



Creating a role description for your volunteers – advice for VSC Organisations

Role descriptions are a valuable tool to help you support volunteers to get the most out their experience with your organisation.

The importance of a role description for volunteers:

- It helps volunteers, who are thinking about applying know what they're being asked to do. This will help them decide if it's right for them.
- It's an efficient way to give the volunteer more information on the role, as there might not be time to cover when they first get in touch.
- It encourages you to think through if you've covered everything that a volunteer might need to know and the support you'll need to have in place.
- Once the volunteer has started, they will know what they need to do. It will also help you support them as you can refer to the role description when catching up about how they're getting on.
- A role description helps other people in your organisation understand how the volunteer role fits with their own.

Getting started:

It might be worth consulting with the rest of your organisation to get their ideas – staff, trustees and other volunteers may be able to offer additional perspectives and views about what is needed.

Some things to think about include:

- What is it that you are looking for volunteers help with?
- Is this activity best for a volunteer rather than a member of staff? For example: maybe a volunteer might help you to do something differently.
- How will this volunteer role sit with the wider organisational roles?
- Would this role appeal to a potential volunteer?
- Identify any risks, or health and safety issues.
- How often is a volunteer needed and who will be their point of contact?

Template Role Description:

Field Required:	Suggested information:
Role Title	<i>Formal title for this specific volunteering role.</i>
Why do you need me?	<i>Brief information on your organisation and the needs that the volunteer would be helping to address (i.e. the purpose of the role).</i>
What activities will I be involved in?	<i>An overview of what the role involves. If known, you can also provide specific activities required (e.g. 'Recording Training Evaluations / comments')</i>
What skills and abilities will I need to have?	<i>List any essential and/or desirable skills required to undertake the role. Include any personal attributes required (e.g. reliable, willing to learn) State if you are able to support development into the role.</i>
What might I gain from this volunteering opportunity?	<i>Suggest possible benefits of volunteering for this role (e.g. acquiring new skills, update for CV, improving self-confidence)</i>
What training& support will I receive?	<i>Outline training support in place for volunteers (e.g. induction, 121 support)</i>
How much time should I offer?	<i>Specify the amount of time you would like the volunteer to commit to the role on a weekly/monthly basis.</i>
Where will I be based?	<i>Provide information about where the role will be based along with any special travel requirements (e.g. Will they need their own transport?)</i>
Will my expenses be paid?	<i>Provide information about your organisation's policy on volunteer expenses.</i>
How to Apply	<i>Details of the application process, timescales and deadline.</i>
Contact details	<i>State who to contact if someone has any questions about the role.</i>