

NORTH OF TYNE VOLUNTEERING AREA OF EXCELLENCE

SELECTING AND SCREENING VOLUNTEERS

Having the right selection and screening processes in place will enable you to find the right volunteer for the role. The process needs to be proportionate to the nature of the role. For simple volunteering roles, such as general admin or event support, your selection and screening process are likely to be less stringent than for roles that involve direct client interaction or require specific skill sets. Try to keep selection and screening processes as simple as possible, but make sure that you follow all necessary legal and compliance requirements for your individual roles.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE HEALTH CHECK FOR VOLUNTEER-INVOLVING ORGANISATIONS

The Health Check for Volunteer-Involving Organisations considers you whether your interview processes are fair and welcoming and whether you undertake background checks on prospective volunteers depending on the nature of the volunteering role.

BE FAIR AND EQUITABLE

Volunteers should be selected based on interest, knowledge, and skills consistent with anti-discrimination legislation. Ensure that you carry out the appropriate screening processes in order to maintain the safety of volunteers, service users, and the wider organisation.

BACKGROUND CHECKING

Background checking processes are an important aspect of selection and screening. There are three levels of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks – Standard, Enhanced, or Enhanced with Barred Lists DBS checks. DBS checks can be used for any position or purpose. However certain roles may require a higher level of check. More information about eligibility can be found on the Government’s website, Gov.uk - [DBS eligibility guidance](#).

When applying for a DBS check, encourage your volunteers to apply for the DBS update service which is free for volunteers. The update service enables volunteers to keep their DBS up to date and allows organisations to check their certificate online, with their consent. Volunteers can use their certificate again when they apply for another position, where the same type and level of check is required.

KEEP THINGS SIMPLE

Depending on the nature of the volunteering role, you may require volunteers to provide proof of certification, such as a current First Aid qualification or Food Hygiene certificate, or evidence the volunteer can perform a certain skill. For other roles, there may be opportunities for volunteers to learn new skills on the job. All of this information should be stated up front in your volunteer role description and discussed with prospective volunteers.

Be careful that you do not apply all the same screening processes to volunteers as you would for employees. Remove unnecessary barriers to involvement with your organisation where possible to ensure you capture the interest of prospective volunteers.



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INTERVIEWING VOLUNTEERS

Interviewing volunteers is not normally necessary and may make a potential volunteer feel anxious. Instead, try talking to prospective volunteers over the phone or inviting them for a casual chat prior to formally involving them in your organisation. This enables you to understand if the volunteer is a good fit for your organisation and provides them with an opportunity to ask questions about the role and the organisation more generally. Sometimes, volunteers may decide against the role at this point if they realise the role doesn't meet their interests or motivations. Conversely, this conversation may help you realise the role won't be a good fit for the volunteer.

TASTER SESSIONS AND TOURS

You may choose to invite a group of prospective volunteers to attend a taster session or to have a look around the organisation. This is another way, like the informal chat, for you to decide if they are a good fit for the role and the organisation. It also provides an opportunity for potential volunteers to meet other volunteers in your organisation, which can help them feel more comfortable if they choose to volunteer with you.

