering. Supported volunteering aims to provide accessible opportunities and ongoing support for volunteers with specific needs.



## Measuring diversity

This Guide gives you ideas on how to diversify your volunteer base. But, if you make changes to your management practices, how will you know they've made any difference? Like all projects and services we need to monitor and evaluate progress.

### There are 3 key questions to ask:

- What's working?
- What's not working?
- What do we need to change?

### Steps to take:

- Have an Action Plan, with SMART objectives and clear outcomes.
- Monitoring progress against your plan.
- Involve your volunteers in the evaluation.
- Report progress to the Board and other stakeholders.
- Update the action plan annually.

## Diversity Action Plan

To demonstrate your commitment to embracing diversity and tackling discrimination it is helpful to have an annual action plan. Themes in the Action Plan could include:

- Commitment from the Board.
- Meeting the changing needs of service users and volunteers.
- Volunteering policies and practice.
- Training and development.
- Resourcing the action plan.
- Monitoring and evaluation.



## SMART objectives

Include SMART objectives with clear outcomes in your Action Plan so that people know what is expected of them and so you can review progress. Objectives should be **SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timebound**.

### You can make objectives measurable by including:

- a number or percentage – e.g. increase the % of youth volunteers.
- a measure of quality – e.g. design an accessible and co-produced volunteer project.
- an indication of the results of work or what it will lead to e.g. “make changes to the recruitment programme leading to improved diversity in our volunteer programmes”. If you use this type of measure, then it is important you can describe what ‘improved’ looks like.

## Outcomes

Before you take action to diversify your volunteer base, be clear about what you want to achieve. Are there groups of people who don’t apply to your volunteer programmes? Do you lose certain volunteers along the way?

Outcomes are the differences you want to make as a result of your actions. You can monitor progress against your outcomes. As an example, you might aim to retain more volunteers with a learning disability. To measure progress you’ll need to have data for current volunteer population so you can compare this with your changing volunteer population at different intervals, e.g. 6-monthly, annually.

If you don’t achieve your expected outcomes, part of evaluation is working out what barriers still exist and what actions you need to take in the future, leading you to update your plans.



## Inclusion across the organisation

It's important to play your part in encouraging the organisation to go beyond equality and to embed diversity and inclusion in all of its practices. Have conversations to build common understanding and shared values across the organisation. Having an equality and diversity policy that makes positive statements is only the first step. Policies without action plans are just wishes. Consider the role the organisation can play in highlighting and challenging systemic discrimination that's built into the structure of society.

Awareness raising and training for staff and volunteers can embed equality and inclusion practices across the organisations.

### Further reading

- **Volunteer Scotland:** Inclusive Volunteering <https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/guidance/thinking-about/inclusive-volunteering/>
- **NCVO:** Time Well Spent: Diversity and Volunteering Research Report <https://publications.ncvo.org.uk/time-well-spent-diversity-and-volunteering/>
- **NCVO:** Diversifying Your Volunteer Base <https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/case-studies/diversifying-your-volunteer-base>
- How to Develop an Inclusive Supported Volunteering Scheme <https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/how-to/how-to-develop-an-inclusive-supported-volunteering-scheme>

**Research briefing:** what is holding the charity sector back from putting words into action? <https://www.thinknpc.org/resource-hub/walking-the-talk-on-diversity/>



## Part 2: Top Tips

These Top Tips have been produced to help ensure that all volunteers have a positive experience of volunteering. They highlight the barriers to participation and provide suggestions on how to make your volunteer recruitment and management processes more inclusive. It is important to remember that volunteer coordination should take an intersectional approach, recognising that individuals have multiple identities and that there will be a wide variety of experiences within any particular identity.

Where reference is made to people with disabilities, it is acknowledged that there will be great variation between types of disabilities. This guide recognises, in line with the social model of disability, that it is society which erects barriers and limits the opportunities of disabled people.

This resource is intended to prompt discussion and thinking on how volunteering can be made more inclusive and does not represent a definitive list of actions. Please explore these areas further and within the context of your organisation.



# Welcoming Volunteers who are Asylum Seekers & Refugees: Top Tips

## Challenges within volunteering

- Financial difficulties.
- Language barriers – individuals may be learning English.
- Technological/Communication barriers with limited access to mobile phones/internet etc.
- Individuals may be traumatised, isolated and experiencing mental health issues.
- The Asylum application process itself requires a lot emotionally from those seeking sanctuary as well as in terms of appointment attendance and phone calls.
- Due to the Law in relation to paid work, individuals may be unclear that they can volunteer.
- DBS process can be problematic due to the timescale and access required to documentation.
- Access to referees.
- Transport issues. Individuals may wish to cycle/walk to volunteering limiting the scope of the location of volunteering.
- Childcare issues.
- Possible stigma faced.
- Individuals may be new to the area and unable to locate your organisation/aware that it exists.





## Suggestions to address these challenges and make your volunteer recruitment and management processes more inclusive

- Reimburse expenses on the same day/in advance if possible (asylum support allowance is £5.66 a day; a bus ticket costs £4.70). Don't forget about cycle expenses.
- Fill out application forms together.
- Organise events/training in an easily accessible place.
- Ensure your induction training/supervisions/communications are clear and understandable to those learning English. Do you have access to translators to help?
- Be flexible around communication methods in relation to technology.
- Be empathetic and signpost to organisations who can offer support with trauma and or mental health difficulties if appropriate.
- Offer opportunities for individuals to socialise and meet new people.
- Give flexibility for legal appointments around asylum seeking process.
- Be clear with your language in relation to 'paid work' and 'volunteering', explain volunteering is allowed.
- To avoid DBS complications, consider non DBS required roles or ensure individuals are aware the process can take longer.
- Be mindful that following the DBS 'Route 4' option which involves the volunteer having their fingerprints taken in a Police Station can be traumatic.
- Rather than using references, consider other ways of assessing suitability.
- Be flexible with timings when you are arranging volunteering; bearing childcare in mind. Can you reimburse childcare expenses?
- Help your volunteers to settle and make connections if they are new to the area.
- Develop your understanding around issues faced by those seeking sanctuary and encourage your staff and volunteers to do the same.
- Take a person-centred approach to supporting people.

### Our Inclusion Top Tip

Overall, clear communication and accessible processes ensure volunteering is more accessible to all e.g. reimbursement of expenses, clear marketing materials, filling out application forms together, choosing accessible venues.



Produced with  
 Ethic Minorities and Youth Support  
 Team Wales  
<http://eyst.org.uk>  
 African Community Centre  
<https://africancommunitycentre.org.uk>  
 and Swansea Asylum Seekers Support  
<https://sass.wales/>



# Welcoming Volunteers from BAME Backgrounds: Top Tips

**(Important note: the BAME community is itself very diverse and covers a wide range of skills, experiences and backgrounds)**

## Challenges within volunteering

- Language Barrier (if English is not their first language).
- Unsure of where and how to access volunteering opportunities.
- Unsure of why is it good to volunteer.
- Unsure of a welcome or positive response from organisation.
- Racism (direct or indirect, this could be personal or institutional).
- Access to transport (car, cost of public transport).
- Access to IT equipment (for digital volunteering; hardware/Wi-Fi/internet).
- Fear/concern about being the only BAME volunteer.





## Suggestions to address these challenges and make your volunteer recruitment & management processes more inclusive

- Recruitment of BAME volunteers should never be a tick box exercise. All volunteering should aim to be mutually beneficial to all parties involved. Tokenism may only add to future issues.
- Commitment to diversity must start of the top, from the Board and CEO/ Senior management team.
- Offer multiple different roles to cater for a range of skills.
- Clear role descriptions for each role
- Straight forward language (clear communication).
- Clear volunteering process.
- There needs to be clearly defined responsibility for volunteers with named person(s) for volunteers' support.
- Supportive environment.
- Commitment to supporting volunteer development. Don't expect volunteers to be the finished article on day one. Training and support are crucial for a smooth volunteer journey.
- Multiple recruitment pathways and a variety of methods should improve diversity including the use of digital adverts (Volunteering Wales website) posters (in CVCs, libraries) links with University students - Swansea (Discovery, UWTSD) Sixth Form colleges and schools, local networks and word of mouth.
- Pre-Pandemic word of mouth was the biggest recruiting tool, this can be overlooked and under-valued. People discuss with friends how good/bad their experience of volunteering was!
- Follow best practice models of volunteering (they really work).
- Be open to learn more about different cultures.
- Be flexible to requests that support diversity (e.g. helping someone to find somewhere to pray whilst they volunteer).
- Be respectful and considerate (e.g. Halal food for volunteer parties).
- Don't ask probing questions about race, asylum status.
- Your volunteer team should in some way reflect the client group you support.
- Increasing your levels of diversity may take time and should be a natural progression rather than something forced for a quick fix.
- The volunteer coordinator plays a vital role. There needs to be a mixture of a clear structure in place to support volunteers but with built-in flexibility to adapt and adjust to individual volunteer needs, clear communication about what the volunteer role is, what is expected of the volunteer and the process involved.
- It is really important the volunteer coordinator reflects the values of the organisation and is welcoming, compassionate and friendly. In order for this to be sustained there needs to be a clear commitment to supporting diversity in all its forms from the top down.

### Our Inclusion Top Tip

Organisations need to put time, effort and resources into their recruitment, induction and support of volunteers. There needs to be a passion and desire from both organisation and staff for this to happen on a sustained basis.



Produced by Ethnic Minorities & Youth Support Team Wales:  
<http://eyst.org.uk/myCommunity> (2020)



# Welcoming Volunteers Who Are Carers: **Top Tips**

## Challenges within volunteering

- Responsibility of caring role, barrier to having time and the opportunity to volunteer.
- Health needs.
- Confidence: caring can be isolating.
- **Skills:** many carers have left employment/education to become carers and don't recognise the skills they have as being valuable.
- Inability to plan-ahead due to changing needs.
- Financial barriers.
- **Overwhelm:** feeling so overwhelmed with caring that despite wanting opportunities to try new things, not feeling able to take on new responsibilities.





## Suggestions to address these challenges & make your volunteer recruitment & management processes more inclusive

- When someone first applies to volunteer, find out if they are a carer (or have any other factors that may impact on their ability to volunteer). Have an honest conversation about what would be reasonable/realistic for them to take on.
- Offer the opportunity to access the support services your organisation provides if appropriate in addition to becoming a volunteer.
- Offer a variety of volunteer roles, in different settings, with different levels of responsibility and time commitments.
- Hold occasional “one-off” volunteer roles without a big time-commitment.
- Consider the volunteer’s caring role so that they aren’t expected to deliver a service that is ‘too close to home’.
- Have reserve volunteers in case a volunteer is unable to attend at short notice.
- Find out whether they are hoping to return to employment and offer training to support their role and build up CV.
- Be flexible allowing the volunteer involved to change over time and with their situation and caring role, make it easy for them to tell you if they need to make changes.
- Good communication between staff and volunteers, so that we pick up if they need support and advice and/or to be relieved of their volunteering responsibilities.
- Hold regular meetings which give space for volunteers to share difficulties they are facing.
- Formalise your commitment to offering carers volunteer opportunities by including it in funding bids.
- Include volunteers who are carers/ former carers in anything special you do (e.g. creating well-being packs).
- Offer a social aspect to volunteering, so that volunteers of different ages, from different backgrounds and volunteering in different parts of the organisation know each other. This will make your volunteer base more dynamic, and it easier for you to bring volunteers together for one-off activities.
- Work with organisations both in the third and other sectors such as business and education to broaden your volunteer base.
- Consider opportunities where volunteers can offer their time and skills within their own workplace (for example we have holistic therapists who offer a voucher system for carers to access treatments).
- Reimburse expenses.

### Our Inclusion Top Tip

**Value everyone:**

communicate clearly what you need the volunteer to do, ensure they can tell you if you their circumstances have changed, build in a back-up system, offer opportunities for training and personal growth, and make sure volunteers feel valued by creating social opportunities across the volunteer team.



Produced by Swansea Carers Centre:

**<https://www.swansecarerscentre.org.uk/>**



# Welcoming Volunteers with Disabilities: **Top Tips**

## Challenges within volunteering

- Many people with disabilities experience barriers around taking part in community activities linked to issues including environment/ accessible transport.
- How to connect with/recruit your target volunteer audience?
- Technology: not everyone has the skills, or access to equipment to be able to virtually volunteer.
- Lack of confidence of individuals and/or some organisations/ staff/volunteers believing that volunteering isn't accessible for all.





## Suggestions to address these challenges & make your volunteer recruitment & management processes more inclusive

- Support to volunteer can enable people with disabilities to increase their skills, confidence and self-worth, feel part of their community, live independently and enjoy their journey within volunteering.
- Help people to connect and improve the experience of volunteers by embracing new technology. You can streamline the process of becoming a volunteer and/or implement a volunteer portal enabling volunteers to manage their role digitally.
- Get to know your volunteers. Suggest roles can be modified and/or offer digital roles with training and help volunteering be more achievable, instilling confidence in change.
- Create person centred roles and take a person-centred approach (ensure the venue is accessible, materials such as the role description, volunteer handbook and training materials are provided in a suitable format and that expenses cover the cost of accessible transport).
- Promote real life case studies of individuals who enjoy volunteering with flexible and adaptable roles, encouraging others to believe they can also volunteer.
- Create bespoke volunteering projects and approach disability community groups, colleges and schools, supported living providers or mental health hospitals.
- Develop group volunteering ideas, building confidence that volunteering is a possibility and accessible. Group projects can lead to longer term individual volunteer recruitment.
- Access Government funding to provide digital equipment to offer an alternative to face-to-face volunteering. Provide a lending service for equipment and have access to training.
- Offer a range of opportunities (our examples include: virtual opportunities, speakers' network, volunteer led local campaign groups and social action roles) and consider time commitments (our examples: regular volunteers who volunteer on 6 or more occasions within 6 months, occasional volunteers who gave us time in the past 12 months, bite size volunteers who engage with our online resources) to engage more volunteers with disabilities.
- Reflect society at large: **by 2024, we will increase the number of volunteers with disabilities to at least 21% of our volunteer base**, aligned with the number of people with disabilities living in the UK.
- Create a central reasonable adjustments fund to reduce barriers for volunteers with disabilities.
- Continue to upskill Community Volunteer Coordinators and introduce training for staff working with volunteers.

### Our Inclusion Top Tip

Create person-centred volunteering opportunities. Be flexible and adaptable with your volunteering offer. Build confidence and be open to discuss what adaptations need to be made to make volunteering possible. It may be that you develop volunteering tasks not roles, shorter volunteering projects instead of a long-term commitment. This may develop into longer engagement from volunteers as their confidence grows.



Produced by Leonard Cheshire:  
<https://www.leonardcheshire.org/>



# Welcoming Volunteers with Diverse Backgrounds (1 of 2): **Top Tips**

## Challenges within volunteering

- Finding volunteering opportunities is difficult for some people.
- There are very few intergenerational volunteering opportunities locally.
- There are not many youth volunteering opportunities locally.
- It is not easy for child and adult volunteers with conditions such as Autism and ADHD to find volunteering opportunities.
- Developing a diverse volunteer base and retaining this, is challenging and requires resources – time, skill, energy and money!







## Suggestions to address these challenges and make your volunteer recruitment and management processes more inclusive

- Positivity and respect go a long way. We have no idea what it is like to be in someone else's situation – be kind, be honest, be fair. We are all equal and have different abilities, strengths, and weaknesses. There is no shame in this.
- Encourage interaction. Often younger volunteers or those with disabilities can be shy or unsure. Buddy them up with long-standing volunteers.
- It is essential that volunteers feel included. A team/family-like atmosphere helps newcomers settle in. Discourage cliques.
- Listen to the volunteers. Include them in decisions where appropriate.
- Be available and visible: all volunteers should have a designated person to approach and act as a conduit between them and the organisation.
- Flexibility may involve extra work but can be a real game changer for those who are entering the unknown world of volunteering.
- Sometimes new volunteers discover it is not for them. Provide assistance to find a more suitable volunteer role.
- Never ask a volunteer to perform a task which paid staff would not be prepared to do – it causes resentment.
- Always give a volunteer recognition. Whether through naming them for their contribution on a particular piece of work or through schemes such as Volunteer of the Month/Annual Volunteer Awards.
- Encourage feedback from the volunteers. Improvement in the experience for volunteers and the organisation arise from these moments. Use Annual Anonymous Surveys, Role Chats, Suggestions Book, Exit Surveys etc.
- A daily volunteer meeting can provide a good environment to disseminate information and field questions.
- Recognise that volunteers are very different from paid employees. They can leave at any time. This is what makes Volunteer Management so challenging!
- Talk to people. Regular supervision both formal and informal should enable you to pick up on any potential difficulties and deal with them before the volunteer leaves. Listen. Offer them opportunities to feedback and use it as an opportunity to improve your practice. If there are practicalities that can enable them to be a successful volunteer – adopt them. **Be unafraid to learn.**

### Our Inclusion Top Tip

Being non-judgemental is key. Offering support wherever needed and accepting that people volunteer for a variety of reasons and being open, friendly, and accessible to their suggestions and questions, can help ensure people get the most out of their volunteering experience and result in benefits for the organisation.



Produced by The Egypt Centre: <https://www.egypt.swan.ac.uk/>



# Welcoming Volunteers with Diverse Backgrounds (2 of 2): **Top Tips**

## Challenges within volunteering

'You don't know what you don't know' and organisations tend to 'always do what they have always done.' This can mean that groups of volunteers become insular and self-replicating. Volunteering becomes tailored around a specific group and goes on to attract more of the same people. Much volunteer recruitment happens via word of mouth because of small promotional budgets and volunteers are likely to sign up with organisations where they see themselves represented.





## Suggestions to address these challenges and make your volunteer recruitment and management processes more inclusive

- Have a welcoming, clear and accessible 'front door' where prospective volunteers speak to a person ASAP in the process.
- Ensure all publicity material including social media shows a range of people engaging in volunteering. Make sure everything is accessible to people using screen readers.
- Work to establish diversity at every level: staff, trustees, lead volunteers.
- Communicate and be true to your organisation's values and ensure diversity is expressed in them.
- Provide individual support, at sign up if possible. Ask people what barriers they may face to volunteering and work out individualised support.
- Think carefully and seek advice on how to ask the right questions rather than focussing on the details of a particular need. Asking open questions such as "How does that look for you?" and "What support do you need when that happens?" are more likely to get the answers you need in terms of making volunteering accessible.
- Form strong working relationships with volunteers, demonstrate you can be trusted, keeping lines of communication open for them to raise issues informally rather than stop volunteering.
- Offer diversity training, including awareness and understanding of the importance of intersectionality.
- Offer flexibility and a wide range of volunteer roles so that people who may have barriers to some kinds of volunteering or some expectations of volunteers can still be involved. Think about tasks rather than roles, be prepared to break down roles so that more people can be involved in a way that suits them.
- 1:1 support such as buddying with another volunteer can help some of the people with the most significant barriers to get involved. Support can be dynamic and personalised in line with their needs.
- Think about your data collection, only ask what you need to know and consider how you ask. Ask everyone their personal pronouns and encourage staff to display theirs, ask everyone if they have any support requirements, ask people to self-define nationality and ethnicity.
- If you gather this data, use it. Check it against your population, identify and address gaps.
- Ensure staff or lead volunteers understand and act on your values and desire to be diverse – making sure everyone is on board is crucial.
- Demonstrate diversity in the activities of your organisation, work with or support individuals or groups who represent those who face discrimination.
- Make it clear that you will challenge discrimination and have procedures in place.

### Our Inclusion Top Tip

Be prepared to personalise support.



Produced by Discovery Board of Trustees: <https://www.swansea.ac.uk/discovery/>



# Welcoming Gender Balance into Your Volunteer Base: Top Tips

## Challenges within volunteering

- Not seeing yourself represented can lead to anxiety about going somewhere new.
- Gender stereotyping and sexist language prevents people feeling welcome and included.
- Caring responsibilities can be overwhelming (carving 'me time' can be a low priority).
- Confidence to try something different or traditionally seen as masculine/feminine.
- Having lots to juggle (childcare, caring responsibilities, work, running a home) another thing can seem like too much. Volunteering is voluntary so for those juggling lots of life stuff, set hours, start times and or constant commitment can be challenging.
- Having a programme/activity which fits in to traditional gender roles means you might end up with certain groups over or under-represented.
- Avoid making assumptions about someone's gender.





## Suggestions to address these challenges and make your volunteer recruitment and management processes more inclusive

- Represent a wide variety of people in your external communications.
- Be careful not to perpetuate gender stereotypes in your marketing.
- Have staff or lead volunteers that reflect the diversity you are aiming for.
- Identify under-represented groups within your volunteer base, seek to understand the barriers to their involvement, ensure your practices help to break down these barriers and target your recruitment appropriately.
- Make visible those who are under-represented. We have less women than men, so when new women volunteers start, we are careful to introduce them to longer serving female volunteers.
- Be clear that sexist language/behaviour is not acceptable in the project.
- Act on reports of inappropriate behaviour.
- Celebrate the contribution of volunteers within your organisation.
- Ensure women are supported to do 'traditionally masculine' roles within the organisation and vice versa providing opportunities to challenge and for individual growth.
- Recognise that not every person identifies as either male or female and provide a supportive environment for trans and non-binary people, making sure to use their preferred pronouns.
- Ensure all volunteers are equally valued and that you build their confidence in supporting others.
- Be flexible with times to make it easier for those who have caring responsibilities to participate.
- Ensure you meet with prospective volunteers and find out about them, offer support and be really positive.
- Reach out to organisations that can provide support to your volunteers.
- Run regular safeguarding training and discuss gender equality at meetings and debrief (make it an organisational priority to maintain inclusivity).
- Treat everyone as an individual without any preconceived notions. Find out what makes them tick, what they want from volunteering and what other responsibilities they have to make it the best volunteering experience for them.

### Our Inclusion Top Tip

Maintain an inclusive and friendly atmosphere to all and celebrate diversity!



Produced by Swansea Community Farm:  
<https://www.swanseacommunityfarm.org.uk/>



# Welcoming Volunteers who have Health Issues and/or Chronic Conditions: Top Tips

## Challenges within volunteering

- Individuals may be living with conditions that mean they have periods of fluctuating wellness.
- Individuals may need to adhere to medication schedule/tend to their health needs at home with specialist equipment.
- Communication barriers which may include technology.
- Access to transport/physical environment/verbal and written information.
- Financial barriers: Additional costs may be incurred e.g. the need for carers.
- Possible stigma/lack of understanding towards people with health issues/chronic conditions.





## Suggestions to address these challenges and make your volunteer recruitment and management processes more inclusive

- Be flexible and consider timings when arranging volunteering/training/events etc. Consult volunteers so that you are aware of certain times to avoid e.g. early mornings.
- Following periods of unwellness, welcome your volunteer back, update them and ensure they feel ready to volunteer.
- Be organised and get to know your volunteers. From your initial point of contact, ask if they have any special requirements or access needs (never assume). Act upon this consistently and be flexible.
- Engage with your volunteers and provide information in appropriate formats. Everyone will have a different preference around how documents are presented so it is best to ask. Be mindful of how info is presented, e.g. for people with a vision impairment, avoid complex layouts and PowerPoint, use MS Word rather than PDF and describe all images or graphics.
- Keep physical accessibility in mind. Consider whether venues are accessible by public transport, have accessible parking, accessible toilets and enough space for a volunteer and translator for example.
- Consider lighting and sound, as well as the support and equipment volunteers may need such as hearing loop systems.
- If possible, reimburse expenses on the same day. Consider the additional costs such as transport (e.g. taxi), support from carers etc
- Attend Disability Awareness and Equality training to develop your knowledge on health issues/chronic conditions and encourage your staff and volunteers to do the same.
- Be mindful about consulting your volunteer about issues affecting those with health issues/chronic conditions. They may be happy to advocate for themselves but may not wish to be a spokesperson for others.
- Be tactful and sensitive about confidentiality and barriers for individuals. Try not to highlight issues/differences in front of others.
- Ensuring support is provided and considered throughout all volunteering related activities, makes a difference to all other volunteers. For instance, venues that are accessible by public transport will be beneficial to everyone. Similarly, if your supervision paperwork gives volunteers the opportunity to make suggestions and changes, your practice will continually improve and your overall volunteer experience will be enhanced.

### Our Inclusion Top Tip

Take a holistic approach, consider your whole volunteer management structure including recruitment, induction, supervisions etc, ensuring that you are providing the best support and make changes along the way if necessary. Give space for suggestions. Your volunteers are the experts in what will suit them best. Be honest and realistic about what is and isn't possible. Involve your volunteers as much as you can in everything you do.



Co-produced with members of Swansea Disability Forum:  
<https://swansea-disability-forum.org.uk/>



# Welcoming Volunteers Who Have a Learning Disability: **Top Tips**

## Challenges within volunteering

- These include anxieties, lack of experience in work, lack of confidence and fear of doing something wrong.
- Adults with learning disabilities often have the effects of their mistakes blown out of proportion with dire consequences, resulting in many not willing to try new things for fear of reduced personal liberty.
- Many feel that they might not be able to learn their role quickly enough, or that they might let someone down.
- Poor public transport connections and social bullying when in public puts many people off, especially from more rural areas where they may be travelling alone.







## Suggestions to address these challenges and make your volunteer recruitment and management processes more inclusive

- Agencies should demonstrate diversity throughout their structures, e.g. on their Trustees Board and amongst staff and service-user groups.
- Having robust recruitment, selection and support policies in place, linked to policies on equality and diversity ensures that volunteers are treated fairly.
- Agencies need to think creatively about how they advertise for and recruit volunteers to include a variety of platforms and media as well as looking to their own members/beneficiaries as a willing pool of recruits.
- Agencies should network with other organisations to share expertise on encouraging and supporting a diverse group of volunteers.
- Volunteers need to be properly prepared for the roles they are expected to undertake with training provided in a format of the volunteer's choosing and taking account of their learning needs, e.g. 'easy-read' materials, learning from peers, one to one support and in group discussion.
- During training maximum use should be made of the volunteer's lived experience.
- Reassure the volunteer that they will always be supported and that the volunteer coordinator is responsible for making things go right.
- Goals are reached at the volunteer's own pace – give them whatever time they need to learn their role.
- Fit the role to the skills of the individual rather than tell them what they need to do.
- Foster a culture in which each person is seen as a valuable member of the team and is the equal of everyone else and doing your best is good enough.
- Be flexible with things like punctuality and take into account travelling concerns.
- Work together in regular support sessions to solve problems. Regularly ask volunteers for their views so that you can constantly improve on the way things are done.
- Ensure that the volunteers are helped to reach their potential by having accessible buildings and facilities and clear guides/tasks which can be kept throughout their time as volunteers.
- Avoid a blame culture. When things go wrong keep calm, find out why and put suitable solutions in place. See mistakes as a learning opportunity.

### Our Inclusion Top Tip

Look at the skills the person has to offer and how they reflect the work of the organisation rather than what the person may look like or which box they would tick.



Produced by Your Voice Advocacy: <http://www.yourvoiceadvocacy.org.uk/>



# Welcoming Volunteers from the LGBT+ Community: Top Tips

## Challenges within Volunteering

- Fear of homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, exclusion.
- Being mis-gendered.
- Being judged and questioned on their identity.
- Being dead named.
- People using the wrong pronouns.
- Assumptions on sexual orientation through everyday conversation.
- Anxiety on how they introduce themselves to new people - (having to come out all over again).
- It is extremely common for LGBT+ people to experience issues with mental health.
- Homelessness - LGBT+ people can experience breakdowns in relationships and families from coming out and being accepted which results in more LGBT+ being homeless.





## Suggestions to address these challenges and make your volunteer recruitment and management processes more inclusive

- Having a strong Equal Opportunities policy, ensuring effective formal processes for incidents of prejudice, discrimination and hate crime are in place.
- There needs to be senior management buy-in, to ensure the culture of the organisation is LGBT+ inclusive. This sends a positive message to all about the organisation's commitment to equality and diversity.
- Check all organisational forms and policies are inclusive of LGBT+ identities.
- Include a question about pronouns on forms, so that you do not get this wrong when meeting the person for the first time.
- Ensure the organisation is a comfortable and welcoming environment. Visibly show your support for the community. Examples of this could include ensuring communications are LGBT+ inclusive, wearing a rainbow lanyard, and showing the LGBT+ and Trans Flags.
- Actively support the local LGBT+ community by promoting events, celebrating Pride, and advocating to strengthen marginalised voices particularly LGBT+ people.
- Keep up to date with issues affecting the community and ways in which you can strive for greater inclusion.
- Facilities should be trans inclusive e.g. gender neutral toilets (people have a right to use facilities which match their gender identity). This can be easily resolved by changing the sign on the toilet door.
- Arrange training for staff and volunteers to increase understanding of the LGBT+ community and the barriers they face.
- Do not assume because a volunteer has told you about their LGBT+ identity, that this is common knowledge. You may want to check how open they wish to be with others. Also be open with them if this information needs to be passed on, so they know who knows.
- Avoid making assumptions about gender or sexuality for example, use gender-neutral language, using 'partner' rather than 'girlfriend/boyfriend'.
- Do not use peoples 'Dead names', this is when people use the name assigned to the person at birth. Hearing their dead name can be upsetting and traumatic.
- Male and Female are not the only genders. Some people identify as non-binary, they may prefer to use the pronouns they/them.
- If a volunteer is transitioning, make sure you use their preferred name and pronoun, but only in front of the people they are 'Out' too, otherwise you could be potentially 'Outing' them.
- If you make a mistake on pronouns, sexuality or anything in relation to gender identity, just apologise but do not make a fuss or a big deal about this.
- Recognise specific issues that transgender people face and provide a supportive environment.
- Make sure they feel visible and valid and are confident with who they are in your organisation.

### Our Inclusion Top Tip

Volunteers within the LGBT+ Community should feel welcome and safe to be who they are away from prejudice and discrimination in an inclusive environment, where they are able to develop holistically and healthily.



Produced by YMCA Swansea:  
<https://www.ymcaswansea.org.uk/>



# Welcoming Volunteers with Lived Experience of Mental Health Issues: Top Tips

## Challenges within volunteering

- Many people with mental health issues hesitate as they do not feel confident in volunteering. They may have been out of the workplace for some time and have concerns about their abilities.
- People who struggle with their own mental health may not be able to see how their skills or experience can benefit others.
- There may be concerns about making a regular time commitment or the support they will receive from the organisation around mental health.
- People who claim benefits due to their mental health problems might feel they cannot volunteer as it will negatively affect them financially.





## Suggestions to address these challenges and make your volunteer recruitment and management processes more inclusive

- Be flexible when developing volunteering opportunities – roles do not always require a regular commitment to be really valuable to both the organisation and volunteers. Also, having roles where people can dip in and out can help remove barriers around mental health issues.
- Mention in recruitment that you value lived experience and the empathy and understanding that can come from this.
- Keeping in regular touch throughout recruitment can reduce anxiety when waiting for references and/or checks to come back.
- An open, honest conversation with each volunteer can help identify their specific needs and what adjustments, if any, can be made, along with a plan for possible changes (e.g. if their mental health deteriorates, how will they let you know? What might they need?).
- Put the right support in place from the beginning. A thorough induction can help alleviate anxieties and manage expectations. Clear policies around boundaries, safeguarding and other aspects of the role (e.g. social media) help to keep volunteers and service users safe.
- Offer mentoring and/or ongoing support, both formal and informal. Inviting volunteers to team meetings can help them feel part of the organisation; offer ad-hoc support from a designated person, or two, to answer any questions that arise, particularly in the beginning; shadowing staff or other volunteers can help build confidence and develop volunteers' skills at a pace that is comfortable for them.
- Offer one-off opportunities for volunteers to try out activities and gain confidence.
- Give clear information around the financial implications of volunteering as well as any checks that need to be made. For example, although a DBS check is often vital, having a criminal record doesn't have to be a barrier.
- Promote the positive benefits of volunteering on mental health. In a recent survey (Time Well Spent, NCVO, 2019) 77% of participants agree volunteering "improves their mental health and wellbeing".

### Our Inclusion Top Tip

Offer flexible opportunities and don't be put off by lived experience; with the right support this is invaluable. Putting the right support in place from the beginning is always worthwhile.



Produced by NPT Mind:  
<https://nptmind.org.uk/>



# Welcoming Older People as Volunteers: **Top Tips**

## Challenges within volunteering

- Digital awareness/capabilities – assumption that skills around digital technology are essential to volunteer.
- Digital exclusion – unaware of opportunities locally.
- Lack of transport – reduced opportunities locally and unable to access those further afield.
- Health and wellbeing – fear of over committing.
- Financial barriers such as initial outlay for travel and out of pocket expenses.
- Caring responsibilities.
- Grandparent duties.
- Physical access to venues.
- Concerns over the formal elements of volunteering such as training, monitoring and recognition.





## Suggestions to address these challenges and make your volunteer recruitment and management processes more inclusive

- Take more opportunities to reinforce/raise awareness that not all roles require digital skills and that ‘people skills’ are vitally important. Facilitate and support volunteers to upskill around digital technology.
- Provide additional methods of awareness raising and publicity around volunteer recruitment campaigns and opportunities.
- Create new volunteering roles to target those who want to support residents in the communities in which they live. This could be more of a flexible/ambassador role, but can have a huge impact and also boost confidence etc. Signpost to other local opportunities that may be more suitable.
- Reinforce the expectations of volunteering roles, but also emphasise the role’s flexibility and ways it could be adapted to changes in circumstances if required.
- Highlight areas of support and/or signposting to services that may be available and have a positive impact on a volunteers’ physical or emotional wellbeing.
- Ensure efficient systems for claiming all out of pocket expenses are in place and communicated to all volunteers. More frequent reimbursement payments can be introduced and if necessary, the use of processes such as petty cash can be utilised.
- Wherever possible, improve access to all premises owned or occupied by the organisation. Where not possible, seek to identify alternative methods to ensure the provision of the service. Risk assessments should be completed on all external venues that are used for outreach activities, drop in centres and events.
- It is important to make it clear from the initial recruitment process that there will be at least some level of training required to be able to complete the volunteering role effectively and safely. If an individual does not respond well to formal training programmes and monitoring exercises, provide assistance through the stages, identify alternative methods/protocols or direct them to more suitable roles that have less demanding training, monitoring and evaluation.
- Approach the development of volunteering roles with an element of flexibility and try to develop roles that are attractive, accessible and have maximum impact to service users.
- Encourage feedback from volunteers around what worked and what didn’t work in their volunteering experience and ways in which processes and services can be improved.
- Try and recruit volunteers from as many areas as possible to ensure a good representation and understanding of local needs and services.

### Our Inclusion Top Tip

Messages around volunteering need to be clear, consistent and accessible for all. Volunteering roles need to be supported and adaptable to ensure that those with the skills and desire to volunteer have equal opportunities to contribute to the communities in which they live and work.



Produced by Age Connects  
Neath Port Talbot:  
<https://www.ageconnectsnp.org.uk/>



# Welcoming Volunteers with Sensory Impairment: Top Tips

## Challenges within volunteering

- Inaccessible information, forms, training, transport and environments.
- Lack of awareness about sensory impairment.
- Misconception around the capabilities and skills a person is able to bring to volunteering.
- False belief that it is too difficult or challenging to adapt practices for the volunteer to fully participate.







## Suggestions to address these challenges and make your volunteer recruitment and management processes more inclusive

- Provide information in an accessible format. Ask the individual what format is best for them, email, text, large print, audio or braille. There are a variety of resources that help translate information.
- Have systems that enable forms to be filled in electronically. Give options for someone in the organisation to fill in the form for the individual.
- Provide the option to receive the form audibly.
- Look at your formatting. Keep it simple - avoid pretty boxes, dotted lines or lines where information is to be inputted.
- Are induction and training videos visual? Do they have an auditory system where someone is talking through the slides, or text on screen? Close your eyes and watch the videos. Have you noticed information you have missed because it is visual.
- Identify if there is dual sensory loss (sight and hearing impacted) and what the persons communication needs are.
- Talk directly facing the individual and check that they have clearly heard you. Some people will find female voices more difficult than males and vice versa.
- Always ask the individual what their needs are and how you can support them in their role. Most people will have a system that works for them in their own personal life they can transfer to their role.
- Volunteers may require time to familiarise themselves with the environment they are volunteering in and a routine so they know where things are e.g. make sure items are kept in the same place.
- Look at the environment for obstacles that could be a trip hazard e.g. bags on floor, low level tables.
- Check if there are any environmental noises that could impact on the ability to hear or process what is being said.
- Consider whether the volunteer role could be done from home or in the person's community e.g. using the telephone/laptop/Zoom/Teams.
- Volunteers with sensory loss want to be equally as useful as any other person. They may need some initial support but once there is a process in place to help them fulfil their role and they are familiar with what they are doing there is no reason they cannot fully participate.
- For volunteers with very specific communication needs, it's important to listen to what they require and be willing to adapt and change to accommodate those needs. Try not to be fearful as the person you are recruiting will be able to guide and support you to support them.
- Any adaptations you make to support a person with sensory loss into your organisation will open up opportunities for others to participate.
- Consider putting a personal communication plan in place that supports the volunteer in their role.



# Welcoming Volunteers with Lived Experience of Substance Use and Involvement with the Criminal Justice System: **Top Tips**

## Challenges within volunteering

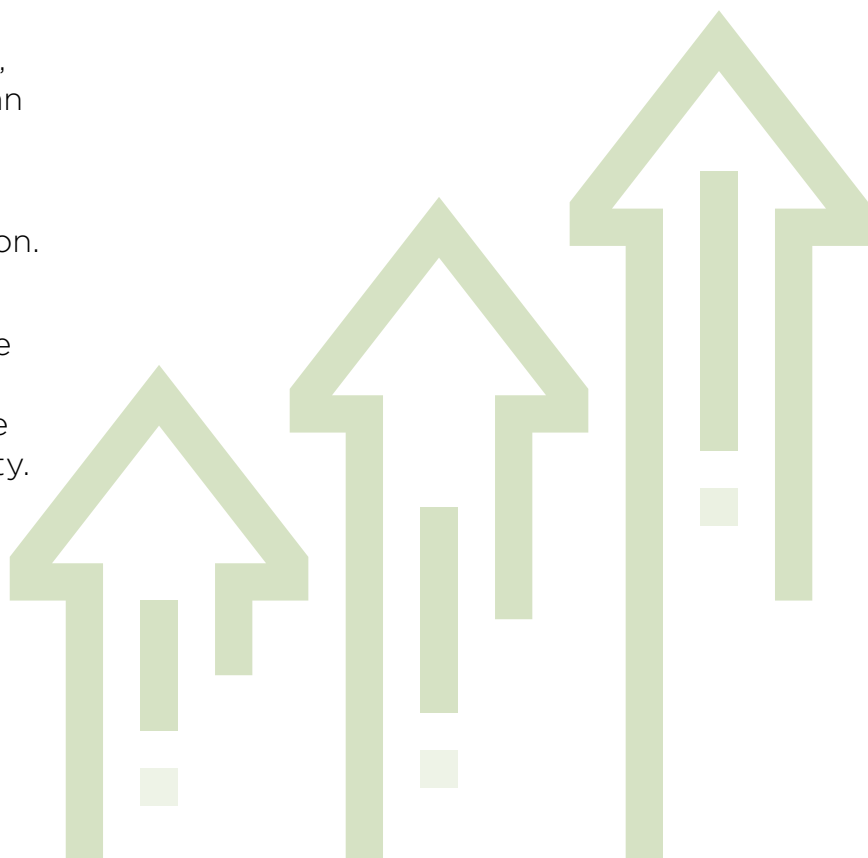
- It can be unclear on some volunteering adverts whether individuals with a criminal record will be accepted and what type of DBS check is needed for the role e.g. Standard or Enhanced. This is important as if the individuals' unspent disclosure period has ended, they do not need to disclose unless an Enhanced DBS is being carried out.
- Some organisations are reluctant to take someone on who has a conviction.
- Individuals in recovery often face stigma associated with substance use and some organisations disregard that the person is in recovery and are reluctant to offer them an opportunity.

## Our Inclusion Top Tip

To listen, be open and willing to adapt and change. To take advice from the individual as they will be the expert in what they need. To seek advice from organisations such as Sight Life so you can enable them to volunteer fully. Don't be afraid to ask questions and be open about the things you don't know, understand or are fearful of.



Produced by Sight Life:  
<https://sightlife.wales/>





## Suggestions to address these challenges and make your volunteer recruitment and management processes more inclusive

- **Be the change you want to see:** organisations should be inclusive, invest time and resources in training existing staff to monitor and support those in recovery and those with a criminal record, so that equal opportunities are offered to all.
- **Be inclusive and do not exclude:** accept that everyone has a past and that everyone deserves a positive future, promote inclusivity from within to develop a diverse organisation.
- **Lead by example:** be familiar with your volunteers and get to know them and their areas of interest, an individual who can volunteer their strengths, is often an asset to an organisation.
- **Clear communication:** make it clear on volunteering adverts that your organisation welcomes diversity. Such as those in recovery/those with a criminal record, as they will be an asset for their life experience. Also, clearly specify which type of DBS check will be needed for the volunteering placement and what, if any, convictions are not suitable for the role.
- **Don't stereotype:** have organisational policies in place to deal with those who are derogatory to those in recovery/with a criminal record. Invest time in developing a workplace that is an accepting and positive environment.
- **If the opportunity isn't there create one:** if a role is unsuitable for someone in recovery, such as a high stress environment, think about creating a role instead, such as volunteering behind the scenes in a quieter setting doing administration.
- **Assign a Mentor:** we all know what being the new person is like, introduce the new volunteer to someone who will be their key contact within the organisation, who they can go to with any questions or concerns.

### Our Inclusion Top Tip

**Be the change you want to see:**

organisations should be inclusive, invest time and resources in training existing staff to monitor and support those in recovery and those with a criminal record, so that equal opportunities are offered to all.



Produced by Cyfle Cymru:  
<https://www.wcada.org/service/cyfle-cymru/>



# Welcoming Volunteers who are Welsh Speakers: Top Tips

## Challenges within volunteering

- There are few bilingual volunteer recruitment adverts on Volunteering Wales website in our region. Fully bilingual volunteer recruitment and support is even harder to come by.
- It is not clear if Welsh is spoken within projects.
- Some people who have Welsh language hesitate to volunteer using their Welsh, because they feel their Welsh isn't perfect.





## Suggestions to address these challenges and make your volunteer recruitment and management processes more inclusive

- During strategic planning for the inclusion of Welsh speakers, identify at the outset the positive outcome of Welsh speaking volunteers on your service: avoiding tokenism.
- Invest time & resources on bilingual volunteer recruitment e.g. Volunteering Wales website and advertising within Welsh media publications. You can get support with recruitment and more by linking with Welsh medium schools or Urdd to attract younger volunteers as well as Welsh learning providers and Merched Y Wawr. Your local Menter Iaith, can support you with so much. <http://www.mentrauiath.cymru/?lang=en>
- Ask within the volunteer application process “Ydych chi’n siarad Cymraeg?” on the form and when you first chat.
- Use regional conversational style Welsh in all your communications – it is more welcoming!
- Mention Welsh learners are welcomed.
- Encourage staff and volunteers to use Welsh, wear Welsh speaker/learner badges and develop Welsh speaking role models/champions within your organisation to make Welsh visible.
- Recognise Welsh can make some people feel more at ease. Welsh speaking volunteers can make a huge difference to those who are Welsh speaking and needing support e.g. those with memory loss.
- Encourage the learning of Welsh, promote the Welsh language and develop a culture that recognises the benefits of being able to offer some services in English and Welsh. This demonstrates commitment to both languages of Wales in your organisation.
- Develop volunteering opportunities that welcome Welsh speakers. This is a great way for agencies wanting to take steps to promote the Welsh language.
- Consider developing more roles for Welsh speaking volunteers e.g. reception, support/social groups, supporting older people, younger people and parenting, within marketing, translation, offering basic Welsh lessons, giving information talks, befriending/telephone support & recording audio books.
- Celebrate Welsh cultural occasions and music.
- Support Welsh Government’s campaign to get 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050 by having Welsh speaking volunteering opportunities.
- There are a large and growing number of Welsh speakers across our region. Volunteering levels of Welsh speakers are higher than those who do not use Welsh, so tap into this!

**The National survey for Wales 2019 found 37% of people who spoke Welsh daily and could speak more than a few words were volunteers compared with 25% who did not speak Welsh regularly.**



# Welcoming Young People as Volunteers: Top Tips

## Challenges within volunteering

- Awareness of how to get involved.
- Availability of youth volunteering opportunities.
- Perceptions of volunteering.
- Time commitment required.
- Lack of confidence, fear of having nothing to contribute.
- Access to equipment and transport; costs involved.
- Cost of giving up time to volunteer instead of earning money.
- Lack of resources allocated to youth volunteering.

## Our Inclusion Top Tip

Advertise bilingually on Volunteering Wales website and on social media and demonstrate your commitment to the Welsh language. Remember what Welsh speakers bring and how they will benefit your project. Ultimately your aim is not just to recruit Welsh speaking volunteers but to encourage more Welsh to be used. Pob lwc!



Produced with  
Merched Y Wawr

**<https://merchedywawr.cymru/rhanbarth/gorllewin-morgannwg/>**

and Swansea Carers  
Centre

**<https://www.swansecarerscentre.org.uk/>**



## Suggestions to address these challenges and make your volunteer recruitment and management processes more inclusive

### Senior Buy-in

Before you start your journey, it's important that there's support from senior management:

- Ensure commitment from those at the top.
- Make management accessible to young people.
- Set up a process for reporting.
- Ask management to pledge their support.
- Establish policies and procedures.

### Reach Out

Work hard to reach out to a diverse range of young people:

- Have a clear recruitment process that is attractive.
- Make sure application forms are clear and concise.
- Use general and targeted recruitment channels.
- Reach out to those who are seldom heard.
- Connect with specialist groups.

### Engage and Involve

You will have better engagement if you:

- Include young people in the early stages of projects and planning.
- Offer a range of opportunities.
- Clarify roles.
- Give young people a choice of how they get involved.
- Allow them the space to discuss things alone.
- Let them set objectives.
- Agree a 'Terms of Reference' and 'Code of Conduct'.
- Listen, listen, listen!

### Barriers

Breakdown barriers to engagement and participation, by:

- Arranging meeting times and days that suit young people.
- Choosing accessible locations or online.
- Offering expenses.
- Challenging jargon.
- Providing clear and accessible information.
- Training staff to support young people.
- Understanding young people's personal circumstances.



## Information

When sharing or producing information, think about the following:

- Is it accessible and available in different formats?
- Is it young person friendly?
- Can young people coproduce information?
- Make sure others provide appropriate information.

## Be accountable

Ensure young people can hold you to account, by:

- Providing timely feedback.
- Providing feedback in different formats.
- Giving reasons if something can't be done.
- Letting young people know how they have made a difference.
- Asking about their experiences of participation.

## Support and Reward

What can you do to support young people? Consider:

- Adult and peer mentors.
- Training.
- Refreshments.
- That all young people are individuals with different needs.
- Holding socials and fun activities.
- Giving recognition and visibility.

## Benefits to young people:

- Knowledge that their views are respected and valued
- Makes 'Article 12' a reality for young people
- Gain new skills and experiences
- Ownership and empowerment
- Involvement in the decision-making process and services
- A unique experience to highlight on a CV, University/job application etc.

## Benefits to organisations:

- Fresh perspective.
- Range of skills, knowledge and expertise.
- Enthusiasm and passion.
- Representative of the people you serve.
- Improves service delivery.
- Young people are directly involved in decision-making.

### Our Inclusion Top Tip

Organisations who are committed to involving young people, should represent THEIR voices in decision-making. YOU can give the leaders of the future, a platform in the present.



Produced by Neath Port Talbot Children's Rights Unit:  
[www.childrensrightsunit.org.uk](http://www.childrensrightsunit.org.uk)



**West Glamorgan Volunteering Support** is a multi-agency project creating shared resources to develop the knowledge, management and coordination of volunteers and volunteer involving organisations across the Swansea and Neath Port Talbot areas. It has been funded through the Welsh Government Volunteering Recovery Fund.

**The project partners are:**

Neath Port Talbot Council, Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service, Swansea Bay University Health Board, Swansea Council, Swansea Council for Voluntary Service and West Glamorgan Regional Partnership.

**For more information visit:**  
**[www.westglamorgan.org.uk/wgvs](http://www.westglamorgan.org.uk/wgvs)**