

Guidance on Micro-Volunteering

The Volunteering Together 4 Health service is delivered by a partnership team of volunteering experts across the 5 boroughs of North Central London. Whether looking for volunteering advice and guidance at a system-wide or local level, you will find dedicated and expert support.

What Exactly is Micro-Volunteering?

Micro-volunteering can be described as small, manageable acts of giving. It involves completing brief, specific tasks that may take only a few minutes or a couple of hours. Unlike more traditional volunteering, it doesn't require an ongoing commitment or fixed schedule. Instead, it allows people to contribute whenever they have free time, making it easy to get involved on a flexible or drop-in basis.

Why It's Great

In a busy environment, you might not always have a six-month role ready, or a potential volunteer might not have the time for a weekly shift. Micro-volunteering bridges that gap. It allows your organisation to:

- **Improve efficiency:** Divide simple tasks among volunteers, like sorting data or providing assistance at events.
- **Draw on different forms of expertise:** Without needing to employ them, you can find people with lived experience, community knowledge, language skills and cultural understanding etc. that are all valuable forms of expertise.
- **Keep people connected:** If you have to turn someone away from a regular role, offering micro-volunteering keeps them engaged with your cause.
- **Reach further:** Tasks can be done remotely and offer more flexibility which may help with recruiting harder to reach volunteers and those from different locations, not just nearby.

Making Volunteering Accessible for Everyone

A key goal is to ensure our volunteer base reflects the communities we serve, including those who are harder to reach and the Core20PLUS5 population. Traditional volunteering can sometimes feel daunting or exclusionary due to strict time commitments or complex application processes.

Micro-volunteering is a powerful tool for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) because it removes these barriers. It is particularly well-suited for:

- **People with health issues or disabilities** who might find a regular, physical role difficult but can contribute from home.
- **Busy parents, students, or workers** who want to help but can only spare a short amount of time between other commitments.
- **Service users** who benefited and would like to make a difference without committing to a formal role.
- **Migrant communities** who may find traditional volunteering daunting due to complex application processes or strict time commitments.

To understand which roles best fit harder to reach applicants and Core20PLUS5 communities, consult directly with service users, busy parents, and people with health issues or disabilities. Focus on developing roles that require 'no experience' and can be done flexibly from home to lower barriers for those facing health or financial challenges.

Getting Started: Simple Steps

1. **Identify the tasks:** Look for things that can be done at any time, from any location, and require no special training. Examples include supporting with admin work, writing cards and encouraging messages to people who use your service, sharing campaigns on social media and raising awareness.
2. **Remove barriers:** For these low-risk, short-term tasks, you can usually skip the formal interviews, reference checks, and DBS hurdles. Provide clear, essential instructions so the task can be completed safely and effectively. The aim is to make 'saying yes' as easy as possible so that a busy person can feel accommodated for without a mountain of admin.
3. **Acknowledge the difference made:** Sending a quick thank you or showing them how their small action contributed to a bigger goal goes a long way. People micro-volunteering often give up limited spare time so it's especially important to respect and acknowledge their contribution. Good for involving people with busy schedules.

Might lead to people wanting to do more volunteering In your organisation!

Monitoring Diversity and Identifying Community Needs

To ensure your volunteer base truly reflects harder to reach applicants and the communities you serve, you can implement a monitoring and engagement strategy that aligns with the low-barrier nature of micro-volunteering:

- **Monitoring Diversity Outcomes:** Use short, anonymous surveys after a task is completed to track if you are reaching those from harder-to-reach groups and different locations. This data can be benchmarked against local borough needs with the support of your local volunteering experts (listed at the end of this document). Beyond standard demographics, track the inclusion of lived experience, community knowledge, and language skills, as these are vital forms of expertise for inclusive health impact.
- **Inclusive Engagement and Feedback:** To reach beyond traditional audiences, ensure these micro-volunteering opportunities are advertised in community spaces like libraries and places of worship. Finally, when acknowledging a volunteer's contribution with a 'quick thank you', use that interaction as a brief feedback loop to ask what other small tasks they would feel comfortable performing. This ensures the process of 'saying yes' remains as easy as possible while you continue to evolve roles based on real community needs.

Top Equality, Diversity and Inclusion TIPS

- To truly reach everyone, ensure your micro-volunteering opportunities are advertised in community spaces like libraries and places of worship, and focus on roles that require 'no experience' to lower the barrier for participation.
- By prioritising tasks that can be done flexibly from home, you provide vital opportunities for those who are harder to reach and in the Core20PLUS5 population who may face health or financial barriers.

For further support contact your local volunteering experts:

Bridge Renewal Trust (Haringey)

CBPlus (Barnet)

Enfield Voluntary Action

Haringey Community Collaborative (Public Voice)

London Plus (Lead Partner)

Voluntary Action Islington

Volunteer Centre Camden (Operational Lead)

Volunteering Barnet (Groundwork London)

