



Finding Your Volunteers

It's important to have a role description in place before recruiting for volunteers (see Volunteer Information Sheet 5: *Role Descriptions*)

1. Where to find your volunteers

Volunteers can be recruited in lots of ways, but make sure that you are using the most appropriate method for the audience you are trying to reach. Where is your audience? Will they read traditional adverts in newspapers or will they be more likely to find out about volunteering opportunities through social media?

2. Creating an advert

An advert maybe the first time someone has heard about your organisation. Adverts should be clear and concise, contain contact details and how to find out further information. Before posting your own advert, search other adverts from organisations similar to yours or adverts for similar roles. Which ones stand out – why? Which appeal to you – why? How easy were they to find?

Make it snappy as your title needs to stand out from the crowd. An advert, leaflet, poster or web article that merely says “Volunteers Wanted” is not eye catching, it is a phrase that is very over used and unlikely to generate much interest from prospective volunteers. Try using humour or unusual titles/descriptions; for example, one charity shop advertised for a retail guru when it was looking for volunteers to serve behind the counter, they were inundated with enquiries.

Explain what is unique and what's special about your organisation and/or its activities. Others will not be aware of what you do, especially the activities outside your main area of business, and may need to be informed of the variety of services/activities you provide and their importance to the community.

Use a mix of approaches and also think about using stories. An article in a local newspaper or an interview on local radio with a volunteer or beneficiary talking about your organisation, also acts as an advert. Although it's not a direct ask always include a line or two at the end e.g. if you would like to find out more about supporting....

3. Where to advertise

Face to Face

- Word of mouth is the best way to find volunteers. Your staff, volunteers and supporters are your biggest asset. Alongside word of mouth, taster sessions, bring a friend and open events or days could be offered. Allow people to try out your organisation and volunteering with you before committing.

Print and Media

- **Leaflets and Posters:** think carefully about where you will display these, where will your audience see them? For example, supermarkets, libraries, GP surgeries, school receptions and town or parish notice boards. Leaflets and posters must be up to date, so don't include anything date specific. Although this approach takes a lot of effort it does have longevity.
- **Newsletters:** your own, community or parish newsletters and those of interested third parties. Try and use a mix of adverts and stories, and always include a photograph or picture.
- **Organising or speaking at events:** not just your own events but find out what else is happening in your community. Could you have a stall at a local school fair or farmers market?
- **Press and radio:** make use of large regional and national initiatives, as they already have lots of traction. The hard work has been done for you, for example Volunteers week in June.

Online

- **Websites:** your own, third parties, and general community websites. Keep information up-to-date and make sure that your contact details are included.
- **Social Media:** Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn etc. It's not necessary to use every platform - it is better to choose one and do it well. Whatever you choose it needs to be kept up to date. Look at the social media of organisations that are similar to yours, what do they post and who do they follow? Different platforms tend to reach different age groups so think about who you want to reach.
- **Volunteer recruitment websites:** Community First Yorkshire hosts a website called Volunteering in North Yorkshire (VINY) that allows organisations to post their volunteer opportunities and also allows volunteers to create profiles. <https://communityfirstyorkshire.org.uk/volunteering/>. Craven runs a similar database called Compass.

Unit A | Tower House | Askham Fields Lane | Askham Bryan | York | YO23 3FS
01904 704177 | info@communityfirstyorkshire.org.uk | www.communityfirstyorkshire.org.uk

Registered Charity No: 515538 | Company No: 1839458 | VAT No: 500834776

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