

Volunteer Interview Questions

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 wider or local level, you will find dedicated and expert support.

This guide is designed to help you host inclusive, informal discussions that ensure a great fit for both the volunteer and your team.

Interviewing for Inclusion

Interviews with volunteers should feel like an informal, two-sided conversation rather than a formal test. The goal is to build a connection and understand how the role can be mutually beneficial.

To support harder to reach applicants and Core20PLUS5 populations – those from the most deprived areas or groups facing health inequalities – we encourage **strengths-based interviewing**. This focuses on a person's inherent talents and their potential to grow rather than just their past formal experience. Their answers are confidential within the organisation.

- **Mindset:** Be careful to **avoid judging confidence as competence**; a volunteer may be highly capable even if they are nervous or have a more reserved communication style.
- **Communication:** Always **avoid acronyms and professional jargon**. This is especially important in health settings which can make it feel exclusive.
- **Cultural Awareness:** Recognise that **communication styles vary across cultures**; differences in eye contact, pauses, or how people talk about their achievements are natural and should be respected.

Flexible Interview Formats

The setting can be just as important as the questions. To make the process accessible, offer an **alternative format** that suits the individual, such as:

- **Phone or Video calls** for those with limited travel time.
- **A 'Walking Meeting'** for a more relaxed, side-by-side conversation.
- **A local Community Venue** where the volunteer feels comfortable and at home.

- **A Supported Interview**, allowing the candidate reasonable adjustments and the opportunity to bring a friend or advocate for encouragement.

Suggested Interview Questions

Instead of a rigid script, try these conversational prompts to explore the volunteer's interests and needs:

- What specifically attracted you to this volunteering role?
- Introduce the role description and tasks
- What skills or experience do you have in [insert area] and how do you think will help you in this role? Are there parts of the role that feel a bit challenging or where you might want some extra guidance?
- How can we help you get the most out of your time with us? Are there specific skills you want to learn?
- [Share a brief scenario relevant to the role and ask them how they would solve it]. If this situation popped up, how do you think you'd handle it?
- What do you understand about equal opportunities?
- What do you understand about confidentiality in the context of this role?
- We are looking for help during [specific times/commitment]. How does that sit with your current schedule and future plans?
- Please let us know – now or at any point in the future – if you have any access or support needs.
- What helps you feel comfortable and supported in new environments?
- Is there anything we can do to help you volunteer successfully?
- Do you have any questions that you would like to ask?

Agree next steps:

- Make sure you have reference details / DBS check, if needed
- Explain when you will next be in touch or when they should start
- Explain who will be their supervisor (if not the person interviewing)
- Explain about induction when they start

It's good practice to keep a record of your questions and the applicant's responses, they could be used in future supervision meetings. Store these securely, in line with your organisation's data protection procedures.

Top Equality, Diversity and Inclusion TIPS

- To support a diverse range of volunteers, ensure your interview location is physically accessible and use clear, jargon-free language to avoid excluding those from different backgrounds or with varying levels of English.
- Focus on potential and lived experience rather than just formal qualifications to create a fairer pathway for harder to reach applicants and the Core20PLUS5 community.

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)

