

Involving Younger Volunteers and Parental Consent

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.

The involvement of young people can introduce diverse skills, motivation, and innovative thinking to your organisation. It also presents a meaningful opportunity to support their development, enabling them to build confidence, acquire new competencies, and feel more engaged with their local community.

Keeping it Safe and Legal

While young people are a great asset, they can be more vulnerable due to a lack of experience, so we have a **legal duty of care** to keep them safe. This means you should:

- **Carry out a specific risk assessment** just for younger volunteers.
- **Avoid high-risk roles**, such as those involving late nights, selling alcohol, or working one-to-one with vulnerable people without supervision.
- **Review your insurance** so you are sure it includes volunteers under 18.
- **Understand DBS rules:** Depending on your role you may need an enhanced DBS check if you are working with volunteers under 18. If the volunteers themselves are 16 or 17, they may need a check if they are working with other children. Those under 16 are ineligible for a DBS check. For more information, visit the NCVO website [here](#).

Parental Consent

Before a young person under 18 joins your team, it is standard practice to secure a **signed permission form** from their parent or guardian to ensure all legal responsibilities are met.

However, we also need to be **inclusive and flexible**. There are sensitive situations where asking for parental consent might not be appropriate or safe for the young person, such as:

- If the volunteering is related to their **LGBTQ+ identity**.
- If they are currently **homeless** or not in contact with their parents.
- For very informal, one-off group activities like a community litter pick.

In these cases, try to assess the situation on a case-by-case basis to ensure you aren't accidentally creating a barrier for a young person who needs support the most.

Making Volunteering Accessible and Diverse

To truly reflect our community, including those who are harder to reach and the **Core20PLUS5 population** (those from the most deprived areas and ethnic minority groups), we must remove barriers to entry. Many young people are deeply concerned about social issues like **racism, homelessness, and the environment**; highlighting how your role tackles these can be a huge draw.

Keep your **application process short and simple** – avoiding long CVs or complex forms helps those who might not have traditional support at home. Being flexible with hours is also key, as many young volunteers have to balance their time with school, exams, or family commitments. Offering a **buddy or mentor** can also help build the confidence of a young person who may feel out of place in a professional health setting, for example.

Top Equality, Diversity and Inclusion TIPS

- To ensure your programme is truly inclusive, reach out to young people where they already are, such as local youth clubs or community spaces, rather than waiting for them to find you.
- Create a culture of mutual respect where young volunteers feel like a valued part of the team and always consider if your consent processes are unintentionally excluding vulnerable or marginalised young people.

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)

