

Getting Started with Volunteer Recruitment

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 the first step in helping your organisation build welcoming, inclusive, and effective volunteer roles.

Getting Your Organisation Ready

Before you start looking for people, think about how volunteers will fit into your daily work and how they will serve the needs of your organisation. Think of volunteering as a gift of time and not 'free labour', which requires your management, resources and support to be ready for their volunteering journey.

Defining the Right Roles

When you design a role, try to see it from the volunteer's perspective, think about your audience. People are often motivated by a desire **to help others, learn new things, get new skills, gain confidence, or simply meet new people.**

To reach a wider range of people – especially those in **Core20PLUS5** communities who may face significant health inequalities – you need to **think flexibly**. Consider offering:

- One-off opportunities for specific events.
- Digital roles for those who can commute easily.
- Non-digital roles for those who may not have easy access to technology.
- Micro-volunteering tasks that fit into busy lives.
- Shared roles.

Important Note: Volunteer roles should always complement the work of your paid staff, not replace them. Chat with your team when creating new roles to ensure everyone is on the same page and the needs of your organisation are being met.

The Recruitment Process: Keeping it accessible

A fair and consistent process is the backbone of good recruitment. If we want to attract a diverse range of volunteers, we need to lower the barriers to entry.

- **Writing the role description:** Keep it simple. Explain who you are, why your work matters, what the volunteer will actually do, and what training or benefits you provide. Avoid 'work-speak' or HR jargon that makes a volunteer role sound like a paid job.
- **Flexible applications:** Provide multiple ways to apply for your roles as traditional applications may act as a barrier. This could include informal expressions of interest chats, spreading the word about opportunities via community referrals and peer ambassadors, taster sessions and group onboarding. If you are using application forms, you can offer to help someone complete it over the phone or invite them to your site to do it in person.
- **Informal chats:** Instead of an interview, try an informal meeting. It's a great way to see if the role is a good fit and helps the volunteer feel at ease.
- **Pay volunteer expenses:** Paying expenses helps remove barriers for volunteers on low incomes or with little spare cash. Funders and donors also often like to see that you'll pay volunteer expenses.
- **DBS checks:** Only request a DBS **check if the role absolutely requires it.** Think about whether a volunteer can start some basic training or non-sensitive tasks while waiting for their check to come through.
- **Kind feedback:** If someone isn't the right fit for a specific role, refer to the role description and provide constructive feedback. You might even suggest a different role that better suits their skills.

Spreading the Word

To reach the **Core20PLUS5** population – those in the most deprived 20% of the population who experience significant health inequalities – you cannot rely on a 'one size fits all' advert.

Think about your audience: Where do they go? What do they read? If you are looking for people from a specific neighbourhood, put posters in their local community centres or GP surgeries rather than just posting on a general website. Tailoring your message shows that you are actively looking for them and their unique lived experiences.

Finally, keep a simple log of where your volunteers are hearing about you. This helps you see which of your efforts are working so you can focus your energy where it matters most.

Top Equality, Diversity and Inclusion TIPS

- Focus on removing practical barriers by offering to help with application forms and where possible ensure all out-of-pocket expenses are reimbursed so that nobody is 'priced out' of volunteering.
- Tailor your outreach by going directly into the heart of the communities you want to reach, using local spaces and simple, jargon-free language that welcomes everyone regardless of their background or professional experience.

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)

