

TOP TIPS FOR RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

*The regular cry from clubs is ‘we haven’t got enough volunteers’ and ‘it’s always the same few’. These Top Tips will give you a few ideas of how to address the difficult task of recruiting volunteers.*

**The basic steps in recruitment are:**

**Why do we want Volunteers?**

People always say they want more volunteers. However, before recruiting volunteers, it is important to plan for their arrival. Questions that you may need to answer are:

* What tasks do we want volunteers to complete?
* Have we got role outlines for these?
* How many do we really need? (Have you calculated this properly or just guessed)
* How long do we need them for?
* When do we need them?
* What training will they need to complete the tasks we have identified for them?
* What support will they require (from when they arrive)?
* Will our current volunteers accept new volunteers?

It is important that new volunteers feel they are making a contribution and that you don’t leave them with nothing to do when they arrive – this happens more than we like to admit!

You also need to ensure that you have sufficient resources to support them while you train them. This may be anything from the time of another volunteer supporting/mentoring them in the role, through to funds to support their attendance ay externally arranged training courses and events.

**What plan will you use to recruit them?**

Ensure your administration is in order before you go any further:

* Either write, rewrite or design your role descriptions.
* Produce your volunteer code of conduct
* Update your volunteer welcome pack
* Ensure you are ready to conduct garda vetting if required
* Make sure your committee(s) agree with the recruitment plans and approve any resources that may be needed for the event(s) or campaign
* Make sure information is sent out to all enquirers and that anyone answering the phone is aware that the club is looking for volunteers and what to do next
* Prepare your club to be volunteer-friendly and ready to welcome new volunteers (e.g. do you have a volunteer coordinator or someone to greet new volunteers?)
* Prepare your recruitment event(s) or campaign
* Timetable some time to meet potential new volunteers
* Recruit any current club members who will be helping with the event(s) or campaign

**Where do you find volunteers?**

You will be more successful in recruiting volunteers if you target your event(s) or campaign. Target people for specific areas required in the club. For general recruiting, it’s important to avoid simply saying ‘volunteers needed’. Instead focus on roles and what they have to offer.

**How will people move from being a recruit to being a volunteer?**

Once you have found some potential new volunteers, you will need to complete the relevant checks. Even if you are in desperate need of some instant help, make sure adequate checks are made on the people who have offered help. Remember, it is important to get the **right** person in the **right** role, so that they can enjoy doing the **right** things efficiently and effectively.

You can filter volunteer recruits in a number of ways:

* One to one interviews
* A ‘find out about volunteering’ evening (bring group together and talk as group)
* Garda Vetting
* Asking them and taking up references

If you use the interview or group discussion method, ensure it is a two-way process and allow the volunteer to decide whether it is something they want to do. It is also an opportunity to check whether you have the right volunteer for the right role.

Maybe introduce a trial period after initial filtering, to allow the volunteer the chance to get to try the role for a while (maybe two weeks or a month), and allow you the chance to get to know them.

When you are happy you have the right volunteer(s), send out a welcome letter and welcome pack. This letter should give the new volunteer the name and contact details of the person who will be supporting them (at least on their first name as a volunteer), and a time for them to make their first visit to the club.

Once you have your new volunteer, you will need to look after them.