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VOLUNTEERING  
SUPPORT

# Volunteering in Primary Care/GP Practices Toolkit

A toolkit



A shared resource for  
developing knowledge





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# Introduction

The development of this toolkit has been funded by Welsh Government through the Coronavirus Recovery Grant for Volunteering (West Glamorgan Volunteering Support).

The toolkit is designed to contribute to the development of a National Standard of Good Practice in Volunteering in GP Practices/Primary Care. This toolkit is for anyone interested in developing volunteering in GP Practices/Primary Care, but is particularly aimed at GP practices and Primary Care Providers that are interested in using this resource to help engage volunteers within their respective setting.

Whilst we acknowledge that the remit of primary care is broader than GP Practices, for the purposes of this toolkit the primary focus will be on GP Practices and how to maximise the use of volunteers within GP Practices. However, it is recognised that the content of the toolkit will be quite generic, which will therefore mean that it is easily transferable and could be used across other Primary Care settings.

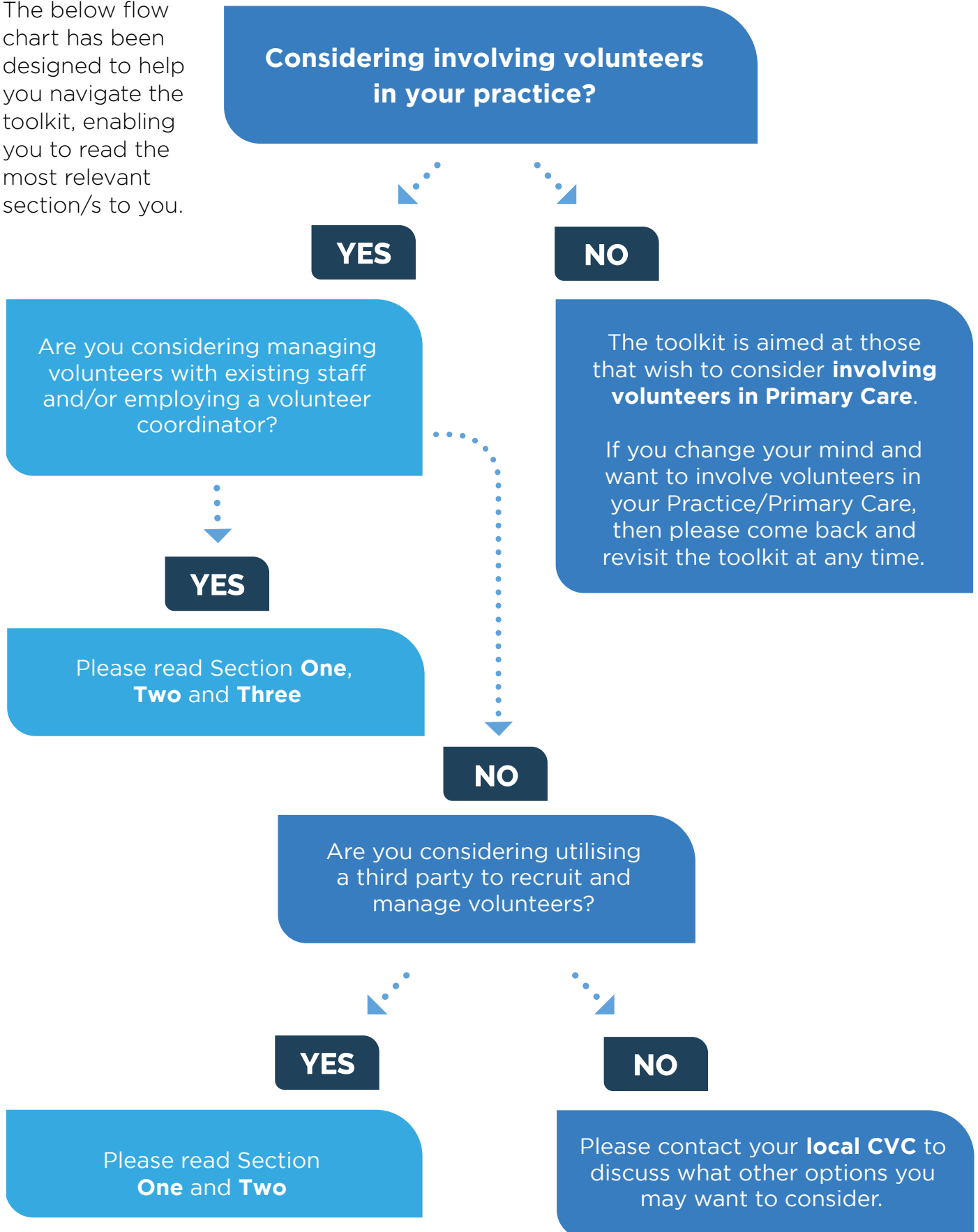
The content of this guide is based on some real experiences of volunteering in GP Practice through work undertaken by Swansea Council for Voluntary Service (SCVS) in partnership with GP Practices within the Cwmtawe Cluster in the Swansea Bay University Health Board area. We have also utilised information from a range of sources, which are referenced within the document.

The toolkit is complemented by a number of information sheets and volunteer induction training resources, which are referenced throughout the document and have been developed as part of the West Glamorgan Volunteering Support project.





The below flow chart has been designed to help you navigate the toolkit, enabling you to read the most relevant section/s to you.





# Section One – Why Involve Volunteers?

## Definition of Volunteering

A volunteer is someone who commits time and energy for the benefit of society and the community, and can take many forms. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain (Volunteering England). Volunteering can be broken down into informal volunteering and formal volunteering.

### Informal Volunteering

Informal volunteering is undertaken by individuals for other people or community groups, although such individuals may not always regard themselves as volunteers. It includes:

- Helping neighbours, community action, participating in faith and community groups and,
- helping out at local events.

There are no formal processes for recruitment. This kind of volunteering is largely hidden within our communities but is strongly rooted within Welsh culture. It is to be celebrated and encouraged.

### Formal Volunteering

Formal volunteering refers to situations where a volunteer's efforts are channelled through an organisation. Such organisations are sometimes described as 'volunteer involving organisations. Many volunteering opportunities are suitable for everyone, with appropriate induction and support. Some require volunteers to be trained extensively for their role (for example in advice work, youth work including scouts and guides, or emergency services). Some may require specialist expertise or prior qualification (for example many overseas volunteering opportunities). Volunteering may be a one off event, for a short period, or a longer term commitment.

The main focus of this toolkit will be on creating and managing formal volunteering opportunities as opposed to informal opportunities.





## Volunteering in General Practice

A Kings Fund Report 'Transforming general practice through volunteering', highlights four different approaches to supporting volunteering in general practice, which are:

- **Enabling General Practice** – volunteers supporting a practice in its everyday running and activities.
- **Shared Premises and Space** – practices that are co-located with organisations that work with volunteers to provide services.
- **Social Prescribing** – supporting paid social prescribing link workers by supporting patients to access sources of support in the community.
- **Community Centred General Practice** – a new model of General Practice that reflects social as much as medical support and where volunteers contribute to practice activities as well as volunteering their own skill and capabilities for the benefit of the community.

**The main focus of this toolkit will be on 'Enabling General Practice and Community Centred General Practice'.**



# Strategic Context

## National Links

Volunteering is mutually beneficial for both volunteers and Primary Care and is a growing priority in the context of current Welsh Government legislation and strategy.

- The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act, provides the legal framework for improving the well-being of adults and children who need care and support. People should have an active voice and be at the heart making co-productive decisions about their own care.
- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, recognises the positive impact volunteering has on wellbeing at the individual, community, organisation and national level.
- Prosperity for All, the Welsh Government's national strategy also discusses how volunteering contributes to the ultimate goal of a more prosperous Wales. Volunteering is mentioned as key to building united, connected and resilient communities.

## Regional Links (West Glamorgan Partnership area/Swansea Bay University Health Board area)

### Links to Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB) Volunteering Strategy (2018-2021)

SBUHB has a developed set of core values and a central element of the strategy is to ensure they are exemplified through all volunteer activity and development.

The strategy is based around the key principles of the WCVA Code of Practice for organisations involving volunteers, which reflects the Investing in Volunteers Quality Standard.

### SBUHB vision for volunteering:

- To work in joint partnership with volunteers to improve the health and wellbeing of the population and contribute to delivering excellent patient and family experience across SBU Health Board.

### SBUHB Volunteering Strategic Aims:

- To embed a leading, innovative and positive volunteering culture within the SBU Health Board.
- To grow Health Board volunteering by inspiring more individuals from our diverse communities to participate.
- To continually work to improve the experience of each and every individual Health Board volunteer.



Research continues to demonstrate the positive human, economic, social and cultural value that volunteering brings. The impact made is not only to organisations, but to their recipients, society and most importantly the engaged and motivated citizen – the volunteer themselves.

### **Links to Swansea Bay University Health Board Primary and Community Strategy**

- Develop resilient communities that will support citizens to build and strengthen wellbeing.
- Build on community assets that already exist to help keep people from becoming patients and enable them to have the best outcomes.
- Build support and reference groups for patients and carers to help citizens to keep control and responsibility for maintaining their health.

### **Links to Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework (QAIF)**

The Quality Assurance domain has two components sub domains, clinical indicators and cluster network indicators and it is within these domains that volunteers could support Primary Care.

- Delivery of public health objectives such screening uptake, physical activity etc. By effectively promoting those issues within their communities, for instance flu vaccinations. By developing a calendar of thematic health promotion events across the area.
- Volunteers can support the practical delivery of immunisation and vaccination clinics both within practices and across the Health Board Area.
- By establishing volunteer led condition specific practice or cluster support groups patients receive support closer to home from others receiving care from the same practice. The groups collective knowledge and issues has the potential to influence the care received from Primary Care; their experiences can feed into area wide support groups.

The involvement of volunteers within practice engagement responsibilities encourages a greater wealth of information to inform Primary care services.





## Links to Integrated Medium Term Plans (IMTP's)

The Primary Care response to 'A Healthier Wales' is outlined in the Strategic Programme for Primary Care, published in November 2018. Specifically, the whole systems approach to health and social care. This programme of work focuses on 'Clusters remaining at the heart of this model'.

The document outlines the **six key work streams**:

Work Stream	Volunteers can support by:
<b>I.</b> Prevention and well-being	Volunteering improves well-being
<b>II.</b> 24/7 Model	Sharing their experiences of primary care; volunteering during peak demand for health care e.g supporting flu clinics
<b>III.</b> Data & Digital Technology	Supporting patients to become technologically aware
<b>IV.</b> Workforce & Organisational Development	Sharing their experiences of Primary Care
<b>V.</b> Communication & Engagement	Providing support practices to encourage health promotion
<b>VI.</b> Transformation Programme and the Vision for Clusters	Becoming a Health Champion



## Why Involve Volunteers?

Volunteers make a significant contribution, in unpaid hours, to the economy of Wales. It is estimated that every year volunteers contribute 221 million hours, which is worth £2.2 billion. This is equivalent to nearly 4.6 percent of Wales GDP (WCVA 2014).

Volunteering also has significant value, which is less easily defined in monetary terms, in terms of social cohesion, inclusion, economic regeneration, and the development of social capital.

## Benefits for GP Practices

- Helps the GP Practices to engage a more diverse range of skills, experience and knowledge.
- Provides additional support and increases capacity for GP Practices.
- Offers the opportunity to deliver services or projects in a more effective and efficient way, which can help to save money and resources.
- By recognising, understanding and drawing on community assets (the skills and qualities that patients have), surgeries will better understand its patients, their needs, similarities and differences.





## Feedback from Cwmtawe Cluster Lead

We have a longstanding working relationship with SCVS which has proved time and again to be of great value to all involved. Our aim is to improve the health and wellbeing of the communities we serve, and this cannot be accomplished by GP surgeries and the NHS alone – we need to involve everyone in order to create a health conscious, caring society. The volunteers we have worked with have been brilliant, their selfless dedication and willingness to freely give up their time to help others has made a real difference and is greatly appreciated.

### Staff feedback regarding volunteers – Cwmtawe

- Very efficient, pleasant and professional.
- Brilliant support.
- Could not have managed without them.
- Happy to do anything asked of them.
- Great with the patients.

## Benefits for Patients/Carers/Communities

- Providing a welcoming face to patients, visitors, staff and other volunteers.
- Being more representative of the community we serve.
- The ability to understand and respond better to the needs of the local community.
- Enhancing patient experience.
- It recognises the contribution patients can make and their position as ‘experts by experience’.





## Benefits for Volunteers

Volunteering can be a route to employment or a chance to try something new which may lead to a career change. From this perspective, volunteering can be a way of:

- Gaining new skills, knowledge and experience.
- Developing existing skills and knowledge.
- Enhancing a CV.
- Improving employment prospects.
- Gaining an accreditation.

For others, volunteering also has social benefits. These include:

- Meeting new people and making new friends.
- A chance to socialise.
- Getting to know the local community.
- Improving an individual's health and well-being.
- Giving back to a cause they are passionate about or have prior interest in.
- Sharing their own expertise by experience.
- Being part of designing more patient orientated services for the future.

“Being a volunteer offers vital help to people in the community. Given the current situation with Covid, it is so important that as many people receive the flu injection. I love meeting people and missed that when I retired but being a volunteer at the clinic has provided me with the opportunity to meet lovely people, connect with the community, help those who are vulnerable and need a little help and even learn new skills.”

Volunteer at Flu Clinic

“I really enjoyed volunteering with SCVS at the flu clinics. I found it a nice way of strengthening the community. It seems a simple act of kindness, but it is a great honour to me, as I was able to give back to the country, which has given so much to me.”

Volunteer at Flu Clinic



## Section Two – Involving Volunteers

As we have already explored in section one, there are many benefits to involving volunteers within GP Practices and Primary Care. In order to maximise the benefits for GP Practices, patients, volunteers and the wider community alike, it is important to involve volunteers in a meaningful and safe way, operating within a framework of good practice.

### This section aims to:

- Highlight the key things that you should consider before bringing volunteers into your GP Practice and/or formalising volunteering within your Practice.
- Highlight further resources and sources of information/support.
- Give a brief introduction to co-production.





## Involving volunteers, where do I begin?

The first thing to consider is whether or not you can meet the code of practice for involving volunteers. The code of practice has been developed to help anyone who works with volunteers to ensure that they do so within a framework of good practice.



To view the Code of Practice then please click here: <https://wcva.cymru/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Code-of-Practice-Cod-Ymarfer.pdf>

## Paid staff and volunteers, is there a difference?

Before involving volunteers it is also important to be clear about why you are doing it and what role they will have within your GP Practice. You should have discussions with staff about this before involving volunteers. This will ensure that early on you can be clear on the difference between staff roles and volunteer roles. Volunteers should not be involved as a substitute for employees.

Top tips for establishing a good relationship between staff and volunteers:

- Make the volunteer roles clear to staff including any restrictions or boundaries to the roles.
- Promote the benefits for staff of having the support of volunteers.
- Provide opportunities for staff to learn from volunteers e.g. developing digital skills.
- Be clear about boundaries for all.
- Involve all in the development of the programme.
- Communicate to staff what you are trying to achieve.
- Put clear task/role descriptions in place for volunteers

The above information has been adapted by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations – Volunteering in Care Homes Project.



## A charter for strengthening the relations between paid staff and volunteers WCVA & Wales TUC



Please click here to view the Charter <https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/charter-strengthening-relations-between-paid-staff-and-volunteers>



## Policy

There are a number of policies you will need to develop that are specifically for volunteers, whilst other policies will have volunteers embedded within them. It may be worthwhile reviewing these policies with volunteers in mind to ensure language is appropriate and does not reference 'contractual obligation' as may be the case for staff.

Below are some of the policies that you will need to have in place for when you involve volunteers:

- Volunteer policy.
- Health and Safety.
- Safeguarding policy.
- Equality and Diversity.
- Expenses policy (where the amount or process is different from staff).
- Counselling out policy.
- Letting volunteers go policy.

There are also other things that it is important to have in place:

- Risk assessments for specific roles.
- Insurance coverage to include volunteers.

## Policy – Resources to support you

- **Information Sheet** – Model Policies for Volunteering – A Checklist – please contact your CVC for a copy of this Information sheet.
- **Information Sheet** – Undertaking Volunteer Risk Assessments – please contact your CVC for a copy of this information sheet.
- **Example Policies** – for all of the above policies that are listed please contact your local CVC.
- **Example Risk Assessment for GP Practice Flu Clinic Role** – please contact your CVC for a copy.





## Volunteers aren't paid like staff, so isn't it free to involve volunteers?

Involving volunteers is not free, time and resources need to be committed in order for roles to remain safe, well managed and appropriate.

### Things to Consider



- What is the capacity of your GP Practice to support volunteers?
- What do you estimate to be the cost of involving volunteers, including recruitment, training, supervision and reimbursement of expenses?
- Are you considering looking for funding to develop volunteering?
- Who is/are the designated person(s) who will be confident and competent.
- What training and support is needed for the designated person/s who will train, recruit, supervise and support volunteers? Supporting volunteers should explicitly be part of the designated person/s job descriptions and staff supervision should include time to discuss the challenges and successes of managing volunteers.
- The reimbursement of expenses is an equal opportunities issue, by reimbursing expenses, you can broaden the pool of people able to apply.

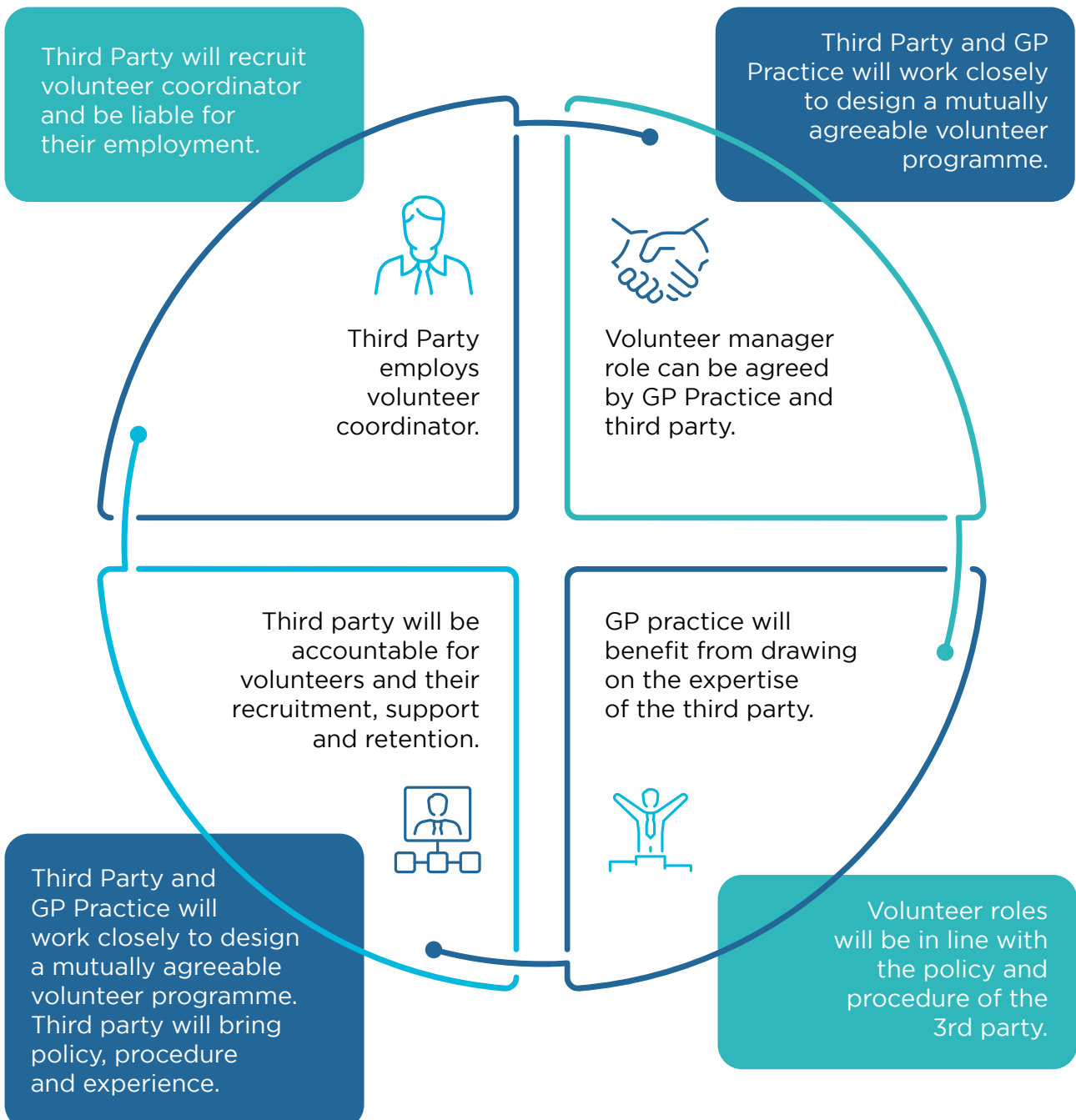
The above information has been adapted by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations – Volunteering in Care Homes Project.



## Options Appraisal

The Options Appraisals below highlight some potential options that you may wish to consider when deciding on the best way to manage the involvement of volunteers within your GP practice.

### Third Party Employs Volunteer Coordinator





When we refer to a third party within this section, please note that this could either be the Health Board or County Voluntary Council (CVC). Did you know that within Swansea Bay University Health Board there is a dedicated volunteer service, that will be able to assist by sharing best practice and offering support to help you involve organisations in your GP practice? As well as your local health board you

can also contact your local County Voluntary Council. County Voluntary Councils are a network of support organisations across Wales that people who are inspired to make a positive difference to their communities. The County Voluntary Councils will also have a Volunteering Services Team who can help you develop policy, procedure and paperwork around volunteer management.

## GP Practice to manage volunteer coordinator





## So, how are you doing? Are you achieving what you set out to do?

It is important that you have definite ideas about what you want to achieve by involving volunteers.

Equally, you need to look at how you're doing, on an ongoing basis.



### Things to Consider

- What's going really well and what could do better?
- Are you carrying out the activities you'd planned?
- Have you attracted as many people to the roles as you'd hoped, if not, why not?
- Are your volunteers making an impact? If not, what changes do you need to make to improve things?
- Have you achieved what you set out to do?
- Have you used your resources well?
- Is what you're doing what people (staff, patients and volunteers) in the surgery actually want?
- What have you learned from this?
- If you were to do it all over again, would you do things differently?

The above information has been adapted by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations - Volunteering in Care Homes Project.



### Resources to support you

- Information Sheet - Measuring the impact of volunteering - **please contact your CVC for this information sheet.**



## Defining Volunteer Roles and writing a role description

Defining the roles of volunteers is a crucial starting point of the planning process in deciding what role volunteers will play in your organisation.

Prior to drawing up a role description, you may want to consider the following questions:

- Why is the role/s needed?
- How will the role/s add value to existing work of the GP Practice?
- Is it feasible to provide and manage the opportunity? Do you have the resources and/or time?
- How will the role contribute to improve outcomes for the GP Practice/ patients/wider community?
- Is it something that people want to do? Is there a demand for the role?
- What are the type of risks involved in the role? Can these be mitigated?
- What level of time and commitment is required and is it reasonable to ask this of volunteers?
- What will make these roles attractive to volunteers?

- Can you devise a range of roles that will appeal to a broad diversity of people? For example, think of short term as well as long term opportunities and general, easy access roles as well as more specific and challenging roles.
- Can you appeal to volunteers who have different motivations for volunteering?
- How might volunteers progress from one role to another as they acquire experience?

The above information has been adapted by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations – Volunteering in Care Homes Project.

### Developing Volunteer Roles – Resources to support you

- Example Role Descriptions e.g. Flu Clinic Meet and Greet Role – please contact your local CVC for these examples.

Click here to download a Volunteer role description template which you can customise:



<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/volunteer-role-description/>



## Promoting equality and diversity in volunteering

Equality is about treating people fairly, ensuring that they have equal access to opportunities and resources, regardless of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity. Equality legislation requires organisations to act in ways that are transparent, consistent and fair regardless of individuals' identity or background.

Although equality legislation does not specifically cover volunteers, there is a moral imperative for organisations to act in regard to volunteers in ways which uphold principles of equality, including:

- Being proactive in reducing barriers that prevent certain sectors of our communities from getting involved in volunteering.
- Being vigilant in addressing behaviour which is discriminatory, whether this be the behaviour of staff, volunteers or service users.

Diversity is about celebrating difference. It is about more than 'fair play' and 'compliance' but has more to do with creating an ethos which values and welcomes the uniqueness of individuals.

Embracing diversity means drawing upon the widest possible range of views, backgrounds and experiences, so that an organisation can listen to, and meet, the changing needs of its users, staff, volunteers, partners and supporters.

Equality and diversity should be embraced not only for reasons of social justice but also because it makes business sense. For example, volunteers with different backgrounds, skills, attitudes and experiences bring fresh ideas and perceptions. Organisations can encourage and harness these differences to make their services relevant and approachable.



### Resources to support you

- **Toolkit - Diversifying your Volunteer Base** - Please contact your local CVC for this toolkit.



## Legal Considerations – Volunteering and the Law

We have already seen that volunteers must not do the roles of paid staff; this also extends to retired health care professionals returning to their previous role but in an unpaid capacity – they are welcome to return, but only in those roles that have been specifically designed with volunteers in mind and where there can be no ambiguity about whether their role is as a volunteer, or staff member.

Normally volunteers have very few legal rights, unlike paid staff who have a wealth of protection under employment legislation and can make a legal case on the basis of unfair dismissal, race, disability and sex discrimination, unequal pay, and minimum wage etc. It is possible, however, to unknowingly create a contract of employment in the way an organisation engages with volunteers.

By following best practice and seeking support from your CVC, you will be supported in developing volunteer opportunities that avoid any implied employment.

### Volunteering and the Law – Resources to Support you

Volunteering and the Law info sheet – please contact your local CVC for this information sheet.

### Things to Consider



- Reimbursement of expenses – have in place a formal process for this once you have a receipt or evidence of expenditure.
- Be mindful of language – refer to volunteering only as ‘volunteering’ not work placements, work experience, student placement. You may have these roles in your practice, but they fall under a different set of guidance.
- Volunteers can sign an agreement – best practice would encourage this. However, this should not specify any contractual obligations – it’s simply an agreement of what can be expected of one another and the process that will be followed if issues need to be resolved. This helps in making their role transparent at the start of their volunteering.
- Where the conduct of volunteers is not acceptable there should be a process to address this – this is not a disciplinary action although it may follow a similar set of actions.
- You may have volunteers who claim benefits – for this group of people it is particularly important not to imply employment as this may jeopardize their benefits.
- HMRC and Home office are very much in favour of volunteering as long as it does not interfere with mandatory appointments people may have with them.



## Co-production

Co-production is underpinned by **5 principles**:

- 1 Value all participants**, and build on their strengths.
- 2 Develop networks** of mutual support.
- 3 Do what matters** for all the people involved.
- 4 Build relationships of trust**; share power and responsibility.
- 5 People can be change makers**, and organisations enable this.



The Co-production Network Wales knowledge base at is at:  
<https://info.copronet.wales/>

“Co-production is a relationship where professionals and citizens share power to plan and deliver support – together, recognising that both have vital contributions to make in order to improve quality of life for people and communities.”

(National Co-production, Critical Friends Group)





## Section Three – Volunteer Management and Support

This section aims to provide you with some basic information and awareness in relation to volunteer management. It is aimed primarily aimed at those within the GP Practice that may be looking to take on the role of volunteer manager or for a dedicated volunteer manager, if your GP Practice does decide to employ someone specifically. We would advise reading this section in conjunction with the Volunteer Coordinator Guide Toolkit, which has been developed as part of Volunteering in Wales Recovery Fund (West Glamorgan Volunteering Support).

**Please contact your local CVC for a copy of this toolkit.**

### Advertising your volunteer opportunities

Once you have a clear idea of the different opportunities you can offer volunteers, the next stage is to think about:

- Will the opportunities appeal to diverse groups of people? If not, what measures can you take to address this?
- How will you attract them to your volunteer opportunity?
- How can you promote the volunteering opportunities in a way which means that potential volunteers will feel inspired to volunteer with you?
- How can you make your volunteering opportunities accessible?

Use your local volunteer centre to advertise your opportunity; and of course, key venues around your community. Be mindful that you may be inundated – Volunteering within health settings is often very popular. A clear role description, interview form and assessment criteria will help you select suitable volunteers in a transparent, fair way.



## Recruiting and selecting your volunteers

It is important that all organisations take responsibility for their volunteer recruitment procedures and have a system for assessing mutual suitability. It means taking care with the application and interview stages, to check that the volunteer and your practice are a good match for each other. The recruitment process should be as simple as possible. It should be a two-way process that enables you to find out more about the volunteer as well as the potential for them to find out more about the opportunity.

Typically, the selection process will include an application form and some way of getting to know the volunteer, such as a volunteer interview or 'getting to know you chat'.

## Vetting

Being prepared with robust systems to vet volunteers in line with the law is as essential as it is with staff. As long as you have a transparent, equitable and consistent approach, which is backed up with appropriate policy and procedure then your recruitment process will be best practice.

Disclosure and Barring Checks (DBS) may be appropriate for some of the role that volunteers undertake, but you should ensure that the roles are eligible for checks before completing them, because not all roles will be eligible.





## Induction, training and ongoing support and supervision

An induction is a ‘welcome’ and a preparation for the role, tied in with a lot of information people need to know.

Once you have recruited your volunteers you will need to ensure they are provided with adequate support and supervision. Support comes in many forms, and often a well-organised induction session and pack will provide volunteers with the support they initially require. Induction should consist of more than simply giving volunteers policies to read and introducing them to other volunteers and staff. Getting the induction process right can help organisations retain its volunteers for longer.

The training that you provide should be relevant to the role and should give volunteers the additional knowledge and skills they need to carry out the role effectively. Lots of organisations will have standard mandatory training that volunteers will need to complete, which will generally be complemented by specific training that is relevant to the volunteer role.



### Resources to support you

- **Please contact your Local Health Board** who will be able to provide you with information about the mandatory training that Health Board volunteers undertake.
- **Please contact your local CVC** who will be able to provide you with information about the mandatory training that CVC Volunteers undertake.

## Recruiting, selecting and vetting volunteers – Resources to support you



Please click on the following link **Recruiting-Selecting-and-Inducting-Volunteers.pdf (thirdsectorsupport.wales)**

Please also contact Swansea Bay University Health Board Volunteer Department (if within the Swansea Bay area) who will be able to provide you with induction information and a handbook or resources.



## Volunteers rights and responsibilities

Volunteering is a two-way process. Whilst volunteers bring with them a wealth of knowledge and experience, an organisation can teach volunteers new skills too.

Here are some suggested rights and responsibilities, however, this is not an exhaustive list and you may choose some of your own.

Volunteers have the right to:

- Know what is expected of them e.g. Code of Conduct.
- Clearly specified lines of support and supervision.
- Be shown appreciation.
- A safe environment.
- Be insured.
- To know their rights.
- Be paid expenses.
- Be trained.
- Be free from discrimination.
- Be provided with opportunities for personal development.
- Complement the paid worker, not replace them.

## Organisations should expect volunteers to:

- Be reliable.
- Be honest.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Make the most of training and support opportunities.
- Carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims of the organisation.
- Operate within the agreed guidelines and remit.

## Data protection, confidentiality and managing boundaries

The UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) applies to volunteers in the same way as any other individual. In other words, volunteers may be data processors, dealing with other people's personal data, and they will also be data subjects, because you process personal information about them – as with staff, you will follow the same GDPR policy for volunteers.

You may want to consider recruiting volunteers from partner surgeries rather than from within your own practice to avoid breaches of patient confidentiality and maintain boundaries.

Within the written guidelines and role description of the volunteer, it is important to emphasise the importance of maintaining boundaries in a clinical setting – volunteers should not exchange personal contact details with the people they support and should be mindful of meeting people in their communities to ensure that confidentiality is maintained.



## Safeguarding

Safeguarding is about understanding the risks of harm to others, putting actions in place to eliminate and reduce those risks and about reporting concerns. We must safeguard volunteers and service users. Make sure you support safeguarding in all volunteering policies, procedures and activities. Ensure volunteer induction and training includes how to safeguard service users and cover safety and safeguarding in supervision and team meetings.



## Reward and recognition

### Things to consider:

- How will you recognise and reward the achievements of volunteers?
- How will volunteers make their voices heard, give feedback or voice a complaint, and be part of the team?
- Can you think of other ways to involve your volunteers and to capture their suggestions? For example, an annual review survey, participating in consultations and planning days or introducing a suggestions box.



## Resources to support you

- Information Sheet – Volunteer Accreditation and Recognition Options – **please contact your local CVC for this information sheet.**



## Managing volunteer exits

### When volunteers are not suitable for your practice:

Here are some reasons why you might consider volunteers to be inappropriate for your role(s):

- DBS check indicates they are unsuitable for role – in-line with your policy.
  - Inability to provide references (if references are required).
  - Inability to engage with the required training, or to achieve assessed standards, or to volunteer within the organisation's volunteer policies. This could include inability to meet key policy requirements e.g. behaviour or attitudes which contravene Equal Opportunities and Diversity policy.
  - Active drug and alcohol abuse.
- Your policies/guidelines should make clear how volunteers are assessed to be suitable. Whatever the basis for deciding that a volunteer is not suitable, the process should be fair and transparent and in line with your volunteer policies.
- Counselling Out is the process of agreeing that a volunteer will not be placed within your organisation. The volunteer should be given clear and honest reasons for not being able to start volunteering with your organisation. They should not be given an excuse (e.g. 'the project is 'full up' at the moment').
  - A 'Letting volunteers Go' policy will guide and support you when deciding whether a volunteer should be asked to leave the project. This should not be referred to as a disciplinary procedure and needs to be separate to procedures for employed staff, since the relationship you have with volunteers has a different basis from that with paid staff.



## When volunteers move on

Volunteers' circumstances often change, preventing them from continuing with their role and volunteers often move on to further volunteering or paid work elsewhere. It should be made clear to volunteers that they can end at any time. Whilst it can be sad to see volunteers move on, it can be a valuable opportunity to celebrate individuals' skills, knowledge and the confidence they have gained. Talk to volunteers about this and let them know their contribution has been appreciated. As a best practice measure, provide them with a reference, a certificate or thank you letter.

## Closing statement

We wish you the very best of luck in setting up your new group or organisation. Meeting an unmet need is an extremely rewarding thing to do, but it can be hard work. Once volunteers have an established role in your service, you may wonder why you hadn't involved them before!

There are highly experienced people in Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot who can help you every step of the way, so please don't be afraid to ask - we are just a phone call away!





Please see below some useful contact details of individuals/organisations that may be able to assist you.

## Contact Details for Swansea Council for Voluntary Service

Swansea Council for Voluntary Service  
7 Walter Road  
Swansea  
SA1 5NF

 01792 544000  
 [scvs@scvs.org.uk](mailto:scvs@scvs.org.uk)

## Contact Details for Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service

Neath Port Talbot Council  
for Voluntary Service  
Ty Margaret Thorne  
17-19 Alfred Street  
Neath  
SA11 1EF

 01639 631246  
 [info@nptcvs.org.uk](mailto:info@nptcvs.org.uk)

## Contact Details for Swansea Bay University Health Board SBUHB Volunteer Service

 01792 703290  
 [Volunteer.Centre@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:Volunteer.Centre@wales.nhs.uk)

## Contact Details for Third Sector Support Wales

If you're not a GP Practice operating in Swansea or Neath Port Talbot area, then you can contact your local County Voluntary Council or Wales Council for Voluntary Action.



Please click on the following link for their contact details: <https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/contact/>



**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)**