

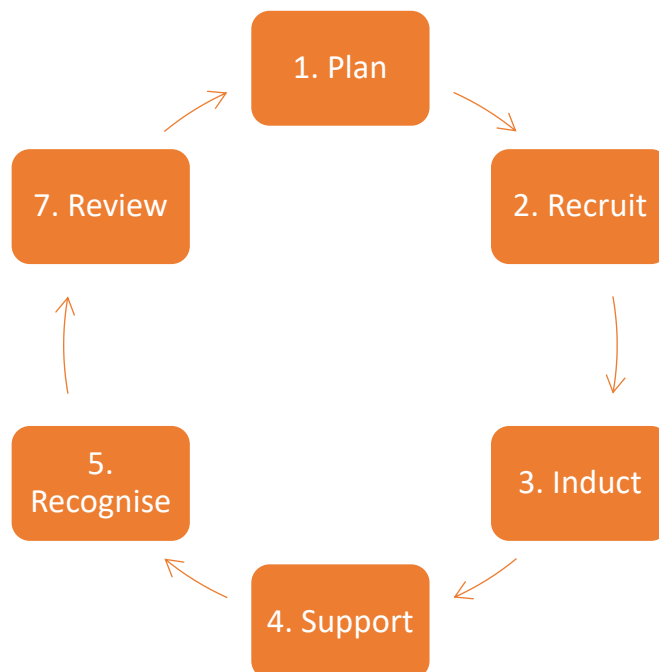
Your Park Bristol & Bath

Volunteer Recruitment Framework & Plan



To keep your group vibrant and get more people involved it is worth investing a little time. The stages set out below can be very useful to consider in helping to bring them fresh people on board and give them the best experience possible.

The Volunteer Journey



1. Plan

Planning should be done thoroughly and will help you use your time wisely, giving you the best chance of successfully finding volunteers with the right skill set and who want to be involved in your work in a mutually beneficial way.

It is important to be clear about what you want a volunteer to do, the more specific you can be the better. This will help you determine what type of person is likely to have the skills and the desire to do that role. The more you can help people visualise what they will be doing and how it will fit into and benefit their current lives, the better.

E.g. General Help with a long list of potential tasks put out on social media and email, is less likely to attract as much relevant interest as Volunteer Coordinator publicised through the local University's Business Management course.

Defining what and who you need

1. What do you want volunteers to do? *You may need to split a few different tasks into separate opportunities.*
2. What skills will someone need to support you? *Create a list of the skills and/or experience people will need to do the role effectively and enjoy it.*
3. What motivations will someone need to take on the role? *Aside from a love of parks and green spaces, what motivations would likely attract someone to the role e.g. skills for a CV, working with people.*
4. Who will be responsible for recruiting and inducting the new volunteers? *Once recruited, it is essential that new volunteers have a good first experience with you to increase the chances that they stay. Ensuring there is someone who takes on this responsibility and has the time to do it is crucial.*

ACTION: work through these questions. You may have a number of different volunteer roles or opportunities that you want to fill. Consider whether you have the capacity in your group to recruit all at once or whether this needs to be staged approach.

2. Recruit

Creating a role profile

Now you need to package up your requirements and get them in front of the people most likely to be interested.

Where possible, create a role profile using the attached template to give prospect volunteers something to read and consider, but at the very least, before recruiting you need to know:

1. Task/role title – helpful when talking to people about what you are looking for.
2. Why we want you – a summary of why you are hoping to recruit this voluntary support and the impact it will make on your group.
3. What you will be doing – a summary of key tasks and responsibilities.
4. The skills you need – a summary of the skills or experience needed to be successful.
5. What's in it for you – tapping into the motivations for someone apply, what can you offer?

Selection

Before advertising you will need to decide on the selection process for your new volunteer. This could be as simple as having a chat on the phone and being invited to the next work party, or for roles with more responsibility, you may want to interview them. See the below table for examples.

Where to advertise

You now know what skills and experience you are looking for, to give you the best possible chance of success you need to get your role profile and in front of the people that meet your requirements, ideally taking as little of your time as possible.

Use your networks

Before advertising, it is always good to see whether you or your network could find the person you need:

1. Do you know someone with the skills and experience needed? A personal ask can be very flattering and get the result you need.
2. Ask your wider network whether they know anyone suitable. Your committee or volunteer group or even the people on your email list may be able to make an approach on your behalf.

Advertising

If personal approaches haven't proven fruitful, it's time to cast your net wider. Here it is crucial to try and reach your target candidate where they are, rather than taking a one size fits all approach.

Being as strategic as possible about where you advertise will give you the best chance of recruiting someone suitable for the role.

Example recruitment plan

| Role | Skills & experience needed | Potential recruitment channels | Selection process |
|------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Regular work party volunteer | Physically able, committed, local, teamwork, good communication | Posters in the park and local businesses, local social media pages, local community organisations. | Quick chat on the phone then come and have a go at the next session. |
| Social media volunteer | Tech savvy, active on social media, good writing skills. | Local universities. Local youth groups. Local sixth form schools. | Meeting in the park to talk through expectations & what to expect. |
| Treasurer | Accounting, financial management, book keeping | Reach Volunteering (skilled volunteering platform). Institute of Chartered Accountants. Local accountancy firms. VOSCUR or 3SG. | Interview with the group Chair and one other. |

ACTIONS:

1. Create role profiles using the role profile template
2. Use this table to create your recruitment plan
3. Advertise across the identified channels
4. Follow the identified selection process
5. Offer the role to the successful applicants

3. Induct

All new volunteers should have some form of induction appropriate to the role that are starting. This is to:

- Make them feel welcome
- Set expectations on both sides
- Understand their motivations and needs
- Provide any necessary training

Example induction plan

| Role | Welcome |
|------------------------------|---|
| Regular work party volunteer | <p>Before they come to the work party give them a call to explain what to expect and ask if they have any needs.</p> <p>Do a round of introductions at the start of work parties welcoming new people. Buddy with a more experienced volunteer for the day.</p> <p>Ensure that they have been given the appropriate tool talk before starting.</p> <p>Take the time to have a chat with them during the work party. Ask them what they want to get out of volunteering.</p> |
| Social media volunteer | <p>Meet for a coffee in the park to talk through the role, the expectations, what they are trying to get out of the role.</p> <p>Introduce them to other key members of the group/committee.</p> <p>Talk through what you are trying to achieve through your social media platforms.</p> <p>Have a period where you review their social media posts before they are sent.</p> |
| Treasurer | <p>Ask about motivations and expectations during your informal interview.</p> <p>Invite to attend next committee meeting to meet all key people.</p> <p>Arrange handover with outgoing Treasurer and provide a run through of the systems and processes you use.</p> <p>Provide timeline with expectations for reports.</p> <p>Hold regular check ins for first 3 months.</p> |

ACTION: use the above table to populate your induction plan and follow it.

4. Support

To retain your volunteers once they have started their role, you need to continue to meet your mutual expectations and their motivations for getting involved.

Keeping volunteers comes down to good people management and there are 4 key areas you can focus on across all your volunteering to help with this:

1. **Fun** – volunteering should be enjoyable or have enjoyable elements. If volunteers are getting on with a fairly thankless task, consider how else you can bring fun into their experience.
2. **Communication** – maintain open communication channels with your volunteers to treat them like your inner circle and keep them up to date. You could set up a Facebook group, or start an e-newsletter. The more you bring them in, the more included they will feel.

3. **Social** – providing the opportunity to meet new people and facilitating new relationships through buddy systems, ice breakers, social events, can make all the difference.
4. **Learning** – whatever the motivation of your volunteers, helping them learn and progress is important in keeping people. If you have a volunteer who has mastered a task, they could support others to do the same thing. Or progress them onto something more challenging.

ACTION: make a list of different actions you can take to support the 4 identified areas. Keep these in the back of your mind and try to introduce them through your volunteering.

5. Recognise

It's very simple, but you can't underestimate the power of saying thank you. Volunteers are often motivated by wanting to give back and a simple thank you goes a long way. No frills are needed, but make sure your volunteers know they are appreciated.

If you are more established and have a good number of volunteers, here are some ideas about how you could take the next steps towards recognising your volunteer team:

- Send Christmas cards with a personalised message recognising the volunteers contribution over the year
- Arrange an annual social and thank you get together, where you celebrate the years work.
- Have a volunteer of the month you profile on your social media channels.
- Put your volunteers up for awards schemes run by local organisations

ACTION: plan 2 points in the year to focus on recognising your volunteers.

6. Review

Try to create time each year to review and assess your volunteer recruitment and management. This should provide the space to think what has gone well and what could be improved. It will also give you the chance to consider any additional roles you may want to recruit and where you may need support.

It can be nice to speak to some of your volunteers about how they have found volunteering with you. That feedback can then inform your review.

ACTION: schedule a meeting with the other volunteer managers in your group to review how things are going each year.