

Creating a Volunteer Recruitment Strategy

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.

This guide is designed to help you build an effective and inclusive volunteer recruitment strategy that is easy to manage.

Laying the Groundwork

Before you start promoting your roles, **take a moment to plan**. Consider what might motivate someone to join your specific organisation – are they looking for career experience, or perhaps a way to give back to their local community? Look at the resources you already have, like current team members or space for a ‘taster day’ and identify where you might need extra help.

Ask colleagues, the local community and existing volunteers from underserved groups to help co-design the recruitment strategy. To keep yourself on track, set a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound) target. Instead of just saying ‘we need more people’, try: ‘We want eight new volunteers from our local Core20PLUS5 population to start volunteering in diverse roles by the end of September’.

Know Your Audience

To help reduce health inequalities, it’s a good idea to focus on harder to reach communities and applicants within the Core20PLUS5 population groups (those in the most deprived 20% of the community and groups facing specific barriers to healthcare).

Examples could be:

- **Parents or carers** who need flexible opportunities
- **Disabled people** who may prefer hybrid or remote roles, or need additional support into volunteering
- **People with lived experience** who want to improve services for others
- **Residents with multilingual skills** who can support culturally responsive care
- **Students** who may want exposure to working in health settings or a path to employment

Once you know who you are talking to, create a one-sentence key message for each of them. For example: 'Passionate about your community? Help us make our local clinic a more welcoming place for everyone'.

Remember, recruitment processes should be open, transparent, supportive, respectful and non-judgemental. Many volunteers may have lived experience of trauma, discrimination, ill health or exclusion.

Outreach Tactics

It's always a good idea to go to where your target audience spends their time, don't just post a link on a website and wait. Examples could include:

- **Community Hubs:** Promote opportunities through your local Volunteer Centre. Place posters in local shops, libraries and community centres.
- **Digital Networks:** Ask existing volunteers to share roles in their local WhatsApp or Facebook groups etc.
- **Face-to-face:** Host an information session or 'taster day' so people can see the role in action without any pressure. Participate in volunteering fairs.
- **Education:** Connect with local health and social care tutors at nearby colleges.
- **Partnerships:** Work with faith groups, food banks, refugee support groups, disability organisations to recruit volunteers. You can work with existing volunteers from underserved groups.

Take Action!

You don't have to do everything at once! Look at your list of tactics and pick the two or three that you think will make the biggest impact for your specific need and setting. Be realistic about your time and focus on building genuine connections.

Importance of Retention

Recruitment is the first step, but it's not everything. It's good to create supportive, inclusive environments that help volunteers from underrepresented communities feel valued, connected and part of something – so they remain involved long-term.

Monitoring Diversity

To ensure that recruitment processes are fair and that volunteer demographics reflect your local communities and Core20PLUS5 groups, you can integrate a monitoring and measurement section into your strategy based on the following principles:

- **Utilise SMART Targets:** Establish a clear baseline for monitoring by setting SMART targets, such as aiming for a specific number of new volunteers from the Core20PLUS5 groups by a set date.

- **Track the Applicant Journey:** Monitor who applies versus who is actually recruited by tracking the success rates of the specific groups identified in the strategy, including disabled residents, parents, students, and people with lived experience.
- **Identify Barriers and Drop-off Points:** Regularly review the recruitment stages to identify where applicants might be dropping out, ensuring the process remains supportive, respectful, and non-judgemental, particularly for those who may have faced prior discrimination or exclusion.
- **Benchmark Against the Community:** To check if demographics reflect the local area, focus your monitoring on whether you are successfully reaching harder-to-reach applicants through outreach in community hubs, faith groups, and refugee support groups.
- **Co-Designed Monitoring:** Involve existing volunteers from Core20PLUS5 groups and the local community to help review recruitment data and identify any points of bias in the process.
- **Consult Local Experts:** For guidance on how to effectively measure diversity and identify local demographic trends, you can reach out to your local volunteering experts (listed at the end of this document).

Top Equality, Diversity and Inclusion TIPS

- To reach a truly diverse audience, move beyond traditional advertising and build trust by showing up in community spaces and using ‘information or taster sessions’ to lower the barrier to entry.
- Always tailor your messaging to speak directly to the motivations and lived experiences of local harder to reach applicants to ensure your recruitment is inclusive and accessible.

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)

